

# BEHIND THE MOSCOW TRIAL

*The Greatest  
Frame-up  
in History*

BY MAX SHACHTMAN

25c

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**SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY  
YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIALIST LEAGUE  
(4TH INTERNATIONALIST)  
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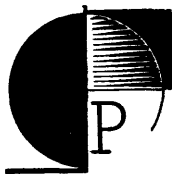
Socialist Workers Party  
Section of the 4th International  
158 Broadway Boston

• MAX SHACHTMAN •

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# BEHIND THE MOSCOW TRIAL

*"If a lie can serve for a moment it is inevitably injurious in the long run; the truth, on the other hand, inevitably serves in the end even if it may hurt for the moment."—DIDEROT*



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## Behind the Moscow Trial



## Behind the Moscow Trial

On August 15, 1936, the press published the report of the official Soviet news agency that the Russian state prosecutor had arraigned Gregory Zinoviev, Leon Kamenev, I. N. Smirnov and thirteen others on charges of conspiring, together with the German Fascist régime, to assassinate the seven most prominent Soviet leaders, and of having murdered S. M. Kirov more than a year and a half ago. Four days later, on August 19, the first session of the trial of the sixteen accused opened before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. (the indictment being published in full in the Soviet press the day after). Within five days the court heard the state prosecutor, A. Y. Vishinsky, make the indictment, heard all sixteen of the defendants and the two witnesses, heard the concluding statements of prosecutor and accused, and then retired to deliberate on the verdict. On August 24, the president of the tribunal read the verdict sentencing all the defendants "to the supreme penalty—to be shot, and all property personally belonging to them to be confiscated." Less than twenty-four hours later, the press announced curtly that the appeal for mercy by the condemned had been summarily rejected by the Præsidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union; the same announcement reported: "The verdict has been carried out."

With stupefying speed, the Soviet authorities had brought to an end a political trial no less startling than the blood purge conducted by Hitler and Göring on that fatal night of June 30, 1934 when they put to death scores of their most intimate colleagues of yesterday. In less than a fortnight after the first announcement of the terrorist plot, sixteen

men were tried and executed. Among them were names inseparably interlaced with the whole history of the Russian revolutionary movement, the October Revolution, and the entire early period of the Third International. The sentence pronounced upon them also included the instruction to seize and bring before the court on the same charges, if and as soon as they set foot on Soviet territory—Leon Trotsky and his son L. L. Sedov.

In the very midst of the trial, the Soviet press announced the suicide of the noted Bolshevik, Michael Tomskey, the director of the State Publishing House, charged with being involved in the conspiracy. The prosecution further announced the preparation of a trial, for complicity in the same terrorism plot, of a group of thirteen others, among them a number of prominent old Bolsheviks. At different times during the dramatic eleven days, the press announced the arrest, investigation and preparation for trial of numerous other former or present distinguished officials of the government, including Gregory Sokolnikov, V. Serebriakov, General Putna and, as late as October 7, Karl Radek. In addition, such men as A. I. Rykov, Nicolai Bukharin, M. Uglanov and G. Piatakov are in various conditions of custody pending the outcome of investigations into the extent, if any, to which they were involved in the alleged plot. Hundreds upon hundreds of other men and women have been arrested in every part of the Soviet Union during the period of the preparation and holding of the trial, also on charges of being connected with the "Trotskyist-Zinovievist assassins." We thus have before us a case of such breath-taking magnitude and importance as commands the detailed attention of the working class throughout the world. For, involved in this comprehensive case is nothing less than the fate of the greatest event in human history—the Russian Revolution.

Of the thirty-five and more volumes filled with testimony by the accused during their examination prior to the trial itself, none has been published. Only the indictment, the prosecutor's summing-up speech and the verdict of the court have been published in full. The testimony of the accused at the trial proper has been made public only in greatly abridged form. The Stalinist authorities have provided an absolutely unavoidable minimum for an examination and

study of the case to arrive at an objective judgment. Fortunately the material at the disposal of the investigator suffices for an analysis of the trial and for a decisive conclusion. When all the material has been assembled and analyzed, only one conclusion will be possible:

The execution of the 16 men on August 24, 1936 was the result of the biggest frame-up known in history!

In the cases of Captain Dreyfus, Mooney and Billings, Moyer-Haywood-Pettibone or Sacco and Vanzetti, the frame-up involved only one, two or three men. In the present case, not only are dozens of individuals involved, but an entire section of the revolutionary movement as well.

In the historical cases mentioned, the artisans of the frame-up were confined to a small local clique. In the present case, the executors not only control one-sixth of the earth's surface, but have at their disposal all the machinery of the most powerfully centralized régime in existence.

Our investigation of the frame-up will therefore also establish that the real criminals were not the men in the dock but the rulers of the Kremlin who sent them to their death. The indictment, trial and execution themselves will stand as the most damning indictment that has yet been made of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

## Terrorism and the Marxian Tradition in Russia

The principal charge against the accused was that, at least since the Spring of 1932, they had organized a widespread conspiracy to assassinate the eight most prominent heads of the Communist party and the Soviet government: Stalin, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Ordjonikidze, Kossior, Zhdanov, Postyshev, and Kirov; and that, on December 1, 1934, they actually murdered Kirov in Leningrad. To this is added the charge that, together with Trotsky and his son, the accused plotted the assassinations in connivance with the Nazi government, specifically with Heinrich Himmler, chief of the *Gestapo* (*Gebeime Staatspolizei*—Government Secret Police). Their common aim was the overthrow of the present Soviet régime and the establishment of a Fascist government with themselves at its head.

The accusation is indeed a grave one. If it could be proved true, the accused would merit the most violent condemnation of the international working class. But before we consider the evidence adduced concretely to support the charge, let us call to mind the unique relationship of individual terrorism to the development of the Russian revolutionary movement under Czarism.

When the Marxian socialist movement in countries like Germany, France, England or the United States asserted itself against the theory and practise of assassination, of individual terrorism as a means of advancing the working class cause, the assertion was little more than an academic statement of position. Save for one or two isolated instances of terroristic attempts, these socialist movements were not faced with very much of a concrete problem. They started off with a statement of the classic Marxian position, proceeded with their work and were very rarely obliged by events to interrupt themselves with a re-statement of their stand.

Entirely different was the course of development of the Russian social democratic movement, both before and after it divided into the factions of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, which, on this question, were of one mind. Czarism represented not only the most tyrannical despotism in Europe, but it ruled over a country where the toiling population was composed of an illiterate peasantry plus a very young and unorganized proletariat. The Czarist system precluded any legal socialist activity—given the complete absence in Russia of a parliament, or the right of free speech, free press, free assembly and the right to organize and strike which the Western capitalist democracies had been compelled to vouchsafe, to one extent or another, to the working class. Everything was ruled by the Czar, his court clique and a vast, corroded bureaucracy which stopped at no repressive measure to crush the least sign of progressive or radical thought.

This was the breeding ground—the *natural and inevitable* breeding ground—for those sensational terroristic movements that called the attention of the world to Russian despotism at the junction of the two centuries. One of the first of these organizations to acquire renown was the Narodnik (Populist) group. With a vague Populist socialism as its platform, it openly advocated individual terrorism against the

Czar and his cohorts. Not a few despots were dispatched to the beyond by the revolver and bomb of the high-minded idealists and heroes who composed the fighting squads of the Narodniki. This movement reached its apex in 1881 when Grinevitsky threw the bomb which blew Czar Alexander II to atoms. Even later on, other attempts still were made, like the unsuccessful one upon the life of Alexander III, for which Alexander Ulianov, Lenin's elder brother, was hanged on the gallows.

At the turn of the century, the dispersed Populist groups were reassembled into the "Union of Socialist Revolutionists" which finally became the Social Revolutionary Party. Developing a considerable influence among the advanced intellectuals and among sections of the peasantry, it distinguished itself from the Marxian social democratic movement by its open and tenacious advocacy of individual terrorism. This advocacy was never confined to theoretical dissertation, but was carried into practise. The party had attached to its Central Committee a highly conspirative organism called the "Battle Organization," which planned and carried out a whole series of attempted and successful actions against particularly odious functionaries of the Czarist régime. Despite the terrific difficulties and hazards of such activity, not least of which was the inevitable presence of police spies and *provocateurs*, the "Battle Organization" had a period of considerable success in its work, in which many of its members displayed a courage, a spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice, a daring and ingenuity which is not to be found on many pages of the annals of the revolutionary movement in any part of the world. The Central Committee of the S.R.'s took public responsibility for the actions of its combat contingent.

It is of importance to note that in contrast to the bourgeois *democratic* countries, where terrorism, when it occurred, was a sporadic phenomenon which never attained the proportions of a national social movement, despotic Czarist bureaucratism produced a widespread *movement* of individual terrorism. The frequent assassinations in the Russian Empire were a constant reminder to the world that an autocratic bureaucracy seemed to leave social critics no other way of expressing their

protest. In a word, the terroristic movement was engendered and nurtured by Czarism itself.

But it is also true that the terroristic movement, in its turn, helped Czarism and its bureaucracy, however involuntarily. If, in self-justification, the terrorists argued that Czarism left them no other way of fighting it except by bomb and bullet, the bureaucracy, to justify its régime of repression, argued that to loosen the bonds by even an inch would mean to give a free hand to common murderers from whom anybody had the right to protect himself by whatever means proved necessary.

Decisive in an estimation of this fight between the Czarists and terrorists is the fact that it was a duel from which the masses were excluded. The ranks of the duelling groups, on both sides, could not be exhausted (socially, indeed, they fed upon each other). While this Czar or that Czarist official might come and go, the state system of *Czarism* remained and the silent inactive masses remained oppressed by it.

Apart, therefore, from the heroism and devotion of the terrorists which earned them the honor and respect of every lover of liberty, the great significance of movements like that of the Narodniki of the 19th and 20th centuries lay in what they were symptomatic of: the crushing bureaucratic despotism which gave them birth.

At once the merit of the Marxian socialist movement and the sign of the maturing of the proletariat as a class for itself, was the fact that the former cut across the vicious circle of this duel and proceeded to organize itself as a vanguard inextricably bound up with the daily struggles of the masses themselves.

"It is not yet sufficiently known abroad," wrote Lenin in 1920, "that Bolshevism grew, took shape, and became steeled in long years of struggle against *petty bourgeois revolutionism*, which smacks of, or borrows something from, anarchism, and which differs in all essentials from the conditions and requirements of the sustained proletarian class struggle. . . . At its inception in 1903, Bolshevism took over the tradition of ruthless struggle against petty bourgeois, semi-anarchist (or dilettante-anarchist) revolutionism. This tradition had always existed in revolutionary social democracy, and became particularly deep-rooted in Russia in 1900-1903, when the

foundations for a mass party of the revolutionary proletariat were being laid. Bolshevism took over and continued the struggle against the party which, more than any other, expressed tendencies of petty bourgeois revolutionism, namely, the 'Social Revolutionary' party. . . . This party considered itself to be particularly 'revolutionary' and 'Left' on account of its recognition of individual acts of terror and attempts at assassination—tactics which we Marxists decidedly rejected."

Why rejected? Not out of moral considerations, to be sure. No revolutionist ever lamented the death of a tyrant. However much he might disagree with the methods of a Khalturin, a Figner, a Gershuni, a Grinevitsky, the Marxist never shed a tear over the passing of their victims. Individual terrorism was rejected by the revolutionary Marxists on the objective grounds of expediency and political principle.

First, for every tyrant killed, another would take his place and continue as before. Secondly, and more important, the cultivation of the idea that to put this or that representative of Czarism out of the way would bring about the emancipation of the people, was equivalent to putting off that emancipation forever. Czarism (like capitalism in general) is a social system and not merely a collection of evil persons. To direct one's blows primarily at the representatives of the system means to obscure the real target and, in effect, to insure it against being fired at. Furthermore, if the notion prevails among the masses that a group of dauntless heroes—ten, a hundred, a thousand—can destroy the social evil by killing off its prominent representatives, then they have no reason for getting into motion as a mass, for forming their mass trade unions, their large political party, their coöperative and cultural organizations. What need is there of all such organizations if a courageous handful of terrorists will gain our ends without them? By its nature, terrorism had no confidence in the masses and prevented the masses from acquiring confidence in themselves.

The systematic hammering home of these objections to terrorism, concretized and elaborated, marked the whole formative period of the revolutionary social democracy in Russia.

Whoever passed through that period in its ranks was permeated to the marrow with this Marxian attitude. It was not merely a matter of intellectual conviction (as was necessarily the case with Western European or American Marxists). It was a conviction organically assimilated in the course of the realities of daily struggle.

That is why, on the very face of it, the charge is so preposterous that men whose whole adult life was spent in the revolutionary Marxian movement, who were associated with the birth and growth of Bolshevism and constituted, with few exceptions, its broad general staff for more than two decisive decades, should now—in their fifties and sixties!—have abandoned their whole past. Who can believe that the men who literally taught the Russian proletariat the difference between Marxism and terrorism should now, under the workers' state, have taken up (in company, moreover, with Hitler and Himmler!) a weapon which they had rejected even in the struggle against Czarism? That ordinary common sense which is the basis of all good philosophy and wisdom simply refuses to accept as genuine such a patent absurdity.

## The Accused and Their Revolutionary Records

In 1922, the Soviets tried the twelve leaders of the S.R.'s for terroristic acts. The S.R.'s as a party, from its inception, advocated and practised individual terrorism. But can the defendants of 1936 be compared with the defendants of 1922 in this respect? Every single one of the accused is known as a life-long opponent of individual terrorism. With the exception of a small number who were not politically alive at the time, every single one of the accused is known as an unreserved supporter of the Soviet republic from its very inception—not merely a supporter, but a most prominent founder and builder of the Russian Revolution. With the exception of Trotsky and his son, every one of the accused who was at one time or another in opposition to Stalin, finally capitulated to him and sang his praises in that extravagant tone and language which is obligatory to every Soviet functionary. Does ordinary human intelligence allow one to believe that men such as those whose records we list below, should have be-



come, not only assassins, but *Fascist* opponents of the Soviet régime in the nineteenth year of its existence?

*Leon Trotsky*: more than two-thirds of his 57 years devoted to the organized revolutionary socialist movement; president of the first Soviet, in St. Petersburg, in 1905; arrested or deported by the bourgeoisie of half a dozen countries; organizer of the Bolshevik revolution, of whom Stalin wrote on November 6, 1918: "One can say with full certainty that the rapid passage of the garrison to the side of the Soviet and the skillful organization of the work of the Revolutionary War Committee, the party owes primarily and above all to comrade Trotsky"; founder and leader, with Lenin, of the Communist International.

*Gregory Zinoviev*: 35 years in the revolutionary movement; founder of the Bolshevik party; Lenin's most intimate collaborator in Swiss exile before and during the war; chairman of the Petrograd (and later Leningrad) Soviet; member of the Bolshevik Central Committee since 1907; first chairman of the Communist International (on Lenin's motion) and occupant of that post until 1925.

*Leon Kamenev*: joined the Social Democratic Labor Party of Russia in 1901, at the age of 18; Bolshevik from the very beginning, *i.e.*, from 1903; special representative of Central Committee in 1914 and director of Bolshevik fraction in the Czarist Duma; sentenced, with latter, to perpetual exile in Siberia in 1915; chairman of Moscow Soviet from 1918 to 1925; vice-chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and chairman of the Council of Labor and Defense after Lenin's death; member of the Central Committee since 1917, later of Political Bureau, where he acted as Lenin's deputy during the latter's illness; charged by party to head Lenin Institute and edit Lenin's works.

*Ivan Nikitich Smirnov*: revolutionary socialist and then Bolshevik for almost 40 years; head of the famous Fifth Army during the civil war; leader of the Bolshevik party of the Northwestern territory, in which capacity he organized the Bolshevik revolution in the East, becoming known as the "Lenin of Siberia"; member of the Central Committee for years; sometime Commissar of Posts and Telegraphs.

*Gregory Yevdokimov*: one of the three principal Bolshevik agitators in Petrograd who mobilized the masses for the

October uprising; old member of the party and leader for years of the Leningrad organization; renowned orator and official party speaker at Lenin's funeral; member of the Central Committee at the time Kirov was killed.

*Vagarshak Ter-Vaganian*: old Bolshevik, leader of the Armenian Communists and the Soviet revolution in Armenia; author of numerous works on the national question and other problems of Marxism; founder and first editor (under Lenin) of the party's principal scientific review, *Pod Znameniem Marxizma* (Under the Banner of Marxism).

*Sergei Mrachkovsky*: born while his father was serving a sentence for membership in the revolutionary workers' circles in the Urals; joined the movement at the age of 15; member of Bolshevik party since 1905; arrested numerous times under the Czar, lastly during the war, for membership in the Ural committee of the party; under conditions of white terror, he organized the workers' insurrection in the Ural region in 1918, forming a proletarian corps, passing Kolchak's flank around the North; after the conquest of the Urals by the Soviets, he became commander of the military district, a post from which he was removed by Stalin in 1924 because he supported Trotsky.

*Ivan Bakayev*: old Bolshevik militant; sometime head of the Petrograd Cheka; member of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission before and after Lenin's death.

*Yefim Dreitser*: former collaborator of Trotsky; hero of the civil war who was twice decorated with the Order of the Red Flag; imprisoned in exile by Stalin for support of the Opposition, and brought almost to the point of death by a hunger strike of protest by himself and 62 other prisoners against bad treatment; finally capitulated.

These are the most noted among the men who were executed. Among those who have already been imprisoned in connection with the "plot," or are being held for trial, or are under some other form of custody, we find:

*Alexis Rykov*: revolutionary socialist from the beginning of the century; delegate from Moscow to the London party congress (1903) and elected to Central Committee, serving there uninterruptedly for almost 30 years; participant in the 1905 insurrection in Moscow; arrested, imprisoned, deported

half dozen times by the Czar; director of Bolshevik fraction in Moscow Soviet; chairman of Supreme Council of National Economy in 1918; vice-chairman of Council of People's Commissars in 1921 and chairman of Council after Lenin's death; until recently Commissar of Posts and Telegraphs.

*Georgy Sokolnikov*: 30 of his 48 years in the Bolshevik party; one of organizers of Moscow uprising in 1917; editor of *Pravda* and other Bolshevik organs; elected to Central Committee at Sixth Congress; Commissar of Banks after revolution; chairman of Brest-Litovsk delegation in March 1918; noted civil war fighter; Commissar of Finance from 1921 to 1926 and creator of first stable Russian currency ("*chervonetz*"); former ambassador to London and assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

*Leonid Serebriakov*: 31 years in Bolshevik party; one of most active workers under Czarism; arrested 14 times and banished 5; organizer of Moscow uprising in 1917; civil war fighter at front; member of Central Committee under Lenin and secretary of party; after expulsion from party for "Trotskyism" in 1927, sent to U.S.A. to direct Amtorg; Russian head of Chinese-Eastern Railroad after his capitulation.

*Karl Radek*: revolutionary movement in Poland since 1902; outstanding Left winger and collaborator of Rosa Luxemburg in Second International before war; leader of Bremen (Germany) Left wing during war; prominent figure at Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences of anti-war socialists; director of Bolshevik Foreign Bureau at Stockholm in 1917; head of Central European Bureau of Foreign Office; arrested by Germans for helping Spartacans; released, and returned to Moscow to help build Comintern, one of whose most authoritative spokesmen he was throughout its first period; Oppositionist since 1923; capitulated 1929; until his arrest, editor of official Soviet government organ, *Izvestia*.

*Georgy Piatakov*: 25 years in the party; distinguished economist; chairman of Council of People's Commissars of first Ukrainian Soviet Republic in 1918; member of Central Committee; deputy chairman of Supreme Council of National Economy; Oppositionist since 1923, capitulating in 1928; later president of State Bank; later assistant Commissar of Heavy Industry.

Also arrested as agents of the "Trotskyist-Zinovievist assas-

sins" are Gayevsky, Gertik and Karev, old Bolshevik militants of the Leningrad district; noted military men like General Putna, late military attaché of the Soviet Embassy in London, Klias Klavin, a chief of the Red Army during and after the civil war, Shoposhnikov, the director of the Military College of the General Staff, General Schmidt, head of the first Red Cavalry brigades in the Ukraine and one of its liberators from White Guard domination; government officials like Arkus, former vice-president of the board of directors of the State Bank and Professor Lieberberg, president of the Executive Committee of Biro-Bizhan, the Jewish Autonomous Republic; Kotsiubinsky, former first secretary of the Soviet legations in Vienna and Warsaw, and founder, together with Eugenie Bosh, Piatakov and Rakovsky, of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic; noted Marxian historians like Friedland and Seidel; literary men and women like Tarassov-Rodionov, author of *Chocolate*, Galina Serebriakova, author of *Women in the French Revolution* (her crime? she is the wife of the imprisoned Serebriakov!), Ivan Katayev, and Selivanovsky, the editor of the Moscow *Literary Gazette*; Tivel, the secretary of Radek and former secretary of Zinoviev.

Add to these, who are better known, the lesser known figures, some of whom we list here according to reports taken at random from recent issues of the Soviet press:

On August 3, *Pravda* announces the arrest of the editors of the Minsk *Zvezda*, Sternin, Rosenblum, Barkakov, Tsipkin, suspected of Trotskyism; the next day, *Pravda* reports the arrest of 15 Trotskyists in Kharkov. On August 6, *Pravda* communicates the arrest of the Trotskyist group in Dniepropetrovsk led by the agronomists Lentzner and Krassny; a day later, *Pravda* reports the arrest of a large group of "Trotskyists and Zinovievists" who had "seized the leadership" of the important Viborg (Leningrad) party district; other arrests at Orel and Kursk; "Trotskyist nests" uncovered in Kiev, Moscow, Leningrad, Rybinsk, Penza, Cheliabinsk.

On August 12, communist leaders of the German Volga Republic are reported arrested for "counter-revolutionism." They include Lepeshev, secretary of the district committee of Palas; Fedotov, secretary of the district committee of Frank; Tatulov, secretary of the Krasnokut committee; Riss,

a party official in Gnadentflur; Tsifrenovich, head of the republic's propaganda department. On August 16, *Pravda* reports the arrest of the editorial secretary of the Kiev *Visti*; the same day, arrest of the editorial secretary of the party organ in Baku; same day, arrests of prominent officials in Minsk, including the heads of the censorship and educational departments. Three days later, the announcement of the discovery of vast "Trotskyist-terrorist" plots in government circles of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, among whom are numerous old Bolsheviks, including a cousin of Stalin! The same day, the press reports a counter-revolutionary plot in Tadzhikistan. On August 17, *Krasnaya Gazeta* reports a "Trotskyist-terrorist" plot in Turkmenistan and a Trotskyist center in Tula. Two days later, announcement of the arrest of a Trotskyist group in Gorky; in Western Russia, the arrest of a former Commissar of the Northern Army and eight other conspirators.

In the same period, widespread "terrorist plots" and arrests in the various peripheral republics. *Vecherni Tiflis* announces the expulsion of its editor, R. Rosenfarb, as a "consistent Trotskyist"—which means arrest, imprisonment, exile. The Georgian Writers' Union purges itself of a whole group of Trotskyists. Agirdavan, just returned from Siberian exile, is arrested again; so is the "Trotskyist-terrorist" Varnazov, in Tiflis; so is the director of the Hydroelectric Research Institute, Persenishvelli and his colleagues Opelsnigin, Chikalazan, Kakhanov and Marchaian. Chief editor Pelin and his assistant, Ghatishov, of the *Bakinsky Rabochi*, the principal paper in Azerbaijan, are arrested. Trotskyists are arrested in the transportation system, at the instrument works, in the refinery, at various manufactories.

Similarly in Soviet Armenia. The central party organ in the republic, *Khorurtain Hayastan* reports, on September 23, wholesale expulsions of "counter-revolutionists." Heads of the government like Leon Vulibegian, Garo Madinian, Hamon Ovhanessian, Arshay Gogunze, Rosa Vinsberg, Haig Lilanian have fallen under the axe. So has the secretary of the party Central Committee, Agosi Kaloian. So has the former Commissar of Education and late director of the Marxism-Leninism Institute at Erivan, Neises Stepanian. So have numerous talented Armenian writers, like Trasdamad

Simonian, Enzak Ter-Vohanian and Ato Atoian. Officials and workers in railroad shops, textile and rug mills, tractor stations, repair shops, planning directors—have been expelled from the party and arrested by the score.

We have listed here only a fraction of the arrests and expulsions listed in recent issues of the Soviet press. In turn, the Soviet press lists only a fraction of the arrests and expulsions that actually occur.

### What is the Meaning of the Mass Arrests?

A mere listing of some of the men involved in this vast "terroristic plot," the well-known among them as well as the obscure, is like a shattering blow delivered by the official accusers at themselves. For, by so extending the scope of the "plot" and by involving precisely those men whom they did involve, the prosecution has succeeded in indicting not the executed and the prisoners, but the bureaucracy itself! The widespread arrests, the very counts in the indictment, the trial, the executions—these constitute involuntary confessions by the Stalinist régime which are a death-blow to its standing.

The far-reaching ramifications of the "plot," the large number of persons involved in it, are, especially if we accept the Stalinist version at face value, an admission of mass discontentment, if not of direct opposition to the régime. What other political significance could this have? Marxists never attributed any necessary significance to an assassination, planned or carried out, by one or two isolated individuals. Terrorism as a *movement*, involving hundreds and thousands of persons, was, however, at all times and everywhere regarded as profoundly symptomatic, as an inevitable, even if distorted, reflection of mass discontentment with the existing régime. The mere fact that so many hundreds, even thousands, must be arrested and imprisoned is eloquent indication of the apprehension felt by the bureaucracy at its growing insecurity and loss of prestige among the masses.

The labelling of oppositional movement—organized or unorganized, authentic or spurious, clear-headed or confused—as "Fascist" is just a contemptible bureaucrat's device used for the purpose of frightening away prospective supporters. Volumes are said by the fact that among the accused there is

not to be found a single former kulak, manufacturer, banker, Czarist, White Guard, Menshevik, Social Revolutionary, anarchist—or any other one-time political opponent of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet régime. Not a single one! All of them (we except, of course, the obvious G.P.U. agents) are tried old Bolsheviks.

The second conclusion that must be drawn at the very outset strengthens the indictment—not of the accused, but of the bureaucracy that accused them. If men like Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov, Mrachkovsky, Sokolnikov, Yevdokimov and hundreds upon hundreds of others, are not only against the party leadership but decide to resort to conspiracy and assassination in order to eliminate it, what does that say about the régime established by this leadership? Isn't the accusation made against the "assassins" tantamount to an admission by the Stalinists that there no longer exist the normal, democratic, regular ways by which a minority, however small, can proceed to agitate for a change in the party's policy or leadership? What a frightful régime of true ideological terror (supplemented by such not very ideological institutions as the G.P.U.!) must prevail in the party under Stalin! What should be said of conditions that compel men without whom the victory over Czarism and capitalism in Russia would have been inconceivable—that compel such men not only to refrain from putting forth their own political position but to assert vociferously that the official position, which they heartily condemn in private, is flawlessly right?

The indictment, on its very face, is an accusing finger pointed at the bureaucracy itself, at its unpopularity among the masses, at its despotic inner-party régime.

Finally, to conclude a consideration of the surface aspects of the indictment, the accusation that the defendants were in league with the Nazis for the purpose of assassinating the Soviet leaders and of establishing a Fascist régime in Russia, is not only an obvious impossibility, but is also a further condemnation of the Stalinist régime.

The official Stalinist view is that the classless society has already been established in the Soviet Union, that the victory of socialism is already irrevocable, that it is a "supreme joy" to live now, and so forth and so on. What possible reason could there be for any of these men, whose whole lives have

been devoted to the attainment of socialism, suddenly to abandon all the ideals and aspirations of their past and turn to Fascism as a solution? An aberration, however astonishing, in one or two or three of these men, might be understood. But is it possible to believe that virtually the entire old leading stratum of revolutionary socialism should suddenly be converted (and at this late date!) to Fascism? Has the Nazi régime so strikingly proved its superiority to the Soviet régime, in the field of economic, political or cultural life, as to induce men with such revolutionary records and traditions to become its partisans? Surely, these men were not so utterly stupid as not to realize that, as soon as the Hitlerites had replaced the Stalinist government, they themselves, namely, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Smirnov and all their associates, would be the first victims of the Fascist counter-revolution. Is there, then, something so unspeakably horrible about life as a beaten minority under "Stalin's socialism," that this minority would rather take its chances in a Russia governed by the Brown Shirts?

Because it is not possible to draw any other intelligible conclusion from the indictment, then the latter, in this respect too, turns into another biting arraignment of the Soviet bureaucracy. Accept the latter's version of the trial, and you must say: There is something so unmentionable about the régime that once great revolutionists like the defendants, who denounced themselves in the dock for having fallen to the base level of Fascist assassins, were driven in their despair and inability to live any longer under that régime, to the point where they preferred an alliance with Hitler to a life under Stalin.

Yet, insufferable as the Stalinist régime must have been—and was, in point of indubitable fact—to these men, it is entirely inconceivable that they had anything whatsoever to do with the Nazis, either directly or indirectly. The more closely one reflects on the official indictment, the more inclined he is to think that the whole affair is a horrendous nightmare, something so ghastly and incredible as to be quite unreal. The accusation of connivance with the Nazis only brings the rest of the indictment down to the nethermost level of absurdity. It is, so to speak, its own refu-



tation. If nothing more were at our disposal with which to reveal the trial as a clumsy fraud, then this would suffice. In hysterical anxiety to prepare their victims not only for physical execution in a G.P.U. basement, but for moral execution by the world at large, the perpetrators of the frame-up over-reached themselves. In a frenzied endeavor to make the charges sound as grave as possible, they nevertheless ended by making them thoroughly ludicrous. And we might well enough laugh, were it not for the terrible tragedy that was enacted and has not yet come to an end.

## The Character of the Testimony

"But the testimony of the defendants, the testimony of the defendants! Whatever else may be said, they *did* confess. They admitted their guilt on every count and gave voluminous details to corroborate the charges of the prosecution."

This cry is heard on many sides, even from those who are ordinarily not so gullible. Let us therefore look a little closer into the "confessions" themselves, even before we answer the questions of *why* they "confessed" and *how* they "confessed."

An examination of the court record—if it can be called a "record"—offers distinct difficulties. It has been made available by the prosecution in various forms, but in every case according to the familiar principle of Stalinist objectivity and justice: Of my side, I give you everything; of my opponent's side, I give you everything that suits me. Three of the available editions of the court proceedings are divided exactly as follows:

The 41½ pages of the report contained in the Comintern English paper, *International Press Correspondence* (Sept. 10, 1936) gives *in full* the indictment (7 pages), the summary of the state prosecutor (12½ pages), and the verdict (2 pages), and gives 18 pages to the statements of the defendants and their answers to questions, directly quoted and more often summarized and condensed, with whole slabs of testimony obviously omitted, and finally 2 pages to the final statements of the defendants. Thus, a total, unabridged, for the prosecution of 21½ pages, and a total, abridged, for the

defense of 20 pages. And the defense includes 16 men and 2 witnesses!

The official report of the trial published by the People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R. (Eng. ed., Moscow, 1936) is just as eminently fair in its division. The indictment, Vishinsky's summary and the verdict are given almost verbatim, and take up, respectively, 31, 48 and 7 pages, a total of 86 pages for the prosecution. The actual hearing of the 16 defendants and 2 witnesses is given 74 pages and the final words of the accused 9, a total of 83 pages for the defense. Here too, what the defendants have to say is sometimes quoted directly, but more often summarized, paraphrased—or omitted.

What is called the "detailed report" of the German organ of the Comintern, the Basel *Rundschau* (Sept. 1, 1936) makes this division: 17 columns for the indictment, 27 for Vishinsky's concluding speech and 4 for the verdict, a total of 48 columns. The defendants (16 accused and 2 witnesses) are given 41 columns of hearing and 5 for their final speeches, a total of 46 columns.

In none of the material published is the testimony of the accused given in full. And in none of the material published are there more than a hundred odd lines quoted from the *thirty-six volumes* (at least that many are referred to in the indictment) of testimony given by the defendants and other accused persons prior to the opening of the formal trial.

Despite the obvious difficulty created by such "impartial" publication of essential material, it is not difficult to record literally dozens of flagrant contradictions and discrepancies, and revealingly significant absurdities in the testimony. An analysis of the testimony makes it possible for an objective reader to dismiss it in toto as worthless. It has no validity. It was obviously concocted and distributed to the various actors by a clumsy perpetrator of frame-ups, by a man either too stupid or—what is more likely—too pressed for time to round off the awkward, tell-tale corners and straighten out the colliding lines.

Because the *Rundschau* version of the proceedings contains a little more material—it is scanty enough—than either of the other two editions, it is the one we shall employ to quote from. All quotations, unless otherwise indicated, will be

from the *Rundschau*, the figure following each quotation referring to the number of the page on which it is to be found.

\* \* \*

The "newly revealed circumstances establish without a doubt," reads the indictment, "that at the end of 1932 the Trotskyist and Zinovievist groups united and formed a united center consisting of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Yevdokimov, Bakayev (from the Zinovievists) and I. N. Smirnov, Ter-Vaganian and Mrachkovsky (from the Trotskyists). The principal condition for the union of these counter-revolutionary groups was their common recognition of individual terrorism against the leaders of the C.P.S.U. (b) and the Soviet government" (1589f).

And in his concluding speech before the Tribunal, prosecutor Vishinsky declares: "I consider it absolutely proved by the personal testimony of literally all the accused, including, on this score, that of Smirnov, that this center was organized on a terroristic basis, that the center worked with terroristic methods and did not shrink from the most sordid and cynical fighting methods." (1627.)

Let us see if the "personal testimony of literally all the accused" proves any such thing. In reading, remember that all these men are on trial for their lives; that, therefore, the very least a prosecutor (and a Soviet prosecutor, at that!) owes the accused, if nobody else, is a scrupulous verification of every single assertion, a checking and re-checking of dates and places and individuals, until there is no doubt left in anybody's mind that the charges are true.

At the very outset, therefore, the fact must be recorded that not one single piece of evidence was introduced at the trial—not a single document, not a single letter, not a scrap of paper—to prove the existence of the conspiracy that allegedly lasted for four years and directly involved scores of men and women in at least five countries.\* The prosecution claims the original existence of any number of documents, and if half or even less than half of them were produced in

\* To be quite exact, three pieces of "evidence," if such they may be called, were introduced at the trial: Olberg's Honduran passport; a letter by Trotsky "advocating Stalin's assassination," found in Holtzmann's trunk; a visiting card of the alleged Gestapo agent in Prague, V. Tukalewsky, found in Olberg's former lodgings in Stalinabad. We shall deal in detail with this "evidence" later on.

court, they might have proved the charges with infinitely more conviction that the mutually contradictory oral testimony of the 16 defendants and the two "witnesses" (Yakovlev and Safonova), both of whom are on trial for their lives in another case.

Take letters alone: "I admit," says Smirnov, "that this position on terrorism was confirmed by L. Trotsky in 1932 in personal instructions transmitted to me by Y. Gaven." (1591.) "According to the instructions of L. Trotsky received in 1931 by I. N. Smirnov," testifies Mrachkovsky, "we were to kill Stalin, Voroshilov and Kaganovich. Stalin was to be the first." (1592.) The indictment claims that "in 1934, the accused Dreitser personally received written instructions from Trotsky, through L. Trotsky's son Sedov, on the preparation and carrying out of a terroristic act against comrade Stalin" (1592). The indictment adds: "In addition to the above-mentioned letter, Trotsky sent the Trotskyist-Zinovievist center a number of verbal and written instructions concerning terrorism." (1593.) "A few days later," testifies Berman-Yurin, "it became known that he [a German emissary bearing two letters from Trotsky] had arrived at the conspirative address, transmitted the documents, received the reply, as arranged." (1611.) "We know," concluded Vishinsky, "that while in prison Smirnov organized the contacts with his Trotskyists, for the code was discovered by means of which Smirnov, while in prison, got in contact with his comrades." (1627.)

But no code is presented in evidence; and not a single one of the at least half a dozen letters from Trotsky. All of them were conveniently destroyed, or vanished in some other way. Nor is anything else made available by the prosecution, and that, we believe, for the very simple reason that there never was anything to be made available. However, if we have no documents, letters or other material evidence, how do matters stand at least with the oral testimony of the defendants?

### When Was the "Terrorist Center" Organized?

Let us start with the question of when the plotters started plotting, of when the "Center" was actually formed. A momentous occasion, one would imagine. Not a date easily for-

gotten by one in any way connected with the event. Yet the accused are anything but united in their reports on this point.

"Further on in his testimony, Ter-Vaganian states that the negotiations of the Trotskyists concerning union with the Zinovievists and the 'Leftists' began in that period and that the terroristic line was perfectly clear." (1616.) "That period," in which Ter-Vaganian not only says that negotiations began but that the bloc was established, refers to "the Fall of 1931."

"VISHINSKY: When was the united Center organized?

"ZINOVIEV: In the Summer of 1932." (1598.)

Bearing out the second version of the date, Kamenev testifies: "In the Summer of 1932, a meeting of our Zinovievist Center was held in our Ilyinskoye villa. I, Zinoviev, Yevdokimov, Bakayev, Kuklin and Karev were present. At this meeting, Zinoviev reported that the unification with the Trotskyists, who had received personal instructions from Trotsky to carry out terroristic acts, was an accomplished fact." (1604.)

Mrachkovsky, however, gives still another date, which is just as indefinite, moreover, as the others: "The terrorist bloc of the Trotskyists and Zinovievists was formed at the end of 1932." (1598.)

Still another version is offered by the "witness," Yakovlev: Karev, one of the Zinovievist leaders, had told him that "in the Fall of 1932 the Zinoviev people organized the bloc with the Trotskyists; a united Trotskyist-Zinovievist Center was established" (1605).

We thus have four distinct versions of the *period* (presumably nobody considered the event of sufficient importance to give anything like a *date*) when the united Center was formed: Fall of 1931, Summer of 1932, Fall of 1932, end of 1932.

## Who Were Its Leaders?

Who were the principals at the Center? The indictment names them as: "From the Zinovievists, G. Y. Zinoviev, L. B. Kamenev, G. Y. Yevdokimov, I. P. Bakayev, and from the Trotskyists, I. N. Smirnov, V. A. Ter-Vaganian and S. V.

Mrachkovsky." (1596.) Mrachkovsky's testimony (1598) includes Lominadze as a member, but nobody else confirms this name, nobody else even mentions Lominadze as a member of the Center itself, not even the indictment. Kamenev's testimony gives the three Trotskyists and four Zinovievists of the indictment, but adds (1604) another Zinovievist, Kuklin, as a member; here too, nobody else either confirms or even mentions the name of Kuklin as a member of the Center. Kamenev goes further, adds the name of Sokolnikov, and replies in the affirmative to Vishinsky's question: "Who was a member of the Center, but a strictly secret member?" (1604.)

This version would give the Zinovievists in the bloc six men to the Trotskyists' three. The least that can be said for the latter is that they certainly had no factional jealousy or fear of being outvoted! But why should Sokolnikov be a "strictly secret member"? Wherein did such a status differ from that of the other members? Wasn't their membership "strictly secret" too? Or is something else involved besides this crude nonsense? Is it, perhaps, the fact that in the instructions given him concerning his testimony, Kamenev was also *told* to name Sokolnikov?

### How Did the "Center" Operate?

Thus far, there is no agreement on such simple matters as the time of birth or the composition of the United Center. How do matters stand with regard to the functioning of this remarkable conspiracy, which was operated not only by secret members, but also by a "strictly secret" member?

Following upon Zinoviev's testimony that the Center was founded in the Summer of 1932, Vishinsky asks: "During what period of time was it active?" and Zinoviev accommodatingly replies: "Actually up to 1936." (1598.) Thus, a good three and a half years of terroristic activity which, it must be added, didn't yield the plotters great results.

Reingold, however, who is a no less accommodating defendant—that is, a man who, though on trial himself, is indistinguishable from the prosecution, establishes a gap in this period of the Center's activity: "Between the Fall of 1932 and the Summer of 1933 there was an interruption in our

terroristic activities, caused by the collapse of Zinoviev and Kamenev in connection with the Riutin affair."

But this "interruption" embraces the time which Vishinsky (elsewhere: he is referring to the date of May 8, 1933) calls "high point in the preparation of the terroristic acts" (1622): The "high point" in terrorist plotting was thus reached months after the plotters had suspended their Center and months before they resumed their work. What is more, we learn that the Center decided to suspend its activities at about the very time that, according to other defendants, it was formed, namely, the Fall of 1932!

Matters grow worse and worse for this very terroristic Center the more closely its singular life-chart is examined. Its three principals are Zinoviev, Kamenev and Smirnov. It was formed, let us say, sometime between the Summer and Winter of 1932. But in November 1932, Kamenev was arrested and banished to Minusinsk (Siberia) and Zinoviev to Kustanai (Kazakstan) for "complicity in a plot to overthrow the Soviet government" allegedly organized by Riutin, Sliepkov, Eismont, Tolmachev and A. P. (not I. N.) Smirnov. They were not allowed to return to Moscow until the middle of 1933. Not even a Zinoviev or a Kamenev can function in a Moscow plotting center when they are imprisoned in Siberia or remote Kazakstan.

Take the case of the third of the "organizers and inspirers" of the Center, I. N. Smirnov. "I confirm the fact," says the ever-ready Kamenev, "that Smirnov belonged to the bloc throughout the entire period." (1609.) "In answer to the questions of the State Prosecutor, Zinoviev confirms the fact that he maintained an uninterrupted contact with Smirnov. Ter-Vaganian corroborates Smirnov's rôle as leader of the Trotskyist section of the bloc, who pursued the job of organizing, consolidating and uniting both sections of the bloc." (1608.) But unfortunately for all the accusers, confirmers and corroborators, Vishinsky himself is compelled to admit that "Smirnov sat in prison since January 1, 1933" (1627). To be more exact, he was imprisoned on that date together with Mrachkovsky, Ter-Vaganian, Preobrazhensky, Ufimtsev, Lifshitz, Gruenstein, Perevertsev and numerous other former Trotskyists. When, if ever, the two other "conspirators," Mrachkovsky and Ter-Vaganian, were released, we

do not quite know; but we do know that between January 1, 1933 and August 24, 1936, the day of his execution, Smirnov did not draw a breath of free air, that is, *he was never released from his 1933 imprisonment!* And one does not need to know too many details of Soviet prison life, especially for such men as a Zinoviev, a Kamenev, a Smirnov, to realize the complete impossibility of such prisoners conducting *any* political activity while incarcerated, much less of directing a highly conspirative assassination plot. History will record the fact that Stalin put a bullet through the head of a man for the crime of directing the work of a non-existent Center, engaged in a non-existent plot, while in the cell of a very much existent Stalinist prison.

Finally, the by no means reluctant witness Bakayev, gives still another version of the Center's existence: "In the Fall of 1932, Zinoviev and Kamenev were expelled from the party. The question arose: what now? At that time, Bakayev had a meeting with Zinoviev, Yevdokimov, Kuklin, Sharov, Dreitzer and others [where were the three Trotskyist members?] and it was decided to suspend the terroristic activities for the time being. They were resumed in the Fall of 1934." (1602.) Now, if we accept the Bakayev version, which was not challenged by the prosecution or by any witness, we get the following results:

Center formed around the Fall of 1932.

Center suspends activities in the Fall of 1932.

Center resumes activities in the Fall of 1934.

Center suspends activities at the end of 1934, never to resume them. For at the end of 1934, Smirnov has been in prison for two years, and Zinoviev, Kamenev, Yevdokimov, Kuklin and Bakayev (to name but a few) have been arrested in connection with the December 1, 1934 killing of Kirov. A month later, they are sentenced to long terms in prison from which they are released only to be tried for their lives in August 1936! This is the balance-sheet, even according to the formal testimony, of the "united Center," this obvious creature of a limited police agent's imagination!

Bear in mind in what has been written and what is still to be written: in not a single case did the Prosecutor call attention to the palpable discrepancies in the testimony, which kept colliding with contradictions to the point of utter ab-



surdity. He did not give a fig for the absence of even elementary harmony in the evidence, so long as the accused continued to revile himself and his co-defendants, and above all, so long as they all continued to involve Trotsky in the plot. It didn't matter if, as the Russians say, the white threads stuck out all over the thing and the finished product simply didn't hang together; important was the fact that the defendants executed their commission. . . .

Let us now examine in more detail the functioning of this peculiar Center, and see how it was actually supposed to carry out its dastardly work. The prosecution is anxious to prove that the Trotskyist section of the bloc was, if anything, its most vicious and terroristic element. And the defendants, however clumsily, proceed to oblige.

"I must admit," says Kamenev, with significant emphasis, "that before the conference in Ilyinskoye, Zinoviev informed me of the proposed decisions of the Center of the Trotskyist-Zinoviev bloc on the preparation of terroristic acts against Stalin and Kirov. He declared that the representatives of the Trotskyists in the Center of the bloc, Smirnov, Mrachkovsky, Ter-Vaganian, categorically insist on this decision, that they have a direct instruction on this matter from Trotsky, and that they demand that a start be made in putting these measures into practise in pursuance of those principles which formed the basis of the bloc." (1995.)

"Was Smirnov persistent during these negotiations," asks Vishinsky, "did he press for terroristic actions?"

"As I have already said," answers Zinoviev, "Smirnov insisted on it passionately and sought to persuade us, although there was no need to persuade us; we were already convinced." (1601.) Both Kamenev and Zinoviev refer to the 1932 period.

Now, if Zinoviev and his associates were already persuaded, why, in heaven's name, did Smirnov find it necessary to persuade them, to insist on terrorism, to insist categorically and passionately? Isn't it much more likely that, before the trial, the prosecution "insisted categorically" that Zinoviev and Kamenev tell just such a story? Why, we repeat, did Smirnov and the other Trotskyists have to insist so categorically and passionately? Were the Zinovievists reluctant to take the road of terrorism? Were they just then—at the time the bloc was consummated, whenever that was!—gradually

coming around to the standpoint of terrorism, and needed only a little more persuading? Other testimony would indicate that Smirnov and his insistent friends were just wasting so much breath in trying to press the idea of terrorism to men who were already dyed-in-the-wool terrorists! Reingold, for example, testifies that "in 1932, Zinoviev, at Kamenev's place, in the presence of a number of members of the Trotsky-Zinoviev Center, argued in favor of the need of applying terrorism" (1601). Even before the bloc was formed, in 1931, Zinoviev convinced Reingold of the need of uniting with the Trotskyists and "in this connection, the basis of the unity of the Trotskyists with the Zinoviev people—Reingold emphasizes—was terrorism" (1601).

Not merely as early as 1931. Zinoviev and Kamenev—if we are gullible enough to believe it—were preparing for terrorism as far back as 1929! It appears that "Kamenev and Zinoviev charged Reingold with a number of responsible tasks, especially that of creating abroad a special fund for the financing the terrorist organization in the event of Kamenev and Zinoviev being deported.

"VISHINSKY: Accused Kamenev, was there any such talk?

"KAMENEV: That was in 1929. . . ." (1602).

1929! Are these the men before whom Smirnov had to insist so passionately? But the prosecution, oblivious to the fact this has already passed beyond the ultimate in human credulity, tries to make its case more damaging, and puts into the mouth of Bakayev the following bit of evidence: "During this conference [of Zinovievists, on the eve of the bloc's formation], Zinoviev said that the Trotskyists, upon Trotsky's proposal, are proceeding to organize the murder of Stalin, and that we must take into our own hands the initiative in the matter of murdering Stalin." (1599.) The Zinovievists, you see, were badly worried over the possibility of the Trotskyists assassinating Stalin before they could get to him. So, with a positively diabolical disloyalty and underhandedness, they decided in caucus to snatch the initiative from their prospective allies in the bloc, to rush in ahead of them, to be the first to kill Stalin, and thereby deprive the Trotskyists of the resulting credit. And, as we shall soon see, Trotsky was not one jot more loyal in dealing with his allies in the bloc, for he too, unbeknown to the Zinovievists, sent

his own private assassins to the Soviet Union without submitting them to the joint discipline of the bloc or even coördinating his efforts with theirs. As with thieves, so, apparently, with assassins: there is no honor among them.

Let us, however, proceed with a few more characterizations of how this amazing Center functioned.

"According to the information conveyed to us by Reingold at the beginning of 1934," stated Pikel, prior to the trial, "the united, counter-revolutionary [this is a *defendant* speaking!] All-Union Center of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc decided, with the efforts of the Trotskyists and the Zinoviev people, to strike a crushing blow at the C.P.S.U. (b) by means of a number of terroristic acts, with the aim of beheading the leadership and seizing power. The All-Union Center of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc at that time bluntly raised the question of the necessity of a 'surgical intervention' (terrorism was meant) in order to bring about a decisive change in the country's situation." (1591.)

From this it appears that only at the beginning of 1934 was the question of terroristic acts against the leadership "bluntly raised," and Pikel informed accordingly. How does this fit in with the rest of the testimony? It simply doesn't, and for all the prosecution cares, it doesn't need to. It doesn't even fit in with Pikel's own testimony of a month later, namely, at the trial itself. There we learn that Pikel did not have to wait until 1934 to learn of a decision to assassinate the Soviet leaders, but knew about the decision and was already participating actively in preparing an attack as early as 1932! "Pikel admits that, as an active member of the Moscow Center of terrorists, he was aware of all the important decisions and terroristic measures of the united Center. In the Fall of 1932, Pikel belonged to the fighting organization of the terrorists, whose leader was Bakayev, and agreed to coöperate in the assassination of comrade Stalin." (1603.)

### The "Center" and the Kirov Assassination

Now let us take the aspect of the trial in which the attempt is made to connect the accused with the direct responsibility for the assassination of S. M. Kirov.

One notices immediately a number of gaping holes in the newly composed version of the assassination. On January 23, 1935, according to the official Soviet report of the time, Medved, head of the Leningrad Administration of the Commissariat of the Interior, that is, of the G.P.U., was sentenced to three years imprisonment; his deputy, Saporozhnetz, to the same term; Baltsevich, in special charge of matters relating to terrorism and who "had at his disposal communications about an impending attempt on the life of Kirov," to ten years imprisonment; and nine other G.P.U. officials to two years imprisonment each. They were charged with having known of the impending assassination and of having taken no measures to ward it off. Yet, none of these men is mentioned, referred to or even hinted at by so much as a word, by anybody or anywhere in the course of this trial.

On January 10, 1935, the official organ of the Comintern wrote: "The Lettish government is also one of the most active initiators of the assassination of our comrade Kirov. It has been proved that the Lettish Consul in Leningrad, Bisseneck, was in contact with the assassin Nikolaiev and aided him in preparing the assassination with 5,000 rubles. Bisseneck also took over the letter-writing contact of the Nikolaiev people with Trotsky. Although Bisseneck was recalled by the Lettish government on December 30, there can be no doubt that he acted with the knowledge and consent of his government." (*Rundschau*, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 114.) Yet, neither Mr. Bisseneck nor the Lettish government, both of whom were so definitely stated to have participated in the assassination of Kirov, is mentioned, referred to or even hinted at by so much as a word, by anybody or anywhere in the course of this trial.

Immediately following the death of Kirov, the Soviet government sentenced to death and executed 103 persons charged with being guilty of the crime, apart from the 14 communists or former communists who were subsequently executed. These 103 were executed without a trial. Their names were never made public. All that appeared about them in the press was the official announcement that they were White Guards who had smuggled their way into the Soviet Union from Poland, Latvia and Finland for the purpose of assassinating Kirov and other Soviet leaders. Yet, the 103 White Guards, so definitely guilty of killing Kirov that they were

summarily executed, are not mentioned, referred to or hinted at by so much as a word, by anybody or anywhere in the course of this trial.

Not even an attempt was made to establish any connection whatsoever between the sixteen accused of the 1936 trial, on the one side, and the Lettish government, the Lettish Consul, or the 103 White Guards, on the other. Now, it is patently out of the question for all of these to be guilty of having assassinated Kirov. Either the "Trotskyist-Zinovievist Center" committed the crime; or the White Guards or the Lettish government or both (we leave aside, for the moment, the possibility of some hitherto unmentioned criminal). On the very face of it, the Stalinist régime committed a judicial murder either in the case of Zinoviev and his co-defendants, or in the case of the alleged White Guards, or *in both cases*.

Around these larger gaps in the new story of the Kirov assassination, is new material which is shot through with so many other holes—smaller, but no less revealing—that the fabric of falsification falls away at the first touch.

How was the assassination of Kirov prepared? "In the Fall of 1932," testifies Zinoviev, "in my Ilyinskoye villa, in the presence of Kamenev, Bakayev, Yevdokimov and Karev, I gave Bakayev the order to prepare a terroristic act against Stalin and I ordered Karev to prepare a terroristic act against Kirov." (1595.) Apart from this statement by Zinoviev, nothing else is said in any part of the court proceedings about Karev's mission to kill Kirov in Leningrad. Did Karev do anything to carry out his orders? Didn't he take the commission seriously? Did he merely forget about it? Or is the truth of the matter, here too, that he never heard of such a commission until he was brought before his jailors and executors?

What holds for Karev, holds also for Zinoviev's former private secretary, Matorin. In passing, casually, without the slightest connected reference to anything else, without a mention of the fact anywhere else in the records, we learn that Matorin, too, was commissioned to kill Kirov. "Zinoviev told me that the preparations for the terroristic act must be speeded in every possible way and that Kirov must be killed by the beginning of Winter. Zinoviev reproached me for lack of determination and energy. He said that in the ques-

tion of terroristic fighting methods, all prejudices must be thrown off." (1596.) And that is the first and last we hear of Matorin's mission.

Bakayev, however, is presented as the "practical organizer" of the Center, and the man directly in charge of the Kirov killing. We have read above that Bakayev was directed to murder Stalin, and Karev to murder Kirov, in accordance with a decision made in 1932. Then more than a year elapses in the record of the preparations for Kirov's murder; nothing, literally nothing happens or is mentioned about this by no means trivial affair until 1934. We are told by Yevdokimov that "in 1934, Zinoviev, in the name of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist organization, gave Bakayev direct instructions to organize the murder of Kirov. Participating in the adoption of the decision to assassinate Kirov, there were, besides Zinoviev and Kamenev, myself, Yevdokimov, and Bakayev, and the representatives of the Trotskyists, in the persons of Mrachkovsky and Ter-Vaganian. In order to prepare the assassination, Bakayev proceeded to Leningrad in the Fall of 1934 and there made contact with the active participants of our organization, with Kotolinov, Levin, Rumiantsev, Mandelstamm and Miasnikov, who formed the so-called Leningrad terrorist Center" (1595).

The decision to assassinate Kirov, first taken in 1932, was, it now appears, adopted only in the middle of 1934. Bakayev went to Leningrad only in the Fall of 1934, just a few months before the assassination itself. He had to go there in order to establish contact with the local terrorists, which allows us to conclude that the Moscow Center of the "bloc" did not have this contact previously.

But Mrachkovsky's testimony contradicts this account. "In the Summer of 1934 Mrachkovsky met Kamenev. 'Kamenev,' testifies Mrachkovsky, 'confirmed to me the fact that a Moscow terrorist center had been organized. Kamenev expressed dissatisfaction with the slow pace at which the work of preparing terroristic acts was proceeding. During this conversation he also said that Bakayev was organizing in Leningrad—apparently very successfully, although slowly—a terroristic act against Kirov.'" (1598.)

Firstly, Mrachkovsky, a member of the same supreme terrorist center as Kamenev, does not know that a terrorist

center has been established locally in Moscow and does not know that Bakayev is at work in Leningrad. He has to be told it by Kamenev at a chance meeting. Didn't the "All-Union Center" meet regularly, with all members present? Did they not all hear the reports of how work was progressing? Didn't they all participate in the sending out of agents, in the adoption of all other decisions? Secondly, contrary to Yevdokimov's story, it now appears that Bakayev did not leave for Leningrad in the Fall of 1934, but had already been there, hard at work, by the Summer of that year. But it is only in that same Summer, Yevdokimov later testifies, that the decision to kill Kirov was adopted (1599) and only in the Fall that Bakayev left for Leningrad. And to make matters more hopelessly confused, the following dialogue should be considered as the supplement to previous testimony that Zinoviev instructed Bakayev to leave for Leningrad:

"VISHINSKY (*turning to Kamenev*): Was it you who gave the order to prepare the assassination of Kirov?"

"KAMENEV: Yes, in the Fall.

"VISHINSKY: Was it you, together with Yevdokimov, who instructed Bakayev in the Fall to proceed to Leningrad and to check up on how successfully the preparations of the Trotsky-Zinoviev group for the assassination of Kirov were proceeding? Is that right; do you confirm it?"

"KAMENEV: Yes, that is right. I confirm it." (1599.)

But why did either Zinoviev, Kamenev or Yevdokimov have to give Bakayev the order to go to Leningrad? According to the testimony of all four of them, given elsewhere, Bakayev was present at the meeting of the Center in the Summer of 1934 where it was decided to assassinate Kirov and where Bakayev was charged with the task. Was Bakayev asleep when the decisions were adopted, and did he have to be informed of them later, personally, by Zinoviev or Kamenev and Yevdokimov? Or, perhaps he was *not* present, despite the testimony, at the fatal meeting which, again despite the testimony, did not take place? Such a conclusion is dictated by still another piece of testimony, this time by Bakayev himself. We recall his evidence that the Center suspended its activities from the Fall of 1932 to the Fall of 1934; consequently no meeting could have occurred in the Summer of 1934. Bakayev then continues:

"Bakayev testifies that in October 1934 an attempt on the life of Stalin was prepared in Moscow under the direction of Kamenev, Yevdokimov and Bakayev, in which Bakayev himself took a direct part. The attempt failed. After this failure, Bakayev came to Kamenev and reported it to him. 'Kamenev,' Bakayev continues to testify, 'said: "Too bad, but let us hope that it will be more successful next time." Then he turned to Yevdokimov with the question of how things stand in Leningrad. Yevdokimov replied that the situation in Leningrad ought to be checked up and that it would be advisable to send Bakayev there. I agreed to go.'" (1602.)

So the Center met in the Summer of 1934 to decide the death of Kirov and it didn't meet. The Center commissioned Bakayev to go to Leningrad and it didn't commission him. Zinoviev sent him in the name of the Center and he didn't send him, Kamenev and Yevdokimov sent him in their own name. Mrachkovsky, Reingold and Sokolnikov were present at the Center's meeting when the decision was made and they were not present. From the Summer to the Fall, Bakayev was working successfully on the Kirov killing, but at the same time he was working unsuccessfully in Moscow on the Stalin killing. He was ordered to go in the Fall, didn't leave until some time in October, but already in the Summer he was working in Leningrad "apparently very successfully, although slowly" on the killing of Kirov.

Then, to make it all perfectly simple, after the testimony that Kamenev and Yevdokimov had sent him to Leningrad at a chance meeting of the three men in Moscow, October 1934, Yevdokimov suddenly forgets that he is supposed to have ordered Bakayev to Leningrad in October and to have arranged for Bakayev to meet the local assassins, and testifies that he learned of the mission and the trip from . . . Bakayev! "I learned from Bakayev that in the Fall of 1934, he, together with a Trotskyist terrorist whose name I do not know, had traveled to Leningrad to establish contact with the Leningrad terrorist Center and to organize the assassination of Kirov." (1595.) And as is so often the case with each piece of testimony, it simultaneously cancels another "confession" and introduces in its place a new one. This time it is the "Trotskyist terrorist" who accompanied Bakayev; and it is the first and last time we hear of him throughout



the court records; Yevdokimov merely thought he would improve on the story with an embellishment that the others hadn't thought of.

Although this would seem to be enough—even too much—on the Kirov affair, it isn't all. Although the "All-Union Center," by the middle of 1934, has been working intensely for a good two years, and has reached its "high point" sometime in the Spring of 1933, it still, apparently, has not established any contact with the Leningrad terrorists. It must first try to make this contact in the Summer or Fall of 1934—a month or two before the pistol is fired at Kirov. Thus, Bakayev does not even know how to get in touch with the Leningrad men, and Yevdokimov must promise to have a few of them meet Bakayev at the train and take him around the city. The promise is kept, according to Bakayev's further testimony: "I left and was actually met at the station by Levin, who said: 'So then, Grigori Yevseyevich [Zinoviev] doesn't trust either Gertik or Kuklin, and not even Yevdokimov himself, and now he sends somebody here to check up on our mood and our work. Oh well, we're not such a proud lot.'" (1602f.) As to Kuklin's visit to Leningrad, no other reference is to be found. Gertik, however, is mentioned. "In 1934," testifies Zinoviev, "I cannot exactly remember the month, it was in the middle of the year, Yevdokimov told me of one of Gertik's trips to Leningrad, during which Gertik established contacts with Kotolinov, as a result of which meeting Kotolinov told Gertik that he was taking a direct part in preparing the assassination of Kirov." (1595.) So it was only during one of Gertik's trips that he managed to *establish* contact (*i.e.*, there had been no such contact previously!) with the Leningraders. And how did the chief director of the terrorist work, Zinoviev, learn about this so vital piece of information? Was Gertik assigned by Zinoviev or the Center to make the trips and establish the contacts? Did he report back faithfully to the Center? Not at all. Zinoviev learned of it in the course of a conversation with Yevdokimov.

There is still more to this madman's tale. It seems that it wasn't Gertik, or Kuklin, or Bakayev who established the Leningrad contact; it was none other than Kamenev himself. "The investigation established that in June 1934, after the united Zinovievist-Trotskyist Center had adopted the decision

to assassinate comrade S. M. Kirov, Kamenev made a special journey to Leningrad in order to check up the progress made in organizing the terroristic act against comrade Kirov." But it was precisely at this time that Kamenev, meeting Mrachkovsky in Moscow, told him about Bakayev's excellent work in Leningrad! And if Kamenev did go there in June, why was there all this difficulty concerning addresses which Bakayev experienced in October 1934, when Yevdokimov *and Kamenev* ordered him to Leningrad? The truth is that the *real* difficulty of the accused lay in their inability to make a good, plausible story out of the complicated, contradictory farce written for them by the prosecution just before the trial and which they probably had little or no time to rehearse even under such stern auspices as their persecutors made compulsory.

### The Plot of Dreitser-Schmidt and Co.

So much for the "Zinovievist-Trotskyist plot" to assassinate Kirov. The "plots" against other Soviet leaders are not one whit more credible—less so, if anything. Take the activities of Dreitser, a subordinate in the conspiracy by virtue of the fact that he was not a member of the directing Center. How often did this agent of the Center meet with his principals? "As far back as September and October 1931, I. N. Smirnov told Dreitser that a course must be adopted towards terroristic fighting methods. And in the Fall of 1932, I. N. Smirnov, at his home, gave Dreitser the direct instruction to organize terroristic acts against Stalin and Voroshilov. . . . In the Fall of 1933, Mrachkovsky repeated to Dreitser the instructions of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist Center on speeding up the carrying out of terrorism against the leadership of the C.P.S.U. (b) and the Soviet government." (1600.)

Dreitser, resident in Moscow, and a highly important cog in the conspiracy, met with a representative of the terrorist Center only once a year to receive his instructions—once in 1931, once in 1932, once in 1933, and invariably, for some unexplained reason, in the Fall! Certainly not an actively functioning Center, this. And for persons within street-car reach for each other, they met with unbelievable infrequency, considering the nature of the job they were mutually engaged

in doing. This isn't enough. *On one page* of the indictment, we are offered three different versions of Dreitser's activities, all of which are nonchalantly recorded by the prosecution without any attempt made to call attention to the gross discrepancies or to question the accused any further with the aim of reconciling the versions or establishing one of them as "standard."

"I learned from Mrachkovsky and Dreitser," testifies Reingold, "that in the Summer of 1933, a Trotskyist group of military men was organized under the direction of Dreitser, composed of Schmidt, commander of a Red Army brigade, Kuzmichev, chief of staff of a troop detachment and a number of other persons whose names I do not know." (1596.)

"In the middle of 1934," testifies Mrachkovsky, "Y. A. Dreitser reported to me that simultaneously he was organizing the assassination of Voroshilov, for which purpose Dimitri Schmidt, who occupied the post of commander of the army and against whom there was no suspicion in the party, was to be instructed." (1596.)

And Dreitser himself declares: "For the purpose of committing the terroristic act, I recruited Estermann and Gayevsky and, in 1935, Schmidt and Kuzmichev. The latter two undertook to kill Voroshilov." (1596.)

The plot of Dreitser-Schmidt-and-Co. to kill Voroshilov thus dates from 1933; it also dates from 1934; then again, it dates from 1935. The three pieces of evidence are not scattered throughout the record. One follows right on the heels of the other; they jostle each other and clamorously proclaim their discord. Astoundingly nonchalant prosecutor, he asks no further questions. He is content. He even has the effrontery to add: "The testimony of Mrachkovsky and Dreitser was also confirmed by the accused Reingold." Why, under any other circumstances, in any other country, an attorney who called this a "confirmation," who failed to pursue the questioning for the purpose of getting a straight story, who failed to ask those indicated, elementary questions which a lawyer would put to a defendant in a night court—charged not with a monstrous assassination plot, but with violating a traffic rule—would be forever barred from the practise of law!

## The *Gestapo's* Plot Against Voroshilov

There was another plot to assassinate Voroshilov, organized under the direct instructions of the *Gestapo*, through its Moscow agent, Franz Weiz, in coöperation with Moscow Trotskyists and a special emissary of Trotsky himself, who came from Germany for the purpose. But although this group kept Voroshilov and his automobile under constant observation from September 1932 to the early part of 1933, and all three assassins were armed with revolvers, they just couldn't manage it.

"PRESIDENT OF THE COURT: So that you would have committed a terroristic act had a more favorable moment offered itself? Why did you not succeed in doing so?

"N. LURYE: We saw Voroshilov's car going down Frunze Street. It was travelling too fast. It is hopeless to shoot at a fast moving car; we decided that there was no point to it.

"PRESIDENT OF THE COURT: Did you manage to see comrade Voroshilov's car?

"N. LURYE: I saw it and so did a second member of the group, Pavel Lipshitz.

"PRESIDENT OF THE COURT: Did you suspend further watching of comrade Voroshilov's car?

"N. LURYE: Yes.

"PRESIDENT OF THE COURT: For what reasons?

"N. LURYE: Because we became convinced that there was no sense in shooting with a revolver.

"PRESIDENT OF THE COURT: What did you turn your attention to after that?

"N. LURYE: To getting hold of explosives.

"PRESIDENT OF THE COURT: What kind of terroristic act did you intend to commit?

"N. LURYE: A terrorist act with a bomb.

"PRESIDENT OF THE COURT: . . . Against whom?

"N. LURYE: Against Voroshilov.

"PRESIDENT OF THE COURT: On the street or in a building?

"N. LURYE: On the street." (1614.)

And that's the end of the Lurye-Weiz-Lipshitz-Konstant plot against Voroshilov. What enviable luck is Voroshilov's in having a fast car and a fast driver at his disposal! How

lucky for him that there wasn't a single marksman among his would-be assassins! How lucky for him that they were unable to get the bomb! Or did they get it? And if not, why not? Didn't they have both the *Gestapo* and the Center behind them? But whether or not they did, what became of the group from 1933 onward, whither it turned its frustrated intentions—the court record simply does not disdain to say. Highly placed army officers, who must have been close to Voroshilov in the three years since the plot was organized in 1933 (or was it in 1934? or in 1935?), men of daring and determination and resourcefulness, nevertheless failed even to aim a pistol at the head of the Red Army, and this despite the fact that they had such a host of qualified collaborators (including the by no means paralytic *Gestapo*) at their disposal.

### Lurye's Abortive Assassinations

It is plain as a pikestaff that, like Mussolini, Voroshilov bears a charmed life against all terroristic attempts, in particular against those organized entirely and exclusively within the police brain of the G.P.U. Nor is he alone. All the other Stalinist chieftains are endowed with charmed lives. It seems that N. Lurye proceeded in July 1933 to Cheliabinsk, to practise his profession of surgeon, in which, we are ready to believe, he was far better qualified than in the profession of assassin. M. Lurye, Trotsky's other agent, instructs him from Moscow to assassinate Ordjonikidze and Kaganovich, who are about to visit the Cheliabinsk tractor works. N. Lurye accepts the commission. How does it work out? The court record just states laconically: "This intention could not be realized." (1614.) Not another word about this particular plot. Did Ordjonikidze and Kaganovich also have fast cars and drivers? Did N. Lurye plan to pick them both off by himself? Or, learning from his failure in Voroshilov's case, did he plan to blow them up with a bomb? Had he finished his bomb, or hadn't he got around to it as yet? We do not know, for nobody tells us.

We do learn, however, that from 1933 to 1936, N. Lurye doesn't seem to have pattered around very much with terrorism. Had this much-thwarted assassin become em-

bittered or discouraged by his failures? Or did he just dabble in assassination during his spare time? Whatever the case may be, the man sent to Russia especially for assassination work, does not appear to have lifted a finger between the time of his unexplained failure in Cheliabinsk and his return to Leningrad in 1936. *En route*, M. Lurye instructed him on January 2, 1936 to shoot Zhdanov, head of the Leningrad party organization, at the coming May Day demonstration. N. Lurye thereupon provided himself with a revolver (no bomb this time, either; he just refused to learn from experience) and left for Leningrad.

"PRESIDENT OF THE COURT: When did you get this weapon?

"N. LURYE: In March 1936.

"PRESIDENT OF THE COURT: What make of revolver?

"N. LURYE: A Browning.

"PRESIDENT OF THE COURT: What size? Medium?

"N. LURYE: Yes.

"PRESIDENT OF THE COURT: Did you succeed in getting into the demonstrators' marching ranks on Uritsky Square?

"N. LURYE: Yes.

"PRESIDENT OF THE COURT: Why didn't you succeed in carrying out the attempt on the life of Zhdanov?

"N. LURYE: We were too far away from him when we marched by." (1614.)

Lucky Zhdanov!

But see how scrupulously meticulous is the court in establishing not only the make but also the caliber of the revolver that was never used, how exacting it is in its questions on such unmistakably vital points. It is not a .22 or a .45 caliber; it is not a Smith & Wesson or a Parabellum; it is not an air rifle or a water pistol. It is a medium Browning revolver. What matter such questions as when (and if) a terrorist Center was organized, who was actually in it, who went to Leningrad and when, and a thousand other trivialities—once the court has triumphantly established the fact, so utterly and conclusively damning to all the accused, their forbears and their progeny, that N. Lurye had a medium Browning revolver. One may regret the distinguished jurist's failure to establish also the fact that the weapon was loaded, and with a full clip of bullets—we are ready, how-

ever, to believe it!—but what he did establish so irrefutably, so painstakingly, so scrupulously, ought to give one an enduring picture of model Stalinist justice.

## The Plots Against Stalin

If the lives of Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Ordjonikidze and Zhdanov are charmed, then Stalin's is positively legendary in its invulnerability. Unlike Achilles, whose heel was fatally exposed when he was dipped into the magic, protecting water, there appears to be no part of Stalin that is not proof against the designs of assassins.\*

Any number of men were assigned to assassinate Stalin, the central object of the conspirators' venomous personal hatred. As we have seen, Bakayev was specifically assigned to the organization of an attempt on Stalin's life as far back as the Fall of 1932. Nothing seems to have come of it. Others were involved or assigned. We read: "In the Fall of 1932, Pikel belonged to the fighting organization of the terrorists, whose leader was Bakayev, and agreed to coöperate in the assassination of comrade Stalin. Pikel confirms the testimony of Reingold and Bakayev that Zinoviev directly guided the preparation for this attempt. . . . Pikel supplements the testimony of Bakayev and declares that in the Fall of 1933 Bogdan undertook another attempt to carry out the assassination of comrade Stalin. . . . Pikel goes on to report the preparations for a terroristic act against comrade Stalin in 1934. Pikel's participation consisted in putting Bakayev in touch with Radin, who had been prepared by Pikel to carry out this terroristic act." (1603.) Nothing seems to have come of these plots, either.

Further: "Questioned by the President, comrade Ulrich, as to his, Zinoviev's, part in the preparation of the terroristic act against comrade Stalin, Zinoviev states that he took part in it and that he is aware of two attempts on the life of Stalin, in which Reingold, Dreitser and Pikel participated. Zinoviev also confirms that he proposed his personal secretary,

\* By the way, the indictment charges the accused with plotting to assassinate Kossior and Postyshev also. But nowhere in the record is there a single reference to an attempt made on their lives, or a person assigned to make such an attempt. A trifle? A trifle!

Bogdan, to Bakayev, the leader of the terrorist groups, for the purpose of carrying out the murder of comrade Stalin." (1607.) No results are yielded by this group of plotters, who are different in composition from those already mentioned—a difference which the prosecution, it goes without saying, does not mention, or refer to, or seek to straighten out. Note, also, the fact that Bogdan was supposed to shoot Stalin in the Secretariat, which signifies that he had easy access to that organism and to its chief, his proposed victim. Note, finally, that Bogdan is reported to have committed suicide rather than the assassination, despite the all-night urgings of his superior, Bakayev.

Further—and this is mentioned for the first time only in the prosecutor's summation speech: "Reingold recruited two terrorists, Krivoshkin and Vigilansky, who were to carry out the assassination of comrade Stalin." (1629.)

Add to all these, the more than half a dozen terrorists sent to Moscow independently by Trotsky, who evidently did not have sufficient confidence in the qualifications of the home-bred assassins. "The investigation has established that at various times, the accused V. Olberg, Berman-Yurin, Fritz David (Krugliansky), Moses Lurye, Nathan Lurye and several others were sent from Berlin to Moscow, and were instructed directly by L. D. Trotsky and his son Sedov (L. L. Trotsky) to organize, at all costs, the assassination of comrades Stalin, Voroshilov, Kaganovich and other leaders of the party." (1593.)

Yet, with all these men at work, singlemindedly, some of them for as long as four years, with resources (*Gestapo!*) at their command such as the pre-war terrorists never dreamed of having, there was not so much as a scratch inflicted on Stalin. Couldn't one of them gain access to him in all this time? Any number of the assassins saw him any number of times: David at the Comintern Congress, Mrachovsky at a private interview, Bogdan in the Secretariat—three out of three thousand opportunities. Was it because the assassins were timid, irresolute souls? Here is the description given of one of them—by no means untypical of the others—by Vishinsky himself: "Precisely Bakayev, who is known as a malicious hater, as a resolute man, as a persevering and persistent man with a very great will power, with a strong



character and stamina, who would not recoil from any means to achieve the ends he has set himself." Men like this, veterans of conspirative work, veterans of the revolution, veterans of the civil war, worked for four years, and except for the death of Kirov, nothing happened—nothing.

"Perhaps the most significant Moscow fact," writes a cynical bourgeois review, "was that at the trial last week almost nothing came out which was not directly or indirectly to Stalin's personal advantage. He emerged from the court records so great that even his worst enemies quarreled over the honor of killing him; so well guarded that would-be assassins sat in his presence not daring to pull the trigger; so idolized that Zinoviev's secretary, rather than kill Stalin, killed himself; so lucky that every plot against him failed; and finally so wise that a whole boxful of Bolsheviki intent on killing him did not try to justify themselves by uttering one critical or abusive word against the Perfect Dictator." (*Time*, Aug. 31, 1936.)

Nothing resulted from the conspiracy! And there were no results because there was no conspiracy.

## How Confessions Are Obtained

"PARMENIO: Stop! Stop! You have won me quite already. Yes! I will do everything. I will, I will tell your father, that he shall not exchange you until tomorrow. But why only tomorrow? I do not know! That I need not know. That he need not know either. Enough that I know you wish it. And I wish everything that you wish. Do you wish nothing else? Is there nothing else that I shall do? Shall I run through the fire for you? Shall I cast myself from a rock for you? Command only, my dear young friend, command! I will do everything now for you. Even say a word and I will commit a crime, an act of villainy for you! My blood, it is true, curdles; but still, prince, if you wish, I will—I will—"

—G. E. Lessing, *Philotas*, Sc.v.

The argument most frequently and triumphantly made by the Stalinists in order to make credible an otherwise incredible story, is that the evidence was voluntarily presented by the accused themselves, that they refused attorneys, that they admitted their guilt. The defendants confessed! The com-

pletely contradictory character of most of the "confessions," we have already established; in what is still to be written, we shall establish that the other "confessions" have the same value, that is, no value at all. But the indisputable fact remains that the accused at least appeared to volunteer their self-indicting testimony.

Upon examination, the "confessions" so proudly referred to by the Stalinists prove to be another relentless condemnation of the régime which caused such a spectacle to be enacted. We have enough material at our disposal to enable us to form an exact picture of how the confessions were obtained.

First of all, the prosecution studiously avoids any reference to the manner in which the plot was discovered, or why it took the G.P.U.—the most efficient and ruthless police service in the entire world—so long to make its disclosure. Like so many other aspects of the trial, this one too is unprecedented. Who told the authorities of the existence of the Center and its plot, that is, who was the first to tell? Who was the man, or the men, who first gave the authorities the clue that led to uncovering the whole conspiracy? Of this, not a syllable anywhere. Yet it is the most elementary, and the customary thing in any trial at all similar to this one.

The unofficial answer to this question, already asked by others, is given in the organ of the Comintern: "It would have been the gravest mistake to make this known and thereby to aid the enemies of the Soviet Union to refine their methods and to guard themselves against being apprehended in the future." (*Rundschau*, Vol. V, No. 42, p. 1779.) This is sheer nonsense. If there was a plot, there are, it would seem, only three possible ways in which the authorities could have discovered it: by accident or some involuntary imprudence of a plotter, which is the same thing; by one or more of the plotters being overtaken by remorse and volunteering the information to the police; by a police agent, working under cover among the plotters, and rendering a report to his real superiors. In any one of these three—the only possible—cases, the explanation of *Rundschau*, however mysterious and impressive it is supposed to sound, is so much poppycock. If any of these three was the case, there is absolutely no reason why the prosecution would not make it known. If it does not—and it doesn't—then it is only because the first news

of the conspiracy was not conveyed from the ranks of the accused to the ranks of the prosecution, but the other way around. In other words, the prosecution invented the plot and compelled the accused to enact it at the trial for the first time of their lives.

Let us see how this explanation fits in with the actualities of the "confessions."

Take the trial of the S.R. leaders in 1922. They were accused of having organized a fight, with arms in hand and in alliance with the Allies, to overthrow the Soviet government, and of having directed the assassination of the Bolshevik leader Volodarsky and the attempt on Lenin's life by Dora Kaplan. The twelve men and women on trial were *never* partisans of the dictatorship of the proletariat or of the Soviet government. They had organized the armed struggle against the Soviets and for the so-called Constituent Assembly and had done it with the support of the Allied imperialists because, they said, the "Russian Democracy" was still in alliance with England, France, Belgium, Italy and the United States. These facts were not brought out at the trial by means of those abject and suspicious "confessions" that marked the August 1936 trial; no witnesses were needed to prove them; nobody, anywhere, sought to deny them. In fact, summarizing the charges, Emil Vandervelde, the Belgian socialist attorney for the defendants, stated: "The Social Revolutionaries admit this fact and are proud of it. . . . The Social Revolutionaries admit this fact and are only sorry that they did not succeed in carrying this [the armed defense of the Constituent Assembly] to a successful conclusion. . . . The Social Revolutionaries admit this [the waging of an armed struggle against the Soviet government] as an undeniable, historic fact." (*The Twelve Who Are to Die*, Berlin 1922. P. 62.)

The defendants did, however, deny responsibility for the assassinations. But in this case, the accusations were, at the very least, historically and politically plausible, whatever one's opinion might be of the conclusiveness of the *concrete* evidence adduced against the defendants. Every one of the twelve was not only an avowed and bitter opponent of the Soviet régime but also a long-standing defender of the theory and practise of individual terrorism against all despotisms,

among which they included the Czarist régime and the Bolshevik régime as well.

But in the 1936 trial of the old Bolsheviks? Never have genuine terrorists, not even the most repentant, made such statements in court as came from the lips of every one of the accused! They reviled themselves and each other; they cursed each other as "mad Fascist dogs"; they vied successfully with the Prosecutor in vilifying themselves, outdoing him—not an easy thing to do when one reads the lexicon of vituperation drawn on by Vishinsky; they cringed, they humiliated and flogged themselves in public in a positively inhuman manner; they even added charges that the Prosecutor hadn't mentioned, volunteered information that was not requested. Not one of them, for years so permeated with an uncontrollable hostility to the Stalinist régime, so filled with a fierce hatred of the party leadership, had a syllable of criticism to offer of Stalin or his domination or his policies. On the contrary, they outdid each other in eulogy of his grandeur and the marvelous achievements made by the Soviet Union under his gifted and inspired leadership.

What person in his right senses can read the testimony of the defendants and conclude that it was normally given and represents even an approximation of the truth? A few examples:

"VISHINSKY: What did its [the Center's] activities express themselves in?

"ZINOVIEV: Its activity consisted mainly in the preparation of terroristic acts.

"VISHINSKY: Against whom?

"ZINOVIEV: Against the leaders.

"VISHINSKY: Does that mean against comrades Stalin, Voroshilov, Kaganovich? Was it your Center that organized the assassination of comrade Kirov? Was the murder of Sergey Mironovich Kirov organized by your Center or by some other organization?

"ZINOVIEV: Yes, by our Center.

"VISHINSKY: You, Kamenev, Smirnov, Mrachkovsky and Ter-Vaganian belonged to this Center?

"ZINOVIEV: Yes.

"VISHINSKY: That means that all of you organized the killing of comrade Kirov?

"ZINOVIEV: Yes.

"VISHINSKY: So then all of you murdered comrade Kirov?

"ZINOVIEV: Yes.

"VISHINSKY: Sit down." (1598.)

What do these dialogues inevitably remind one of? The questions of a severe schoolmaster and an errant pupil who has been compelled to learn his answers by rote, without necessarily understanding or believing them. Or this:

"VISHINSKY: Accused Zinoviev, you too were an organizer of the murder of comrade Kirov?

"ZINOVIEV: In my opinion, Bakayev is right when he said that those really and mainly guilty of the scoundrelly murder of Kirov were primarily myself—Zinoviev—Trotsky and Kamenev, who organized the united terrorist Center. Bakayev played a big rôle in it, but by no means a decisive one.

"VISHINSKY: The decisive rôle was played by you, Trotsky and Kamenev. Accused Kamenev, do you join in the declaration of Zinoviev that you, Trotsky and Zinoviev were the main organizers and Bakayev played the rôle of the practical organizer?

"KAMENEV: Yes." (1603.)

And this:

"VISHINSKY: How are your articles and declarations to be evaluated, which you wrote in 1933 and in which you expressed your devotion to the party? As deception?

"KAMENEV: No, worse than deception.

"VISHINSKY: Perfidy?

"KAMENEV: Worse.

"VISHINSKY: Worse than deception, worse than perfidy; do you find this the word—treachery?

"KAMENEV: You have found it.

"VISHINSKY: Accused Zinoviev, do you confirm this?

"ZINOVIEV: Yes.

"VISHINSKY: Treachery, perfidy, two-tonguedness?

"ZINOVIEV: Yes." (1604f.)

And this:

"VISHINSKY: So in your policy against the leadership of the party and the government you let yourself be animated by personal motives of a low nature, by the lust for personal power?

"KAMENEV: Yes, by the lust for power of our group.

"VISHINSKY: Do you not find that this has nothing in common with social ideals?

"KAMENEV: It has as much in common as revolution and counter-revolution.

"VISHINSKY: So you stand on the side of the counter-revolution?

"KAMENEV: Yes.

"VISHINSKY: Then you clearly perceive that you are conducting a fight against socialism?

"KAMENEV: We clearly perceive that we are conducting a fight against the leadership of a party and a government that is leading the country to socialism.

"VISHINSKY: Then you are against socialism?

"KAMENEV: You draw the conclusions of an historian and a prosecutor." (1605.)

If anything defies or obviates comment, is it not just such quotations? This is not the worst, for elsewhere, and often, the zeal of the defendants overcomes them entirely and, forgetting their rôle, they speak like so many prosecuting attorneys, until the distinction between those in the dock and those outside it becomes purely formal. For instance:

"Indignant at Kamenev's wriggling in this question, Reinhold says: 'Let Kamenev not play the angel of innocence here! He is a hardened politician who would make his way to power over a mountain of corpses. Would he really have hesitated to kill off one or two terrorists? Nobody will believe him!'" (1605.)

"VISHINSKY: You belonged formally to the party?

"HOLZMANN: Yes.

"VISHINSKY: At the same time you were a Trotskyist?

"HOLZMANN: A Trotskyist.

"VISHINSKY: And?

"HOLZMANN: A counter-revolutionist.

"VISHINSKY: And a double-dealer?

"HOLZMANN: Yes." (1613.)

One cannot come to any other conclusion except that the "confessions" were made to order. The defendants must have felt themselves under some moral, mental or physical compulsion to make the kind of confessions they did. If they really made them of their own accord, they should have been

turned over, not to the executioner, but to an institution for the treatment of mental aberrations.

Holzmann testifies somewhere that one of the conspirators' code books was the *Thousand and One Arabian Nights*. We cannot say that the stories given so blandly and casually by the defendants were taken from the Arabian Nights, for it contains nothing to compare with the testimony for sheer fantasy.

How were the confessions obtained? We know by now how similar confessions were obtained in other trials, where the same kind of stupefying testimony was given with the same unanimity and zeal as in the August 1936 trial. All trials of political opponents, real and alleged, that is, all trials held in public, have been monotonously identical under the reign of Stalin: No documents, no material evidence, *nothing* written adduced, all the evidence confined to the "spontaneous" and "voluntary" confessions of the invariably penitent accused. This has been the case from the days of the Shakhty trial to the Zinoviev trial.

### The Trial of the "Mensheviks" in 1931

Take the case of the trial of the so-called "Menshevik Bureau of the Union" in 1931. One of the central charges in the indictment, to which all the accused not only promptly and vigorously pleaded guilty but which they immediately set out to prove by detailed oral evidence, was that the Menshevik Bureau in the Soviet Union (nine-tenths composed of former Mensheviks who had turned Stalinist, like nine-tenths of all the Mensheviks in the Soviet Union) had plotted a counter-revolutionary sabotage campaign at a meeting with Rafael Abramovich, exiled Menshevik member of the Bureau of the Labor and Socialist (Second) International. Although somewhat vague, the approximate period of Abramovich's illegal trip to Moscow was given by the prosecution and the "defendants": between the middle of July and the middle of August 1928.

The clumsy dolts who had framed the details of the "plot" had neglected to watch Abramovich's movements in Europe during the crucial month. The result was that Abramovich was able to prove a faultless alibi for the period he was sup-

posed to be conspiring illegally in Moscow and elsewhere in the Soviet Union. From Berlin, Abramovich made public the following statement, which speaks for itself:

"I have already informed the Moscow tribunal and I have declared publicly that I passed the month of July at Plau (Mecklenburg), up to the 30th, inclusive, as I have now been able to establish, and not up to the 26th. This has already been confirmed in the press by Kurt Grossman, secretary of the German League of the Rights of Man. I am now in possession of a notarized declaration of the proprietor of the Wendenburg Hotel, in Plau, attesting that I resided in his house without interruption from July 9 to 30, 1928. I also possess a sworn statement of the former proprietor of the Strand Hotel, where I lived during the first few days of my stay in Plau, as well as a number of other testimonials of persons whose acquaintance I made in Plau at that time.

"The affair becomes worse for Krylenko [Vishinsky's predecessor] with regard to the first half of August. In their haste, his agents took no note of the fact that precisely at that time an International Socialist Congress took place in Brussels. Anybody at all can establish, on the basis of the minutes of this Congress, that from August 1 to 12 inclusive I took part in various meetings of organs of the L.S.I. (commissions, Bureau, Executive), as well as in the sessions of the Congress. Whoever does not have at hand the minutes (they should certainly be found in the Marx-Engels Institute of Riazanov) can learn of them in *Pravda* of August 5, 1928 (No. 181) or in the *Rote Fabne* of August 7, 1928.

"It is thus established that I was not in Moscow in 'the summer of 1928.'" (*Le Procès de Moscou et l'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste*, Brussels, 1932, p. 33.)

One does not need to share the political views of Abramovich—the author does not, for example—to be able to recognize a frame-up when it is so obviously revealed. But Abramovich's conclusive disclosure is but a prelude to further revelations of even greater importance, which throw a bright white light on the last obscure corner not only of the 1931 trial but the recent trial as well. Among the so-called Mensheviks who "confessed" so avidly at the 1931 trial was the not unknown Sukhanov. Some five years later, the details of the *why* and *how* of his confession and all others, was made



known in the foreign organ of the Russian Mensheviks, by means of a letter smuggled out of the Soviet Union, the authoritative nature of which is not only vouched for by the editors, and substantiated by testimony from other sources, but is also clear to all who are in the least acquainted with the sinister methods of Stalin's G.P.U.

"One of the Poale-Zionists who came out of the Verkhne-Uralsk solitary prison, has told the story of unfortunate Sukhanov. This story has caused a sensation among the exiles, and it has also become known through other sources.\* When Sukhanov, Groman and the others arrived at Verkhne-Uralsk, after their notorious trial, they were subjected to a boycott by all the socialist and communist groups in the solitary prison [*Isolator*]. Since there was discord even among themselves, their moral position became very onerous. Sukhanov applied for admission to the communist fraction but was refused. As time went on, and after several fruitless attempts in the same direction, he became more and more nervous, and finally reached the stage of highest irritability. He began writing, in an ever more categorical and irritable tone, declaration after declaration to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee; and he imparted the text of these declarations to other prisoners, aiming thus to justify and to rehabilitate himself.

"In these declarations he refers to the services he performed for the régime, for the sake of which he had sacrificed even his conscience in agreeing to go through the farce of the 'Menshevik trial.' He relates in detail how this farce was staged and organized; how the G.P.U. dictated each rôle; how agreement was reached beforehand as to the testimony to be given, and so on. He asserts that there was not a syllable of truth in the words of the accused, but that they had agreed to play these base rôles because they were assured that this was demanded by the interests of the U.S.S.R. But, he adds, the G.P.U. promised to take this sacrifice into account, and solemnly pledged not to execute the sentence imposed by the tribunal. The accused kept their promises, whereas the G.P.U. violated its pledge. Now, Sukhanov demanded that

\* For example, through Victor-Serge, the noted Franco-Russian Bolshevik who was confined in a Stalinist prison for several years because of his sympathy with the Trotskyist Opposition, to be released only recently as a result of a mounting protest not only in labor and revolutionary circles, but also among writers and other intellectuals. See the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition*, No. 51.

the promise given him should be kept, or else he would declare a hunger strike to the death. This hunger strike lasted about fifty days, with an occasional interval extracted by the promises of the prison administration to get in touch with Moscow, etc. In the end, Sukhanov disappeared, and it remains unknown whether he was killed in order to put an end to his revelations, so embarrassing to the authorities, or he was simply transferred to another place." (*Sotsialistichesky Vestnik*, No. 9 [1365], May 10, 1936, p. 15.)

Several days later, the substance of this horrifying account is repeated by one of the former leaders of the Yugoslavian Communist Party, Dr. Anton Ciliga, who spent a long period of time in Soviet prison because of his opposition to the Comintern leadership.

"In the Summer of 1931, the principal heroes of the so-called 'Menshevik' trial, the trial of the 'Socialist Bureau' (Groman, Sukhanov, Ikov, Sher, Ginsburg, Rubin and others, about ten in all), arrived in Verkhne-Uralsk. The G.P.U. kept this group in strict isolation from the other prisoners, and placed them in prison in such a manner that they would have the least possible contact with each other. The G.P.U. was obviously afraid of something—it was afraid lest these sorry heroes should reveal the *secret* of the trial.

"All of us, who were political prisoners and who already know how the so-called trials of 'wreckers,' of engineers and others were manufactured; who knew the political position of the Russian social democracy . . . did not have a single moment's doubt that the entire trial of the Bureau was a monstrous machination; false self-accusation on the part of some, and shameless slander of others. We also knew that two of the men implicated, S. D. Braunstein, and the former old Bolshevik Bazarov [Russian translator of *Das Kapital* and a non-party man since 1917] refused point-blank to play the rôle of docile puppets in the hands of the Stalinist G.P.U. The latter did not dare to bring them to trial, but dealt with them instead in the usual summary administrative manner, without any trial. This circumstance alone was ample evidence to any impartial man, even one entirely unacquainted with the present situation in Russia, not only that the 'caution' of the G.P.U. was well calculated, but that the entire trial was fraudulent and vile in essence. How low must

the revolution have fallen, and how alien to socialism is a society in which such trials are possible!

"But despite the watchfulness of the G.P.U., despite the fear of the victims themselves, some ties were established with the condemned of the Bureau trial. It is impossible to sit months and years in the same *Isolator*, completely cut off from the outside world and not seek to establish contact with other cells. Man is, after all, a social animal. . . . To the question of how they came out in the trial with such obviously false accusations and self-accusations, one of them gave me the following answer: 'We do not understand ourselves how such a nightmare was possible. . . .' From other comrades, I learned that there were among them those who wrote of physical tortures, applied by incarceration in cells the temperature of which was alternately raised to intolerable heat and lowered far below zero. More often than not, they were subjected to a combination of psycho-physical methods, so beloved by the G.P.U. (*Sotsialistichesky Viestnik*, No. 10 [366], May 27, 1936, p. 8.)

We quote, finally, from another article by Ciliga which sheds light on just what arguments the sbirri of the G.P.U. employ to break down the resistance of prospective "confessors."

"I also became acquainted here [in a Leningrad prison] with the methods by which certain trials of wreckers were prepared and organized. One of the men who 'confessed' spoke to me as follows: 'They kept me in solitary confinement for five months, without newspapers, without tobacco, without my being allowed to receive packages [of food and clothing] or to see my family. I was starved and tortured by loneliness. They kept demanding that I confess myself guilty of acts of wrecking that never took place; I refused to assume responsibility for crimes I never committed—I was afraid of the consequences of such grave self-accusations, but the prosecutor kept assuring me that if I was really for the Soviet power, as I said I was, then I must prove it by deeds: the Soviet power was in need of my confessions and therefore I must give them. I need not be afraid of the consequences because the Soviet power would take my unreserved confessions into account, and give me an opportunity to work [he was an engineer], and enable me to expiate my sins through

work. I would immediately be permitted to receive visits from my family, obtain newspapers and packages and go out for walks. But if I persisted in remaining stubborn and kept mum, I would be treated ruthlessly and not only find myself subjected to repressions but my wife and children would be persecuted as well. . . . For months, I refused to capitulate, but then things became so hard, I was so lonely, that it seemed to me that the future could hold nothing worse in store. In any case, I became indifferent to everything. Then I proceeded to sign everything the prosecutor demanded.' The consequences? He was immediately permitted to receive newspapers, visits, books, packages and was transferred to a common cell. The G.P.U. kept its promises. His lot was improved by his false self-accusations (and his accusations of others, although he made no mention of them directly to me). . . . In this jail I later ran across many similar cases." (*New Militant*, Apr. 18, 1936.)

These disclosures provide an invaluable and perfectly fitting link in the chain with which the perpetrators of this ignoble frame-up can be made fast! Now we can understand, fully and clearly, *just* how the confessions were obtained from the prisoners. Now we can understand, fully and clearly, what was already implicit in all the circumstances of the trial, but which required, so to speak, external confirmation.

*The sixteen accused were not oppositionists!* Every single one of the known men—not including the obvious G.P.U. police agents—were capitulators to Stalin. Zinoviev, Kamenev, Yevdokimov, Bakayev, Pikel, Holtzmann, Reingold, M. Lurye—these are all *former* Zinovievists; Smirnov, Ter-Vaganian, Mrachkovsky, Dreitser—these are all *former* Trotskyists. Between 1927 and 1935, *all* these men capitulated once, twice, and in the case of Zinoviev and Kamenev, five times to Stalin. They repeatedly declared their desire to "serve the party," which now means, as they knew it meant, to serve Stalin and his clique; they repeatedly pleaded for an opportunity to serve.

The suspicious and jealous bureaucracy always kept a certain distance between itself and the groveling capitulators. It kept them for public display—as in the case of the obscene parade of vociferously penitent ex-opponents of Stalin at the 17th Party Congress. It hired them out for technical, ad-

ministrative, journalistic jobs, but kept them at a safe distance from the possibility of influencing political positions, and at a still greater distance from power. It held them in tantalizing reserve, as a source from which to select scapegoats whenever anything went wrong. Politically disemboweled, demoralized, most of them broken physically and all of them morally, they sank to the point where they were always ready to do Stalin's bidding even when he had them imprisoned or deported. It became their distorted way of serving the Revolution.

Were they cowards? Not in the ordinary sense of the word; few of them in any case. If, by capitulation, they thought they could avoid prison terms and even worse, for most of them it was only because they thought that freedom, even under the Stalinist régime, would keep alive their contact with the party. They would be, they thought, of service to the cause in this way, whereas, dead or imprisoned, they could not be; and some day, when a crucial moment arrived, they might be of more signal service to the Revolution.

Knowing the history and the psychology of the capitulators, one can deduce what actually happened and how it happened. Knowing that their victims were entirely at their mercy—physically as well as politically—the G.P.U. told them (as they had told, we now *know*, defendants in similar trials before this) that if they were *really* loyal to the régime, *really* loyal to the party (read: Stalin), *really* penitent of their sins and ready to expiate them, they could show it "by deeds."

There *are* terroristic moods abroad in the land, especially among the youth of the country. One has but to read the revealing report made by the chairman of the Communist Youth League, Lukianov, to the Plenum of the Nizhni-Novgorod district of that organization (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, Sept. 16, 1936) for ample evidence on this score. These moods must be counteracted. In addition, the danger of war against the Soviet Union by the Nazis becomes daily more imminent, and the country must be prepared for it. Let these spirit-broken ex-oppositionists "confess" to the crime of terrorism, and they will help dispel terroristic moods among the youth by virtue of their own horrible example. Let them implicate the Nazis, as assassins, and that will only strengthen

Soviet and world opinion against the already hated Fascists. Let them, above all, involve Trotsky in the assassination plot, thereby helping to discredit further a "common enemy"—and they will prove that they are *not* impenitent Trotskyists, that Trotsky is *their* enemy, too, by placing the stigma of murderer—Fascist murderer—upon him.

Thus was the pistol held to their heads. And these men, or creatures who once were men but whose spirits Stalin could boast that he had crushed completely, agreed to the wretched bargain. How faithfully they carried out their part of it, the testimony shows. But the very volubility of their answers, the unnecessarily excessive self-debasement, the off-hand manner in which the grossest crimes were admitted, the flagrant contradictions and exaggerations in the testimony—was the way chosen by the defendants to convey to the world at large that their "confessions" were not to be taken seriously. One can detect that attempt throughout the testimony: sardonic admissions, admissions with obvious double-meanings, admissions which admit nothing. In one passage of the testimony after another, one gets the clear impression that, as subtly as the bargain with the G.P.U. will permit, the principal defendants, at least, are *burlesquing their performance*. Elsewhere, they talk as if they are humoring along the prosecution, indulging its imperious demand for favorable replies to questions.

Smirnov, for example, "turned to Ter-Vaganian, Mrachkovsky and Dreitser and said to them: 'You want a leader? All right, take me.'" (1628.)

Again, after talking for minutes on end about the "Center," the directives he gave it, his membership in it, and the like, Smirnov, asked when he resigned from the Center, replies: "I didn't rush to resign from it because there was nothing from which one could resign."

"VISHINSKY: Did the Center exist?

"SMIRNOV: What Center are you talking about? . . ." (1608.)

Many of Kamenev's replies, some of which are quoted above, are given in the same cryptic manner. He will not let the prosecutor accuse him of mere deception; it is something worse; it is worse even than perfidy. Is it treachery? "You have found the word," replies Kamenev.

Or the following dialogue between Zinoviev and Vishinsky:

"ZINOVIEV: . . . Smirnov accused me here of often speaking untruth. Yes, I often said untruths. I said them from the moment I took the road of struggle against the Bolshevik party. But since Smirnov also trod the road of struggle against the party, he is also speaking the untruth. But the difference between him and me apparently consists in this, that I have firmly and conclusively resolved to tell the whole truth in this last minute, whereas he has apparently taken a different decision.

"VISHINSKY: But now you are telling the whole truth?

"ZINOVIEV: Now I am telling the whole truth to the very end.

"VISHINSKY: Remember that on January 15 and 16, 1935, during the session of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court, you also asserted that you were telling the whole truth!

"ZINOVIEV: Yes, on January 15 and 16 I did not tell the whole truth.

"VISHINSKY: You didn't, but you swore that you were telling the truth." (1606.)

In his final words to the court, Yevdokimov begins with the significant words: "Who will now believe even a single word that we say?" adding words like these: "Who will continue to believe us, we who stand before the court as a counter-revolutionary bandit gang, as allies of Fascism, of the *Gestapo*?"

Yevdokimov was right. Common sense, ordinary human common sense, and all the eloquent evidence before our eyes dictate to us the right and the duty *not* to believe the "confessions"!

## The Defendants Double-Crossed

The accused had a bargain thrust down their throats, and they lived up to it. They did not conduct themselves in court like revolutionists, like men—that is true. But we do not want to judge their conduct here; certainly not when there are offenders guilty of infinitely greater crimes than ever the accused could have thought of committing. We

refer to the perpetrators of this most odious of all frame-ups. However, the accused did live up to their part of the bargain. The prosecution, doubly and trebly guilty of that gross disloyalty for which Lenin, on his sick-bed, castigated Stalin, did not live up to its part of the bargain: to grant the defendants their lives.

Do not the terms of the bargain stick right out of the very court record itself? One defendant after another, in his final speech, excoriated himself mercilessly and stated in so many words that he had no right to plead for mercy and would not plead for mercy.

Thus Mrachkovsky: "I do not ask for a mitigation of my punishment, that is not what I want." (1631.)

Thus Yevdokimov: "I do not consider it possible to beg for clemency. Too great are our crimes, both against the proletarian state and the international revolutionary movement for us to count upon clemency." (1632.)

Thus Dreitser: "I, at any rate, am one of those who has neither the right to expect mercy nor to plead for it." (1632.)

Thus Reingold: "I have fully confessed my guilt. It is not for me to plead for mercy." (1632.)

Thus Bakayev: "Bakayev ends his last words with the statement that he understands the full gravity of the crime and awaits the deserved and just verdict of the proletarian court." (1632.)

Thus Pikel: "I must bear my deserved punishment." (1632.)

Thus Kamenev: "Twice my life was spared. But everything has its limits, even the magnanimity of the proletariat has its limits and we have exceeded these limits." (1632.)

Thus Berman-Yurin: "The proletarian state will deal with me as I deserve. It is too late for penitence." (1633.)

Thus virtually all the others.

This is on August 22 and 23. At 2.30 A.M., August 24, the president of the court, Ulrich, reads the verdict condemning all the accused to be shot. From their concluding remarks, that is what the accused expected, that is what they said they deserved, that is the verdict they announced in advance they would not appeal from. The evening of the very



same day, August 24, the following curt official statement is issued, and printed in the Soviet press the next day:

"The Præsidium of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. has rejected the appeal for mercy of those condemned by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. on August 24 of this year in the trial of the united Trotskyist-Zinovievist terrorist Center. The verdict has been executed."

The men who had announced forty-eight hours before that they would *not* appeal, that the coming death sentence was just and merited, nevertheless *did* appeal. Why? Didn't they know it was futile? Hadn't they said it was futile? Yes. But they didn't *believe* it was futile! The G.P.U. had promised them that if they spoke in court in exactly the manner in which they did speak, if they stood firmly by their confessions to the end, their lives would be spared by an act of clemency from the government. They knew that the government had granted clemency before in trials at which the court had sentenced the accused to death. They knew, also, that in previous framed-up trials (as in the trial of the Ramzin "wreckers" and the "Union Bureau" of the Mensheviks), death sentences had been pronounced and later commuted to terms of imprisonment. Their quietly-made appeal was the last step taken by the accused in the fulfillment of the bargain. But the rejection of the appeal, and the frightful haste displayed in putting executioner's bullets through their heads, was the culmination of one of the most despicable games of disloyalty, of double-dealing, of the *double-cross*, that has ever come to our attention.

Any other explanation of the last day of the macabre drama enacted in Moscow leaves nothing explained. The most monstrous of frame-ups was climaxed with a most monstrous double-cross.

## Why the Penalty of Execution?

Let us assume for a moment that the very worst was true, that we should be blind to the evidence which looms before us as big as life, that we accept unquestioningly and unthinkingly the entirely absurd conclusions of the prosecutor. Let us assume for a moment that the accused were guilty of every

charge levelled against them. Let us assume that they were allied with the Nazis, that they were responsible for the death of S. M. Kirov, that they did plan the assassination of the seven Soviet leaders. An uncorrupted human mind revolts at such a conclusion, but let us nevertheless adopt it for the moment. Even then, were the executions justified?

In 1922, the twelve leaders of the party of Social Revolutionists were on trial in Moscow. They were able to provide themselves with Russian counsel; they were allowed to have distinguished attorneys representing parties of the Second and "Second and a Half" Internationals: Emile Vandervelde, Theodor Liebknecht, Kurt Rosenfeld. No confessions were extorted from them, and it occurred to nobody to make such a charge, or even to think of it. The men and women on trial were *indubitably* guilty of at least most of the charges made against them. They scorned to deny them, nor could they deny what the entire world knew to be simple historical facts. They had taken up arms against the Soviet power; they had taken them up in league with the Allied imperialists. They did not renounce their past actions; they boasted of them and expressed regret only at the fact that they had not succeeded in achieving their ends. In addition to these accusations, they were charged with the responsibility for the assassination of Volodarsky, the attempted assassination of Lenin by Dora Kaplan, whose shot was almost fatal, with attempting to assassinate Trotsky, with the blowing up of trains and buildings, etc., etc. They never were supporters of the Soviet régime, and they didn't pretend to be.

The court sentenced them to death. As in the present case, so then too, large sections of the international labor movement were not convinced of the completeness of the case against the S.R.'s even though this unbelief had infinitely less grounds fourteen years ago than it has today. A considerable protest movement was aroused. Thereupon, the Soviet government commuted the death sentences to imprisonment and strict isolation of the condemned. And at what a time? When the Soviet republic had just emerged from the most violent and exhausting civil wars known in modern history, a civil war in which the Soviets had to fight off not only internal foes but the armies of every imperialist nation in the world, a civil war to which the S.R.'s on trial had contributed

signally on the anti-Soviet side. At what a time? When the Soviet republic's position, at home and abroad, was far from secure. Yet Lenin and Trotsky found it possible to avoid the death penalty for the accused.

Under what circumstances were Zinoviev and his co-defendants shot? Apart from the fact that virtually all the men involved were proponents (and not entirely unknown ones!) of the Soviet power, its creators and builders, they were tried and executed *in the nineteenth year of the revolution*. The domestic foe of the Soviet power, at least, has been entirely liquidated, according to the official view. Classes no longer exist in the Soviet Union, according to the same view, and consequently no class enemy threatens the régime. Socialism has already triumphed—"irrevocably," as the Seventh Comintern Congress solemnly stated; the classless society has been inaugurated. The Soviets have never enjoyed such power, such security. Furthermore, over a hundred men have already paid with their lives for the death of the one man, Kirov.

Does not, in view of all this, the magnanimity of the socialist society, the society of the tomorrow, the society of the new man, suffice to commute even a merited death sentence to, let us say, life imprisonment? Why was it so essential, so urgently imperative to shoot down these men who had given ten, twenty, thirty and forty years of their lives in most selfless devotion to the aspirations of the oppressed, the exploited, the abused? Even if they were guilty of twice the number of crimes for which they were convicted, why did not the proud security of the Soviet power and the unquestioned glory of the defendants' past, make the scales of justice tremble just a little on the side of clemency? What sadistic Oriental vindictiveness, or what pervading fear, must have animated the despot of the Kremlin to command that figures who, with all their defects, were once a Gregory Zinoviev, an Ivan Nikititch Smirnov, a Sergei Mrachkovsky, should be mowed down immediately, like so many nameless nomad curs! Was it fear of the growing international protest that prevented a delay of a month in the execution? Was it fear of a compelling demand for an objective investigation that prevented a delay of even a week? Was it fear of what the

accused, outraged by the double-cross, would reveal about the trial, that prevented a delay of even three days?

Whatever it was, guilty or innocent—a hundredfold more so in the incontestable case of the latter—a heinous, revolting crime was committed, a judicial massacre, an unspeakable monstrosity that besmirches the shield of socialism, that puts to shame the international working class movement. The criminals are the band of usurpers who now abuse the power of the Soviet Union. Their ringleader, the instigator of the frame-up and principal culprit, is Joseph Stalin.

### Trotsky—The Target of the Trial

In living up to their wretched bargain, the accused, without exception, not only assailed themselves, but carried out their mandate to implicate Leon Trotsky as the real head and heart of the conspiracy, the assassin-in-chief.

“My whole political philosophy,” says Olberg, “was shaped under the influence of Trotsky and Trotskyism. Like Trotsky, I hesitated neither before terror nor before the pact with the Fascists.” (1633.)

“I want to assure the proletarian court,” declares David, “that I curse Trotsky. I curse the man who ruined my life and drove me to such grave crimes.” (1633.)

“I am guilty of this,” says Zinoviev, “that after Trotsky, I was the second organizer of the Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc which set itself the aim of murdering Stalin, Voroshilov and a number of other leaders of the party and the government.” (1633.)

“Why did I tread the path of counter-revolution?” asks Mrachkovsky. “It was my connection with Trotsky that led me to it.” (1631.)

“The facts presented to the court,” says Bakayev, “show the whole world that Trotsky is the organizer and the moving spirit of the unprecedented counter-revolutionary Trotskyist-Zinovievist terrorist bloc.” (1632.)

Unfortunately for the prosecution, the “facts” show nothing of the kind. Nor are there enough facts in the whole world to “show” anything of the sort. Like the charges against the executed sixteen, those levelled at Trotsky are

based on lies—not mere distortions and exaggerations, but flat lies—from beginning to end.

## Trotsky and the Zinovievists

Whoever is acquainted to any measurable extent with the history of the struggle in the Bolshevik party, can see the first big lie at the very beginning: the lie about the bloc between Trotsky and the Zinovievists. The campaign against a so-called "Trotskyism" was launched in the Russian party and the Comintern by none others than Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin and Stalin, with the first two in the rôle of most active "educators" of the party in the lore of anti-Trotskyism. In 1925, under pressure of the Leningrad proletarian ranks, headed by Zinoviev, the latter fell out with the Stalin-Bukharin bureaucracy, formed an opposition to it, and in the middle of 1926 did indeed form a bloc with the so-called "Moscow" or "1923" or "Trotskyist" Opposition. This united opposition bloc was formed on the basis of a political platform, suppressed by Stalin, to be sure, but published throughout the world nevertheless; so also were other political documents of the bloc on numerous vital questions.

The bloc lasted until the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in December 1927. Under Stalin's lash, the Congress decided to expel the entire Opposition and to make *support of its views* incompatible with party membership. Thereupon two declarations were handed in to the Congress: one by Kamenev, Bakayev and Avdeyev (for the Zinovievists), announcing their submission to the Congress, that is, not only quitting the Opposition but renouncing their political views or the right to hold them; the other by Muralov, Smilga, Radek and Rakovsky (for the Trotskyists; neither Trotsky nor Zinoviev signed either document because they had been expelled before the Congress), submitting to the decision of the Congress to dissolve the Opposition but retaining their right (so elementary, one would think!) to hold different political views and to express them within the framework of party discipline. The first statement was a capitulation to Stalin; the second a courageous re-affirmation of revolutionary position. Each marked a different road. Zinoviev, Kamenev and their followers were later re-admitted

into the party; so were the Trotskyists (like Radek, Rakovsky, Preobrazhensky, Smirnov, Mrachkovsky, etc., etc.) who took the same road of capitulation. The genuine revolutionists refused to trade their principles for a party card, and they were deported, exiled, imprisoned or shot.

From December 1927 to the present day, as the Stalinists, above all, know perfectly well, there have been neither organizational, political nor personal relations between Trotsky and his friends, on the one side, and the Zinovievists and all other capitulators, on the other. Quite the contrary. There is hardly an article, pamphlet or book written on the Soviet Union by Trotsky since 1927, which does not contain a polemical attack upon Zinovievism and an admonition against any conciliation whatsoever with the capitulators.

Immediately after the capitulations, Trotsky wrote a confidential letter of advice to his co-thinkers which was intercepted by the G.P.U. and published in its press. It began as follows: "1. It must be clearly understood that the detachment of the 'capitulators' (Zinoviev-Kamenev) from the Opposition necessitates a revision of all the elements of the International Opposition. With the Opposition of the Russian party or with the 'capitulators'? Thus and only thus must the question now be put to every single group and every Oppositionist in Europe; we must break relentlessly with the 'capitulators'; as for the hesitators and those who stand by expectantly, they must be openly guarded against. 2. The treachery of Zinoviev and Kamenev is an historic fact. . . ." (*Pravda*, Jan. 15, 1928.)

In the same period, in a personal letter to I. N. Smirnov sent from his Alma-Ata exile on March 10, 1928, Trotsky went into detail to explain why Zinoviev suffers from a "Leftism of the epidermis," that is, of a purely superficial, skin disease which never penetrates deeper. In October 1932, from Prinkipo, Trotsky returned, for the *n*th time, to the subject, on the occasion of Zinoviev's second expulsion from the party and wrote: "The capitulation of Zinoviev and Kamenev, before the 15th Congress, at the moment of the organized extirpation of the Bolshevik-Leninists, was accepted by the Left Opposition as an act of monstrous perfidy. Such it was in its essence." (*Soviet Economy in Danger*, p. 54.)

Seven months later, on May 23, 1933, after their second

repentance, Trotsky wrote: "So they have once more capitulated. . . . They finally sank down into the depths. Their personal fate is profoundly tragic. When the future historian aims to show how pitilessly the epochs of great convulsions devastates men, he will bring forward the example of Zinoviev and Kamenev." (*The Militant*, June 10, 1933.)

Trotsky wrote these lines about Zinoviev and Kamenev (and how many similar ones, both before and after!) in the period when, according to the "confessions," he had given his direct, personal approval of a bloc with men he considered political corpses. And for what purpose? Of assassinating the Soviet leaders! It is hard to imagine a more inept construction.

### Trotsky and the Defense of the Soviet Union

The same holds true of the calumnious charge that Trotsky instructed his alleged followers to sabotage the defense of the Soviet Union in the event of war. Doesn't every man, woman and child acquainted with the revolutionary movement know that for years Trotsky has conducted a relentless, intransigent polemical and organizational struggle against all those, temporarily in, or near, or even outside the Trotskyist movement, who expressed the view that the Soviet Union, under Stalinism, no longer represented a proletarian state and consequently did not merit the defense of the working class in the event of war? Do not Stalin and his apparatus in particular know that a split occurred in the Left Opposition ranks in 1929 over the question of Russia as a workers' state, and the defense of the Soviet Union, in connection with the Chinese-Japanese attack on the Chinese Eastern Railway? Don't they know that on this question Trotsky and his co-thinkers broke ruthlessly with Hugo Urbahns in Germany, with Maurice Paz and Robert Louzon in France, with Van Overstraeten in Belgium? Do they not know that one of Trotsky's latest writings on Russia, *The Soviet Union and the Fourth International*, dated October 1, 1933, is one long polemic in defense of the thesis that Russia, despite the bureaucratic excrescences and the marks of degeneration, remains a proletarian state and must be defended *unconditionally* by the workers of the entire world? Do they not know that his

views have remained, to this day, those expressed in a private letter, dated as recently as January 1, 1936, in which he wrote: "The economic and cultural successes of the Soviet Union, with the maintenance of the socialized means of production and the collectivization of the overwhelming majority of the peasants, testifies too clearly that the social bases established by the October Revolution are not annihilated in spite of the menacing bourgeois degeneration of the leading stratum, and can create the necessary premises of the future socialist society. To put the U.S.S.R. on the same plane with the capitalist states, is to throw the baby out of the tub together with the dirty water."

Of course they know all this. But the Stalinist Borgias operate on the basis of the idea once expressed by Mark Twain that a lie can circle the earth during the time that the truth is putting on its shoes.

### Trotsky and Fascism

Do they not also know Trotsky's real attitude towards Fascism and the Fascists, as well as the latter's attitude towards Trotsky? Of course they do! They know the utter impossibility of the slightest conciliation or collaboration between the two.

They know that the Fascists, the reactionaries, the plutocrats and oppressors throughout the world regard Trotsky as an "incendiary," as the symbol and incarnation of the international proletarian revolution. They know that which the Stalinist organ in Catalonia involuntarily acknowledged when it wrote of Trotsky after the trial, with the aim of discouraging sentiment for granting Trotsky asylum in Catalonia, that "the truth is that this personage is considered undesirable by the entire world . . ." (*Treball*, Sept. 23, 1936). By the entire world, to be sure: by the Stalin régime, on the one side, and by the governments of the bourgeoisie on the other! They know that all during the period of the rise of Fascism in Germany, Trotsky wrote voluminously—one article after another, one brochure after another—urgently appealing especially to the German Communists to make a united front with the social democracy for the purpose of crushing Fascism, pointing out what a catastrophe the triumph of the



Nazis would be not only for the German and European working class, but for the Soviet Union as well.

Shall we look at what the—for that matter, well-known—opinion of all the Fascists in the world is towards Trotsky and his ideas?

In 1929, after his deportation to Turkey, when Trotsky was attempting to get a visa permitting him to reside in Germany, the reactionary and Fascist press launched a savage campaign against the granting of the visa.

“Germany has enough to do in these difficult times with the maintenance of its own internal equilibrium,” wrote the reactionary organ of high finance, “and we consider it superfluous to create new burdens artificially by a hospitality that will give the strongest propagandist of Bolshevism [Trotsky] the opportunity to exercise his propaganda powers in a country which, in his opinion, can be most speedily ripened for a Bolshevik harvest.” (*Berliner Börsenzeitung*, Feb. 1, 1929.)

Under a photograph of Trotsky, the official organ of Hitler and his Nazis printed the following comment, which has since been substantially repeated and elaborated in the Nazi press, not once but a thousand times: “Trotsky, the Soviet-Jewish bloodhound, wants to reside in Berlin during his exile. We shall have to keep a vigilant eye on this Jewish assassin and criminal.” (*Illustrierte Beobachter*, Feb. 9, 1929.) Trotsky the assassin and criminal! These words, coined by the White Guards and Fascists, have found an echo today in new quarters!

If corroboration is needed of the traditional (and present-day) Nazi view of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Radek (and Lenin, the “half-Jew”!), we reproduce on page 132 a typical anti-Soviet election leaflet, “Russia’s Grave-Diggers,” which we found among our collection of agitational material issued by the various parties during the 1932 campaign in Germany.

Isn’t it known, too, that the opinion of the Italian press on the outcome of the trial is gleefully summarized by one Fascist newspaper as “a victory of political reason over revolutionary romanticism” (quoted by *Neue Front*, Oct. 1936)? Isn’t it known, too, that the opinion of the French Fascists is expressed by one of their leaders, M. Henri de Kerrily, in *Echo de Paris* (also quoted by the same issue of *Neue Front*),

who asks: "Why was it necessary to destroy the 'Trotskyists' for good?" and replies: "Whatever the special methods of the Soviet police may be, it is nevertheless impermissible to conclude therefrom that European order has anything to gain from the triumph of the 'Trotskyist' extremists. Antagonism to the Moscow régime must not go to the point of acknowledging so dangerous a doctrine as the permanent revolution. Suppose for a minute that Leon Trotsky were to be in Stalin's place: hundreds of Soviet planes would already be in Spain. And that says everything." Perfect! That does, indeed, say everything!

Isn't it known, too, that the opinion of Trotsky held by the Norwegian Fascists is not exactly friendly? The *Nasjonal Samling*, the Fascist organization created and financed entirely by Hitler and Göbbels, organized the raid on Trotsky's home on August 5, 1936. It was their daily paper, which subsequently carried the following sensational head lines: "Trotsky, at Hønefoss, Carries On a Big-Scale Insurrectional Agitation Against Stalin. Dangerous Letters of Trotsky Are Printed in Russian in Paris and Smuggled into the U.S.S.R. The Norwegian Government, Trotsky's Host, in a Serious Situation with Regard to the U.S.S.R." (*Fritt Folk*, Aug. 14, 1936, the day before the public announcement of the Moscow trial!) It was the Norwegian Fascists who brought charges against Trotsky on August 6. It was they who produced as evidence of "subversive activities" eight issues of the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition*, edited by Trotsky. It was against them and their raid that the Norwegian Stalinist press protested, *before the trial*, to be sure, criticizing at the same time what it called the lukewarm attitude of the Minister of Justice and demanding the immediate arrest of the Fascists who burglarized the home of Trotsky and his host. It was the Norwegian Fascists and reactionaries, together with the Stalinists, who made their demand for Trotsky's immediate deportation one of their principal arguments against the Norwegian Labor Party government in the recent national elections.

And isn't it known, finally, that it is the Stalinists who have been appealing to the French Fascists for unity in a "French Front"? And that the Italian Stalinists have just made a shameless appeal to the Black-Shirts for unity, in the interests

of Stalin's diplomatic manoeuvres in Europe, that the "Communist" Party of Italy, which supported the Stalinist policy in Germany against a united front with the socialists to smash Fascism, has now issued an official appeal to Mussolini's cohorts? The official organ of the Comintern informs us that the Italian party secretary, Nicolletti, "turning to the Fascists of the Old Guard as well as to the Fascist Youth," declares:

"We proclaim that we are ready to fight together with you and with the entire people of Italy, for carrying out the Fascist program of 1919, and for every demand which represents a special or general direct interest of the toilers and the people of Italy. We are prepared to fight with anyone who really wants to struggle against the handful of parasites which is sucking out and oppressing the nation, and against those bureaucrats who serve them. . . . Let us extend a hand to each other, children of the Italian nation! Let us extend a hand to each other, Fascists and communists, catholics and socialists, men of all tendencies! Let us extend a hand to each other and let us march side by side in order to wrest the right of existence of citizens of a civilized land such as ours! We have the same ambition: to make Italy strong, free and happy. . . . The present rulers of our land want to keep the people of Italy divided into Fascists and non-Fascists. Let us raise high the banner of the union of the people, for bread, work, freedom and peace!" (*Rundschau*, Vol. 5, No. 37, Sept. 20, 1936, p. 1498.)

Suppose Trotsky had ever written anything like such an infamous document? Suppose it was Trotsky, instead of the Secretary of the French Communist Party who wrote, on the occasion of the recent visit to France of the Polish butcher, Rydz-Smigly: "That is why, in the name of the toiling people, in the name of the communists of France, saluting the arrival of General Rydz-Smigly, we exclaim with all our heart. . . . *Vive la Pologne!*" (*l'Humanité*, August 30, 1936)? Would not then the Stalinist press throughout the world display the news in its largest type and literally writhe in a frenzy of opprobrium and condemnation of a man who would write like that? Would not statements like these, from *Trotsky's pen*, be considered irrefutable proof that he had "finally and irrevocably" passed "openly" into the camp of Fascism?

## Trotsky's Letters

But what about the "evidence" submitted at the Moscow trial concerning Trotsky's relationship with the Nazis and the assassins he sent to the Soviet Union? Isn't there at least *some* truth in it? No; and one is tempted to say: Even less truth than in the rest of the evidence—only, there is neither less truth nor more, for *all* the "evidence" is made up of lies and lies and lies, stupid and miserable fabrications hatched in the brains of dull police officials. We do not, however, want to limit ourselves to mere assertion. We want to give proof, based on a checking of the evidence not only with simple logic but with easily verifiable facts.

There are, first of all, the letters written by Trotsky to his "agents" in the Soviet Union, that is, to the capitulators with whom, as we saw above, he had broken off all political and personal relations years ago.

In addition to a letter in 1934 to Dreitser, reads the indictment, "Trotsky also transmitted to the Trotskyist-Zinovievist Center a number of oral and written instructions on terrorism" (1933).

What happened to all these documents ("a number")? Not a single one was preserved. Like every other document or piece of material evidence that might conceivably prove something, the letters of Trotsky were carefully destroyed by the prudent conspirators, or else vanished into thin air. Let us examine some of these letters of Trotsky, so remarkable for their shrewd ability to destroy themselves in the nick of time.

### Letter No. 1

The first "terrorism" letter from Trotsky seems to have been sent as early as 1931. In that year, testifies Mrachkovsky, "when I. N. Smirnov was in Berlin and made contact with L. Trotsky, the latter sent instructions to proceed to the organization of fighting groups of Trotskyists. . . . According to L. Trotsky's instructions, received by I. N. Smirnov in 1931, we were to murder Stalin, Voroshilov, Kaganovich. The first was to be Stalin" (1932). The first thing to be remarked upon is that, according to the testimony itself, this

position in favor of terrorism marked a "turn" away from the former Trotskyist position against terrorism. When Vishinsky asked Mrachkovsky what the instructions to Smirnov spoke of, he replied:

"It was pointed out that the instructions given up to then, that is, up to 1931, were already outlived. Trotsky proposed to pass over to a *different* fighting method, to a sharper method." (1607.)

From which we must conclude that the minute Trotsky proposed to make a change from peaceful methods of agitation for his views to terroristic methods (not a trivial change, it must be admitted), *all* the "Trotskyists" to whom this proposal was transmitted promptly agreed with it, without the slightest hesitation, after-thought, reservation, doubt, discussion! The group was certainly not lacking in nonchalance! It changed from prosaic methods of work to terrorism without batting an eyelash, with the indifference of a man changing his tie.

Smirnov, however, says that while he received two addresses for letters, he did not get in touch with Trotsky in 1931, but only met his son, Sedov, twice in Berlin. Sedov urged upon him the idea of terrorism, which Smirnov subsequently reported to the "Trotskyist Center" in Moscow. And Mrachkovsky, forgetting that a letter is involved, himself says, a few minutes later, that Smirnov reported to them Trotsky's opinion, but did not show them any letter. After he has answered Vishinsky's question as to "What did these instructions speak of?", the following dialogue occurs:

"VISHINSKY: Who proposed this [the sharper method, *i.e.*, terrorism] Sedov or Trotsky?

"MRACHKOVSKY: Trotsky.

"VISHINSKY: Smirnov spoke of Trotsky?

"MRACHKOVSKY: Of Trotsky. Sedov certainly was no authority either for him or for us." (1607f.)

Smirnov *spoke of* Trotsky. Upon examination, it is clear that not even the most voluble defendant saw a letter from Trotsky to Smirnov in 1931. The most that the testimony goes to indicate is that Smirnov reported a position that Trotsky held, or that Sedov said he held, or that Sedov left the impression he held. So that letter No. 1 can be safely called a myth, but not Myth the First nor Myth the Last at

this trial—just one of any number of myths concocted before it and after.

### Letter No. 2

The second letter came through Yuri Gaven, and a very belated letter it was, showing how careless, inefficient and dilatory Trotsky was about his chosen business of terrorism. Smirnov got the first letter on terrorism from Trotsky, the letter that marked the "turn," when he was in Berlin on Soviet service in May 1931, together with two letter addresses (did he ever use them?), a password for agents, and the code based on the fascinating pages of the *Thousand and One Arabian Nights* (was the code ever used? And did both parties in the code have the same edition of the *Arabian Nights*—a very important point, you see, for there is more than one translation of the work . . .).

Then, Dreitser confesses that in the Fall of 1931, that is, a few months later, under I. N. Smirnov's orders, he took advantage of an "official mission to Berlin to get in contact with Trotsky. Smirnov's concrete task was to ascertain Trotsky's position in the question of a bloc of the Trotskyists with the Zinoviev people. In Berlin, Dreitser met Sedov, Trotsky's son, twice in a Leipzigerstrasse cafe. Sedov told him at that time that Trotsky's instructions would be sent on later" (1600).

But Trotsky, notoriously efficient, allows months and months and months to pass without sending the instructions on this crucial point. Was it, perhaps, because he had never before in his life tried his hand at the game of terrorism—a lack of experience which cost the Trotskyist conspirators a year of anguished waiting for the reply from Trotsky which Sedov promised Dreitser in the Fall of 1931 would be sent along later? Let us, however, proceed with the second letter.

We have heard from Dreitser that Smirnov told him *in the Fall of 1931* to find out, from Berlin, Trotsky's instructions on whether the Trotskyists should join with the Zinovievists or not. But Mrachkovsky proceeds to inform us that it was not in the Fall of 1931 but in the middle of 1932 that Smirnov raised this question.

". . . In the middle of 1932, I. N. Smirnov put before our directing Collegium of Three the question of the necessity of

uniting our organization with the groups of Zinoviev-Kamenev and Shatskin-Lominadze. . . . *At that time* it was decided to inquire from Trotsky on this matter and to get instructions from him. L. Trotsky answered that he agrees to the formation of the bloc on the condition that the groups, which unite in the bloc, recognize the necessity of the violent removal of the leaders of the C.P.S.U.(b) and primarily of Stalin." (1592.)

Being good, disciplined "Trotskyists"—mere reference to Trotsky's views being enough to get them to act—they awaited his instructions before proceeding with the bloc. In the second half of 1932, Mrachkovsky continues to testify, "Smirnov sent Trotsky a letter through Holtzmann, in which he informed him about the status of the Trotskyist organization and presented him with the question of the unification with the Zinoviev people. In the Fall of 1932, Trotsky's reply arrived, in which he approved the decision to unite with the Zinoviev people. At that time, Trotsky likewise communicated through his emissary, Gaven, that this unity must take place on the basis of terrorism, and Trotsky emphasized here once more that Stalin, Voroshilov and Kirov must be murdered" (1598).

We note here in passing that whereas in his 1931 instructions to Smirnov, Trotsky demands the heads of Stalin, Voroshilov and Kaganovich, he changes his course a year and a half later and demands, in 1932, the heads of Stalin, Voroshilov and Kirov. For some mysterious reason, Kaganovich's life is to be spared for a while longer (for which, we think, he should be duly grateful), but as for Kirov—well, there is nothing to be done about it: Trotsky and Fate have decided that he must be among the first three to go. And whereas in 1931, Trotsky insists that Stalin must be the first to die, in 1932 he doesn't specify any order at all. He seems to have lost interest in who dies first, so long as all three are put out of the way at one time or another.

Is Gaven called to confirm the story that he was Trotsky's emissary and brought back the reply solicited by Holtzmann? Gaven is being held in a group that includes Safonova, Smirnov's former wife. She was called to give supplementary testimony (one of the two witnesses in the whole trial). Why not Gaven? An elementary procedure, one would think, a

procedure that is automatic in any half-decent bourgeois court. But this is a Stalinist court, where prosecutor and Tribunal have only scorn for bourgeois morals—and for any other kind. But let us get on with the absorbing adventures of Smirnov, Holtzmann, Gaven and Trotsky.

Holtzmann finally gets to Berlin, with the password on his lips, Sedov's telephone number probably hidden in the heel of a shoe, and the not-to-be-forgotten copy of the *Thousand and One Arabian Nights* in his valise, probably covered with a copy of *Pravda*. Did he ever use the code from the *Arabian Nights*? We are not told, so we do not know; and we care less. We do know that the stories he read in them (if he did), inspired him to the heights of fantasy and imagination, not to say fabrication.

Holtzmann met Sedov from six to eight times during his four months' stay in Berlin, and always in the same mysterious house "on the fourth floor," and though he went there often enough, he testifies that "I do not remember the street." In November 1932, Sedov suddenly telephones him and proposes that Holtzmann take a trip with him to Norway to meet his father, Leon Trotsky. Then Holtzmann goes on with a story which, if not as well told as one from the *Arabian Nights*, is at least as remote from reality.

"I agreed to go. But I told him that, for conspirative reasons, we could not travel together. I agreed with Sedov that I would travel to see him in Copenhagen two or three days later and register at the Bristol Hotel, and that we would meet there. From the railroad station, I went directly to the Hotel and met Sedov in the foyer.

"About ten o'clock in the morning we drove to Trotsky. When we arrived at Trotsky's, he interested himself primarily in the mood and the attitude of the party masses toward Stalin. I told him that I intended to leave Copenhagen that very day and that I was leaving for the U.S.S.R. a few days later. Then Trotsky said to me, striding up and down the room in a somewhat excited state, that he was preparing a letter to Smirnov, but since I was leaving the same day, he wouldn't write it. I must say that all during the time of the conversation with Trotsky, I was all alone with him. Trotsky's son, Sedov, came into the room very often and then went out. . . .



"VISHINSKY: So Trotsky told you directly that the main task now (that is, in the Fall of 1932) consists in the assassination of comrade Stalin? Do you recall that exactly?

"HOLTZMANN: Yes.

"VISHINSKY: So that's what Trotsky's instructions consisted of?

"HOLTZMANN: Yes, Trotsky was unable to put it down in written form and that's why I took it orally and transmitted the exact sense of it after my arrival in Moscow.

"VISHINSKY: Those were Trotsky's oral instructions?

"HOLTZMANN: Yes." (1613.)

So the second letter did not come back with Holtzmann. All he got—according to his unchallenged testimony—were oral instructions. Trotsky decided that it was too late to write the letter to Smirnov in time for Holtzmann to take it along. The prosecutor leads the accused on to this version; the prosecutor does not dispute the version, but accepts it. And then, in his summation speech, the prosecutor suddenly announces, with the utmost coolness, that Trotsky *did* send a letter back with Holtzmann!

"That is why, in March 1932, Trotsky, in a fit of counter-revolutionary rage, wrote a letter with the appeal to put Stalin out of the way (this letter was taken from the secret bottom of Holtzmann's suitcase and presented as an exhibit in the case)." (1621.)

### Exhibit No. 1

And thus, after long last, we come to the first of the three exhibits (that is, concrete pieces of material evidence) submitted by the prosecution in the trial. It was worth waiting for, because it helps characterize further—if that is still necessary—the value of the accusations. Vishinsky, unscrupulous as ever, makes it appear as though this was a conspirative letter sent by Trotsky to the Moscow terrorists, calling upon them to assassinate Stalin. Not that the "letter" is not real. It is; it has existed for more than four years. *But it was not a secret letter at all!* Its existence has been known ever since it was written, not only to the Stalinists but to everyone else in the wide world who follows the revolutionary movement. Trotsky's letter of March 1932 was entitled "An Open Letter

to the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R." and was made public as such!

The Soviet government had issued a decree on February 20, 1932 depriving Trotsky and others of citizenship in the Soviet Union. Trotsky's "Open Letter," dated March 1, 1932, was an appeal against that decree. It was printed in the monthly magazine, *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition*, edited by Trotsky in the Russian language, copies of which go regularly and legally to government and party institutions in Russia. It was printed in the German, French, Belgian, Spanish and Greek Trotskyist papers of that period, to mention but a few. It was printed in English in the American Trotskyist organ (*The Militant*, Apr. 9, 1932). The Jewish section of the American Trotskyists issued it in New York in a pamphlet printed in the Jewish language. In a word, Mr. H. G. Wells does not know what an "Open Conspiracy" looks like until he has studied how secretly Leon Trotsky plans his assassination plots!

The appeal to kill Stalin? Here it is, translated word for word from the text of the "Open Letter": "Stalin has brought you to an impasse. You cannot come out on the road without liquidating Stalinism. You must trust to the working class, give the proletarian vanguard the possibility, through free criticism from top to bottom, to review the whole Soviet system and pitilessly cleanse it of the accumulated rubbish. It is time, finally, to fulfill the last urgent advice of Lenin: to remove Stalin."

What does the last sentence refer to? A year before his death, in a note dated January 4, 1923 and addressed to the party, Lenin wrote in a document that has come to be known as his "testament" the following advice: "Stalin is too rude, and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us communists, becomes unsupportable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore, I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority—namely, more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc. This circumstance may seem an insignificant trifle, but I think that from the point of view of preventing a split and from the point of view of the relation between Stalin and Trotsky which I discussed

above, it is not a trifle, or it is such a trifle as may acquire a decisive significance." (*The Suppressed Testament of Lenin*, New York, 1935, p. 7.)

The actual author of the proposal to remove Stalin is not Trotsky. According to the Stalinist judges, therefore, the real author and inspirer of the assassination plot is V. I. Lenin! A barbaric revenge it is that they have taken on him for this proposal: all his closest and staunchest collaborators, those who continue to one degree or another to carry forth his tradition and views, have been expelled, imprisoned, exiled, deported and now—murdered.

We are not, however, through with Holtzmann's thrilling exploits in Denmark to meet Sedov and his father. Holtzmann tells us that he went to the Bristol Hotel and met Sedov there some time during Trotsky's eight-day stay at the end of November 1932 in Copenhagen, where he had gone to lecture on the significance of the Russian revolution, on the invitation of the Danish socialist students. This piece of evidence will be of tremendous interest (1) to Sedov, (2) to the proprietor of the Bristol Hotel, (3) to all students of psychic phenomena, miracles and other manifestations of the supernatural.

1. Sedov: He was not in Copenhagen at any time in 1932, nor, for that matter, at any other time in his life. The G.P.U. must have learned that he met his parents during their Danish trip, but lazy bureaucrats that they are, they did not trouble to find out where he met them. Meet them he did, but not in Copenhagen! The French Ministry of the Interior can produce a copy of the telegram sent by Mrs. Trotsky to the then Prime Minister Edouard Herriot, asking for the granting of a visa to her son, Sedov, so that he could meet his parents in Paris on their way back from Denmark. The temporary visa was granted; the meeting took place in Paris, as the dates stamped on Sedov's passport will irrefutably prove; the dates will show that the meeting could have taken place only after Trotsky's return from Denmark. Consequently, Sedov should be very much surprised to learn that he met Holtzmann in Copenhagen in November 1932.

2. The proprietor of the Bristol Hotel. We have no doubt that he was proud of his establishment, the service, the cuisine. We do not know, however, if he regretted its disappearance.

Disappearance? Doesn't Baedeker's *Scandinavia* record the Bristol Hotel as one of Copenhagen's best? It does, but only up to the 1917 edition. That was where the good-for-nothing G.P.U. agents must have obtained their information, and, again lazy bureaucrats that they are, they neglected to find out if it was in existence in 1932. Alas for the proud proprietor, the Bristol Hotel was torn down, demolished, taken away brick by brick and lath by lath, some time in 1917, without leaving so much as a foyer or a telephone booth for Holtzmann to meet Sedov or anybody else in! It was put up again in 1936, and was opened to the public during the very period of the Moscow trial! Both of these facts have been established beyond the possibility of dispute, and anybody can easily verify them for himself. But how the Bristol's *maitre d'hôtel* must swell with pride at the thought that, though the hotel itself was no longer there, its renown was sufficiently solid to last from 1917 to November 1932, and to be so well preserved that one Russian assassin was able to meet with another Russian assassin, not in the foyer, but in the remarkably durable reputation of that foyer. Mark Anthony observed that "the evil that men do lives after them, the good is often interred with their bones." With Danish hotels, however, it is somewhat different: their good is not interred with their beams, it lives after them to form a foyer where the Fascist mad dogs of the Zinovievist-Trotskyist counter-revolutionary terrorist Center may meet to plot their evil.

3. Believers in supernatural phenomena will be delighted to learn that one man (Sedov) was in Paris and Copenhagen, or Berlin and Copenhagen, at one and the same time; that another man (Holtzmann) stayed in a hotel which scoffing materialists would say was not there; that the second man, who was in Copenhagen there met the first man, who was not in Copenhagen but in Berlin or Paris, and met him in the foyer of a hotel which was not in Copenhagen, nor in Berlin, nor in Paris.

Now, Holtzmann gave his testimony in the morning of August 21. In the evening of August 20, Valentin Olberg gave his testimony, and because he was also involved in a trip to Copenhagen at the same time as Holtzmann's fabulous journey, his evidence on this point is worth noting.

"Before my departure for the Soviet Union, I intended to go to Copenhagen together with Sedov in order to see Trotsky. Our trip did not materialize, but Suzanne, Sedov's wife, went to Copenhagen and when she came back, she brought along a letter from Trotsky addressed to Sedov, in which Trotsky gave his agreement with my journey to the U.S.S.R. and expressed the hope that I would succeed in carrying out my mission. Sedov showed me this letter." (1610.)

Accused Olberg testifies that Sedov *did not* go to Copenhagen. His wife went and because he could not go, his father transmitted a letter to him through Suzanne Sedov, a letter which Sedov showed Accused Olberg. Accused Holtzmann testifies, twelve hours later, that Sedov not only went to Copenhagen, but that he saw him in the Bristol Hotel, drove to Trotsky's with him, and saw him go in and out of Trotsky's room several times. The genial prosecutor is not a man to waste time on trifles. He does not confront the men with each other's testimony; he does not seek to establish which story is correct; he is satisfied with the simple fact that both men lived up to the agreement to confess themselves assassins. How they go about proving it against themselves is a matter of no particular importance.

Was there ever so clumsy a frame-up?

Now, why should Holtzmann deliberately and voluntarily tell such fantastic lies? Even if we assume that he was a terrorist, why should he of his own accord, go out of his way to invent preposterous stories for the purpose of proving the case against himself? Doesn't every fiber of simple human reason insist upon the only possible reply? Holtzmann did not invent his story. It was invented for him by bunglers and he was forced to repeat it under the title of a "confession." And his confession is of a piece with all the other confessions. They are worthy of each other. Each has the value of the other, neither more nor less. Their value, taken separately or together, is nil, absolutely nil.

Our unavoidable excursion into the Holtzmann testimony, we may consider ended now, thus enabling us to return to the hunt for the elusive Trotsky letters. Holtzmann met Trotsky and, presumably, turned over to him Smirnov's letter of inquiry concerning the permissibility of a bloc with the Zinovievists, in Copenhagen, at the end of November 1932

(Trotsky delivered his lecture on November 27). Trotsky had not yet written the reply. Holtzmann did not bring it back. Gaven is supposed to have brought back the reply. When he met Trotsky, how he met Trotsky, where he met him, we are not told. Gaven, as we have said, was not brought to the trial to give evidence on this or any other point. But in any case, he could not have brought back a Trotsky letter until some time in December, at the earliest. But Mrachkovsky and others, in their testimony, asserted that Gaven brought back Trotsky's reply to the Smirnov-Holtzmann letter "in the Fall of 1932," a season in which, as a rule, December is not included. The second letter, it is not too much to conclude, is as much an invention as the first.

#### Letters No. 3 and 4

We come now to the third and fourth letters. According to Berman-Yurin's testimony, he recommended to Sedov a "Trotskyist" named Alfred Kunt, to serve as courier for Trotsky to Russia, where he was to deliver two documents, "including Trotsky's instructions on the tasks of the terroristic illegal organization in the Soviet Union. . . . Alfred Kunt left for Moscow in January-February 1932, arrived—it became known a few days later—at the conspirative address, transmitted the documents, received the reply, as arranged . . ." (1611). Who received the letters? They were certainly of decisive importance, if only as confirmation of Smirnov's report to the Trotskyist Center in 1931 that Trotsky had decided on a "turn" to terrorism. Did Smirnov get them? They were destined for him, but not handed to him personally only because, says Berman-Yurin, he was out of town? Did he read them to the others? Why does not one single other defendant mention these documents? Why doesn't even the indictment or the prosecutor mention them? It goes without saying that, like every other document, they managed to destroy themselves, for they were not introduced into evidence. Here, too, no other conclusion is left to be drawn save they were not introduced as evidence for one simple, decisive reason: they never existed.

Then there is the last of Trotsky's letters, so remarkable for their unique attributes and properties. "In October 1934, Dreitser's sister brought him a German moving picture maga-

zine from Warsaw, which had been transmitted to her by one of Sedov's agents. In the magazine Dreitser easily discovered—for he had also arranged for such a means of contact with Sedov in Berlin—a letter written with chemical ink in Trotsky's own handwriting, containing the instructions to prepare and carry through immediately terroristic actions against Stalin and Voroshilov. Dreitser immediately sent on this letter to Mrachkovsky who, after acquainting himself with the letter, burned it for conspirative reasons." (1600.)

Nothing could be more fitting: a moving picture magazine for a moving picture scenario, even if not a very good one! Now, what was this letter of the Fall of 1934? Nothing but the long-awaited instructions from Trotsky in reply to Dreitser's inquiry of three years before, in 1931, when, after hanging around Berlin in vain, Sedov soothed his terroristic impatience with the promise that "Trotsky's instructions would be sent later on"! Did the world ever see such a rank diletante in terrorist conspiracies as Trotsky? Known all his life as a man punctilious to a fault, efficient to the highest degree, he turns into a slothful, negligent, dilatory amateur the minute he makes the "turn" to terrorism! He lets three invaluable years go by before sending the instructions to Dreitser, during which time, thank God! Stalin and Voroshilov are given a new lease on life.

But why the *German* moving picture magazine? In 1934, both Trotsky and Sedov were living in France—Trotsky in one of the far-off provinces. Why didn't he use a French moving picture magazine? Is it because his German Nazi masters, out of stubborn loyalty to the principle of autarchy even in the tiniest details, insisted that he use an Aryan, home-manufactured magazine even for his chemical letters, thus furthering the interests of the plot and of German industry at the same time? And are we to conclude from Trotsky's letter to Dreitser that he was getting discouraged, and was beginning to bargain with his terroristic agents? For while in his first instructions he wants Stalin, Voroshilov and Kaganovich done in, and in his second instructions he substitutes Kirov for Kaganovich, in his third instructions he seems to be ready to accept the first two alone as victims, if only the boys in Russia will really get to work. Or is Kaganovich's name left off the instructions in the German magazine because, true

to the racial principles shared by Hitler and Trotsky, the name of a Jew must not be allowed to defile the pages of a full-blooded Aryan periodical? And how curt Trotsky becomes in his instructions when he is impatient! Assassinate Stalin and Voroshilov, organize the work in the army, sabotage a war and take over the régime in the course of it—all in five lines. As Trotsky said in an interview after the trial: "Five lines for those three tasks! That's really just a little bit too concentrated!"

### Trotsky's Emissaries

So much for the letters. What about Trotsky's murdering emissaries? In order to omit nothing, we shall take them one by one and nail them to the pillory for the unconscionable liars that they are. These five or six or more persons "who were directly commissioned by L. Trotsky and his son Sedov" to go to the Soviet Union with murderous intent, are—all of them—unknown, or at best, obscure and tenth-rate personages. What is known of their testimony and their records puts upon them the unmistakable stamp of *G.P.U. agents*. With one single exception, all of them are unknown, either by their names or their given aliases, to the European Trotskyist movement; the one exception had an exceedingly brief and revealing career in that movement—of which more later.

What is noteworthy in the testimony of all these Trotskyist emissaries from Germany, is the immediacy and ease with which every single one of them acquired the confidence of Trotsky or his son at their very first meeting, and the same immediacy and ease with which all of them—presumably trained in the communist tradition of antagonism to individual terror—were convinced of the appropriateness of assassinations after a few minutes conversation with their chief.

Olberg testifies that Sedov showed him for the first time (in March 1932) a call by Trotsky for the assassination of Stalin. Immediately, Sedov proposed to Olberg to go to the Soviet Union to commit the deed; immediately Olberg consented. Just as simple as that; just like reaching for your hat at the end of a work-day.

Berman-Yurin testifies that he met Trotsky for the first



time in Copenhagen in November 1932. Immediately, Trotsky insists that the Soviet leaders must be murdered. Second conversation the same evening: "I asked him the question of how individual terror could be harmonized with Marxism. To this, Trotsky declared: The question cannot be approached dogmatically. He stated that a situation has been produced in the Soviet Union which Marx couldn't foresee. Trotsky also said that in addition to Stalin, Kaganovich and Voroshilov must be murdered. . . . [Unfortunate Kaganovich! Here he is back again on the death list!]

"VISHINSKY: Did he convince you?

"BERMAN-YURIN: During the conversation he walked nervously around the room and spoke of Stalin with exceptional hatred.

"VISHINSKY: You expressed your agreement?

"BERMAN-YURIN: Yes." (1612.)

Nothing more complicated or difficult than that! Trotsky meets an unknown for the first time; argues for terrorism; answers one single question; walks around nervously for a bit—and Berman-Yurin is his man. Trotsky immediately gives him concrete instructions on how and whom to kill, and Berman-Yurin is off on his killer's junket without a word or a thought.

Oh yes! Before he takes leave of Trotsky, Berman-Yurin remembers that he has a friend in Germany who isn't very busy and who would be a good man for this sort of work. "I said that I had an acquaintance, Fritz David, and asked if it would not be possible to establish contact with him. Trotsky answered that he will instruct Sedov to investigate the matter and that he will give him instructions accordingly." (1612.) One conversation; two men hired! (By the way, did Berman-Yurin see Sedov in Copenhagen, as Holtzmann did, or in Berlin, as Olberg did? He does not mention Sedov's presence in Denmark!)

Another example: N. Lurye arrives in Moscow and gets in touch with the Trotskyist, Konstant. "I reported to Konstant on the instructions concerning terrorism which I had received from the Trotskyist organization through Moses Lurye. Konstant told me that there was nothing new in that for him." (1614.) Ter-Vaganian meets Friedland in 1932 and

tells him that from now on violent struggle against the party is the order of the day. "To his question on what violent fighting forms might mean, I answered: You're not a child, violent fighting forms are terroristic fighting forms. That ought to be clear." (1616.) Friedland becomes a terrorist on the spot. In the Fall of 1931, Ter-Vaganian makes contact with Lominadze, puts the same proposal to him, gains a comrade-in-terrorism with the same casual ease. In 1932, Kamenev negotiates on the same point with Lominadze and Shatskin; same results. Then with the old "Workers' Opposition" leaders, Shliapnikov and Medvediev; same results, obtained with the same nonchalance. In 1932, 1933 and 1934, he deals with Tomsy and Bukharin and experiences the same total lack of difficulties, no objections, no resistance, no argumentation (1604). The witness Yakovlev testifies: "In this connection, Kamenev commissioned me personally to organize a terrorist group in the Academy of the Sciences. I took this commission." (1605.)

It was all like a slot machine: you dropped in your proposal for terrorism, you pressed the lever, and out came a terrorist. Can a more astounding assassination plot be imagined? *Everyone*, literally everyone who was approached by the main organizers of the conspiracy, immediately fell in with the plot. Nobody hesitated; nobody had any doubts; nobody ran to the authorities to say, between horrified gasps: "A plot is afoot to kill the Soviet leaders and, much as I disagree with their course, I am certainly not a terrorist. Here I am to prove it, by informing you of this frightful conspiracy." In all the four or more years during which such widespread and indiscriminate recruiting of terrorists went on, among prominent persons and obscure ones, there was not a single, solitary person who ran off, revolted by the plan, to give the G.P.U. the slightest intimation of what was going on under its very nose!

This is the story we are commanded from Moscow to swallow, hook, line and sinker, without gagging, on penalty of being denounced as assassins or their advocates!

Having indicated the fabulous ease with which Trotsky recruited his agents, let us now see what happened to them after they set to work.

## I. Friedmann

One of the agents sent to Russia bears the name of Friedmann. His career as an assassin or even as a figment of the G.P.U. imagination, is brief and colorless.

"VISHINSKY: What do you know about Friedmann?"

"OLBERG: Friedmann was one of the members of the Berlin Trotskyist organization who was also sent to the Soviet Union.

"VISHINSKY: Are you aware that Friedmann was connected with the German police?"

"OLBERG: I heard about it." (1610.)

And that's all there is, in the whole court record, about Friedmann. Not another word. Nobody else mentions him—not the defendants, not the witnesses, not the prosecutor, not the court, not the indictment, not the verdict. Did he go to the Soviet Union? Did he meet anyone there? Did he do any plotting there? Any results? We don't know. We aren't told. The two questions and the two answers are the only information about Friedmann, Terrorist No. 1. If he was paid for the work he undertook to do, he undoubtedly cheated his employer out of every penny he got.

## 2. Alfred Kunt

We know something already about Terrorist No. 2, Alfred Kunt. He was a Berlin Trotskyist, recommended to Sedov by Berman-Yurin as a reliable man. We also know of the two Trotsky documents he brought to the secret address in Moscow and of his failure to find Smirnov at home. Now what activities did he carry on in the Soviet Union? Berman-Yurin gives us all the details: "Kunt also reported that he had established himself in the vicinity of Moscow, that his work was successful, and that 'things are going well.'" (1611.) Nobody else ever heard of Kunt, ever saw him, or ever mentioned him during the trial. What were the "successes" of what "work" that he was carrying on? Was he canning preserves in the vicinity of Moscow, or manufacturing bombs? What "things" were "going well"? Was the canning season at its height, had he invented a new method of preserving persimmons, or a new fulminating cap? Or was he just cheating his employer, like Friedmann, and spending his time lolling in the sun or swimming in the Moscow

River or hunting aurochs when he should have been hunting Ordjonikidze?

### 3. Nathan Lurye

As to this bizarre personage, who may have been a good surgeon but was never cut out for the more strenuous life of an assassin, we have already seen what his activities consisted of (see p. 42 *et seq.*). He puttered away months waiting on street corners to see at what speed Voroshilov's automobile would be driven each day. He gave that up as an un-amusing job after half a year of wasted time and went off to distant Cheliabinsk, with the faint hope that maybe one of his intended victims might pass through the city and give him a chance. Then Kaganovich and Ordjonikidze came to Cheliabinsk, and he fumbled his chance again. Was this surgeon-assassin busy at the moment with a stethoscopic operation or an appendectomy, and took off his rubber gloves and mask only to learn that the two Soviet chieftains had left Cheliabinsk for Makhatch Kala? Anyway, he wasted another thirty months in Cheliabinsk, drawing wages from the Soviets and from Trotsky (probably also from Hitler) and not doing much of anything for any of them, we'll warrant. In Leningrad, May Day 1936, he marches past Zhdanov, but on the far side, so that nothing comes of that, either.

How did this hopeless amateur come to get mixed up in this indelicate business? It was all very sudden, but very simple. "At the beginning of 1932, Moses Lurye told me that the time has come to travel to the U.S.S.R. and carry on a terroristic activity there. This instruction of his did not come to me unexpectedly. It arose logically from all the preceding work. In April 1932 I left for the U.S.S.R. . . ." (1614.) Arrived in Russia, he finds Konstant and Lipshitz. They tell him that they are already at work with an architect, a Franz Weiz, who was sent to the Soviet Union for terroristic purposes under direct order of Heinrich Himmler, head of the German *Gestapo*. "The fact that a direct agent of the German political police stood at the head of the terrorist group did not in the least perturb N. Lurye and his Trotskyist gang." (1614.) This was early in 1932. But oh, these careless idiots of the G.P.U.! They neglected completely the fact that in that year, the

"German political police" was not Nazi but Weimar-Republican, and that Herr Himmler, in any case, was not the head of it. The *Gestapo* was organized and Himmler put at its head only after the Hitlerites came to power, namely, some time in 1933. But just as the news that his co-plotter, Weiz, was a Nazi agent, did not perturb Lurye, so the conflict in dates fails to perturb Vishinsky. He goes ahead; so does his gracious witness.

Others testified that Trotsky was working hand in glove with the Nazis. Weiz, the Nazi, was working daily with the Trotskyists, Konstant and Lipshitz. Why didn't the Nazis tell Trotsky about Weiz? And if they did, why didn't Trotsky tell his emissary, Moses Lurye, who recruited Nathan Lurye, that Nathan would have to work with a Nazi when he got to Moscow? Moses Lurye found out about Weiz from N. Lurye only after the latter had established relations in Moscow with the Nazi spy. We must therefore believe that Trotsky was confident that the two Luryes would continue their assassins' activities when they got to the Soviet Union, without the flicker of an eyelash, without the demon of doubt assailing them for an instant, even after they found out that their work was being directed by Himmler.

Finally, how long was Weiz in Russia? We do not know. We are told when he left. "In August 1932, Franz Weiz, on leaving for Germany on his vacation, charged me with the direction of the terrorist fighting group," says N. Lurye. (1594.) Elsewhere, he testifies: "In August 1932, Franz Weiz reported to N. Lurye the existence of the opportunity to carry out an attack on the life of the People's Commissar for the Defense of the U.S.S.R., comrade Voroshilov. The terrorist group received orders from the Fascist secret police [in August 1932!] to go into action." (1614.) Weiz is the direct Nazi agent. In August 1932, there is an opportunity to assassinate Voroshilov (what, by the way, did this special opportunity consist of? Had reports come that Voroshilov's car was slowing down?). The *Gestapo*, which didn't exist then, orders its people into action. Thereupon, in the same month, the main Nazi agent . . . takes his vacation in Germany. Did he ever come back? Was somebody else sent to relieve or replace him? We hear no more on this subject; we hear no more about Weiz. Where he is, what happened

to him—remains a mystery as profound as the mystery surrounding the question of why the G.P.U. couldn't find more intelligent agents to concoct this shoddy, palpable frame-up.

#### 4. Moses Lurye

To the singular collection of worthless agents Trotsky sent to Russia to assassinate Stalin, the indictment adds Moses Lurye. Let it be established right away that M. Lurye was *not* sent by Trotsky, even according to his own evidence. He received his "instructions" from Trotsky's agents in Berlin, Ruth Fischer and A. Maslow, on March 4, 1933. "The character of the task was as follows: Trotsky is of this opinion and he insists on it, and we, that is, Maslow and Fischer, are in solidarity with this instruction of Trotsky, which consists in the following: the organization of terroristic acts against the leaders of the C.P.S.U. (b) and the Soviet government, and against Stalin in the very first place, must absolutely be speeded up. I received this instruction, verbally, from Fischer and Maslow, as I have already said, on March 4, 1933."

Whether or not Fischer and Maslow were still in Germany after the Hitler triumph, we are not yet in a position to say. We do know, however, that at that time they had absolutely no personal or political connections with Trotsky. Fischer and Maslow were Zinovievists from 1926 onward. They capitulated, following Zinoviev, on May 9, 1928, in a letter to the National Committee of the oppositional organization in Germany, the Leninbund. From then on, they led the existence of capitulators, that is, political corpses. They staked everything on getting back into the ranks of the German Stalinist party. It was only toward the end of 1933 or the early part of 1934, in voluntary exile from Hitlerite Germany, that they began a *rapprochement* with the Trotskyist organization and expressed themselves in favor of its position for a Fourth International. They collaborated with the Trotskyists for something like a year or two, but at this writing it is already close to a year since they have broken off, again, all relationships. They issue a German bulletin of their own in Paris.

It is utterly inconceivable that they could have acted, on March 4, 1933, as Trotsky's agents for any political mission,

to say nothing of a terroristic enterprise. In Trotsky's letter to a friend abroad, written early in 1928 and already quoted in this brochure, he already warned against Maslow and Fischer and foresaw their capitulation. His intransigent opposition to them and to their stand was only sharpened after their act of May 9, 1928, and became still sharper subsequently. When the temporary reconciliation was effected—and not until 1934—it was on the basis of mutual agreement on a political program, the program of the Fourth International. But let us go on with our conspirator.

The Fisher-Maslow-Trotsky instructions were to be communicated by Lurye to Zinoviev. Lurye arrived in Moscow on March 9, 1933, he says. A little later we read the astonishing statements that "M. Lurye reports on his three meetings with Zinoviev. At one of these meetings, which took place at Zinoviev's home at early in August 1934, Lurye informed Zinoviev in detail about Trotsky's instructions, which he had received from Ruth Fischer and Maslow. . . ." (1615.) In other words, though Zinoviev was available at his Moscow home for most of the period, it took Lurye, who was a personal acquaintance of A. V. Herzberg, an old agent of Zinoviev, *a year and half* to get in direct touch with Zinoviev for the purpose of transmitting the instructions of Trotsky! Weren't they important? Weren't they urgent? Did they deal with the kind of questions that you could convey to their destination today, tomorrow, next month, next year, or not at all, depending on whether or not you felt like taking a ride in a Moscow street car? What sort of nonsense are the Stalinist prosecutors trying to stuff down our throats!

Further: M. Lurye learned of the collaboration in the N. Lurye group of the German Nazis as early as April 1933. He winced, according to his testimony, but told N. Lurye to go ahead meanwhile, and to continue going ahead unless he heard from him, that is, from M. Lurye, to the contrary. M. Lurye never let him hear "to the contrary." He let months and months go by, with apparently a minimum of soul conflict, until he finally met up with Zinoviev.

"ZINOVIEV: I knew that M. Lurye is a Trotskyist, and not only a Trotskyist: when he spoke, the very voice of a Fascist spoke up from him.

"VISHINSKY: Wherein did his Fascism express itself?

"ZINOVIEV: His Fascism expressed itself in his saying that in a situation like the present all possible means must be resorted to." (1606.)

But although Zinoviev saw Lurye's Fascism clearly expressed, he nevertheless found it necessary to convince him that there was nothing wrong with this "clearly-expressed Fascist" to collaborate with the Nazis. He told Lurye, according to the latter, that Lassalle had once used Bismarck. "With this historical parallel, Zinoviev sought to convince me of the possibility and need of utilizing an alliance with the National-Socialists in the struggle against the C.P.S.U. (b) and the Soviet government." (1594.)

This "parallel" must have been a knockout, for by means of it alone all of Lurye's perturbations (if it was possible for a "clearly-expressed Fascist" to have any on this score) were put to rest. N. Lurye, we repeat, never heard to "the contrary." How simple is the life of the assassin!

We are not, however, quite finished with M. I. Lurye, for more reasons than the one that, along among the scores of other assassins, he was the only one to feel even a twitching of the conscience at the idea of working with Nazis; the others, you see, merely took that in their stride. The party name of M. I. Lurye, or one of them, was Alexander Emel, a by no means unknown personage in the German Communist party.

In the November-December 1931 issue of the German Stalinist magazine, *Die Internationale*, Ernst Thälmann published a lengthy article attacking "deviators" in the party and naming, among others, a certain A.E., who had written in *Der Propagandist*, another party organ, articles bearing not a Trotskyist, but an extreme "Third Period" character, replete with all sorts of nationalistic and petty bourgeois absurdities.

Of A.E.'s article, it could be said that it merely expressed, bluntly, the then prevailing Stalinist policy in Germany; Thälmann called it a "break with Marxism." Good. In their comment on this episode, the editors of the then Trotskyist paper in Berlin wrote: "Note in passing: For A.E., this treatment as a scapegoat is particularly disconcerting. Alexander Emel was once disciplined as an Oppositionist in Russia. In the German party, he sought to win his spurs after the passage of a probationary year by separating himself explicitly, on



every occasion, from Trotsky's views, most recently in the question of the Spanish revolution. And he is just the one whom the great Thälmann has now sought out for whipping boy!" (*Die Permanente Revolution*, Jan. 1, 1932.)

This gives us an idea of what the Trotskyists thought of Alexander Emel! Two issues afterward, the Trotskyist organ had another comment to make on the case of Emel, who had meanwhile felt the heavy hand of the Central Committee for his "deviations" (more exactly, for the deviations of the leadership for which he was being made the goat) and *who was being sent to Moscow*, a trip—early in 1932 and not on March 4, 1933, as Emel-Lurye testified—on which they bid him godspeed: "A.E. belonged in 1927 to the tail-end of the Zinoviev Opposition. At the end of 1927, he played the Faithful Fridolin towards the party, at the same time also playing around quietly with the famous 'Wedding Opposition.' In the circles of the [Trotskyist] Opposition, nobody took him seriously. Since January 1928, Emel became 'party-loyal.' The Central Committee allowed him to give classes and to dish up theoretical articles. . . ." (*Die Permanente Revolution*, Feb. 1, 1932.)

Now, unless we draw the breath-taking conclusion that early in 1932 the Trotskyists were cunningly preparing an alibi for a terroristic trial where Emel-Lurye would be involved four and a half years later, we must conclude that the views expressed by *Die Permanente Revolution* represented the opinion held by the Trotskyists of this servile capitulationist.

Did Emel leave for Moscow only on March 4, 1933, with terroristic instructions from Trotsky-Maslow-Fischer, or did he leave early in 1932, as the Trotskyist magazine indicated at the time? Other evidence indicates the latter. In the official organ of the Comintern, German edition, of November 15, 1932, we find one of Alexander Emel's frequent articles, which bears the earmarks of having been written from Moscow: ". . . The social democracy alone no longer suffices—the workers do not believe it. The bourgeoisie now requires a 'better' expert against the Soviet Union, a better agitator and propagandist whom the workers put faith in. This social command of the bourgeois is now being carried out by Leon Trotsky. The 'letters from the Soviet Union' which appear

in his *Bulletin* are strongly propagated, especially in those countries that play a particular rôle in the war being prepared against the Soviet Union: in Pilsudski-Poland Trotsky enjoys a quite special sympathy from the side of the Political Police." (*Internationale Presse Korrespondenz*, Vol. XII, No. 96, Nov. 15, 1932.)

There we have the plainly expressed views of Emel on the Trotskyists, and of the Trotskyists on Emel. And this is the man whom, four months later, Trotsky is supposed to have commissioned as his confidential agent-in-assassination!

### 5. Konon Berman-Yurin

The political biography of the fifth of Trotsky's bunglingly unsuccessful agents, is totally unknown to us. The court record does not shed the slightest ray of light on it. We learn that he was born in 1901, that he has the alias of Alexander Fomich, that (he says) he hovered around Trotskyist circles in Berlin in 1931. Where he comes from, what his record is in the movement, if any, we do not know. This unknown was, he testifies, given the most conspiratorial mission imaginable by Leon Trotsky one hour after he met him for the first time. We are asked to believe this, as if we hadn't already been asked to believe too, too much.

What did his terroristic activities consist in? He gave orders to Fritz David in Moscow on the carrying out of assassinations. But they had to be carried out, do you see, in a certain definite way. Trotsky told him in Copenhagen that "if possible, the terroristic act must be carried out at a Plenum or Congress of the Comintern, so that the shot at Stalin should ring out in a large assembly. This would have a tremendous repercussion far beyond the borders of the Soviet Union and call forth a mass movement throughout the world. This would have a world-historical political significance" (1612.) It wouldn't do to shoot Stalin in a hallway, in his office, on the street, at his home, or while he was riding to hounds. It had to be done during a Congress, or at the very least during a Plenum. Otherwise, you understand, the shot and his death might not be noticed at all. It might be given a 2-line item on the back page of *Pravda*, and the whole effect of the assassination would be lost.

Berman-Yurin further testifies that "Trotsky said that I

should not establish contact with any Trotskyist in Moscow, that I should carry out the work independently" (1612). From which it is evident that just as Kamenev, for example, did not invite the Trotskyist, Mrachkovsky, to all the meetings of the Center, and just as Zinoviev wanted to rush in ahead of the Trotskyists in order to be the first to claim credit for the assassinations, so Trotsky didn't trust either the Zinovievists or the Russian Trotskyists. All by himself, Berman-Yurin was to walk into a Plenum or Congress of the Comintern, get Stalin to the center of the hall, put him in a convenient position, and shoot him—"independently."

Overcome by modesty, Berman-Yurin thereupon suggested the employment of Fritz David to help him in Moscow. Trotsky, after reflection, decided that maybe he was right, maybe the job was just a little too much for one man working "independently," and that in any case, it wouldn't hurt to give another comrade a job (Himmler, in any case, wouldn't miss the extra salary to be paid out).

Berman-Yurin arrives in Moscow, gets in touch with David, and plans are laid to kill Stalin at the Thirteenth Plenum of the Comintern. "On the eve of the Plenum, however, it turned out that Fritz David did not succeed in getting an admission card for Berman-Yurin and the plan failed. It was decided to postpone the murder of comrade Stalin until the Comintern Congress." (1612.) Much to Stalin's relief, we have no doubt. "Before the opening of the Congress, however, Fritz David reported to me that he was again unable to get a card for me, but that he himself would be at the Congress." (1612.) Why David failed at these two meetings, we shall see later.

What Berman-Yurin did between the Seventh Congress of the Comintern and the end of May 1936, when he was arrested, we do not know and he does not say. Let us assume that he just sat at home for 8-10 months, in a blue funk at having missed both Comintern sessions. But whatever we assume, the fact is that the above is the sum total of Berman-Yurin's self-confessed terroristic activities. From which it becomes increasingly plain that Trotsky's chronic financial difficulties and the Herr Hjalmar Schacht's inability to balance the budget of Nazi Germany, are due in no small measure to the squandering of money on good-for-nothing assassins who

barely lift a finger to earn their keep. Especially to be condemned is the thoughtless expenditure of money to pay men like Berman-Yurin who is so all-too-obviously not a terrorist, but a double-crossed agent of the G.P.U.

## 6. Fritz David

We come to Trotsky's sixth agent, who, unlike Berman-Yurin, at least has a known record in the movement. This does not prevent him from being a liar, and a stupid liar to boot. Or, to be perfectly fair, that characterization applies to the G.P.U. which invented his testimony and wrote it out for him.

A Stalinist official in Russia and Germany for years, David got in touch with Sedov in August 1932, who proposed to him to go to Copenhagen to meet Trotsky. He agreed; he went; he met Trotsky.

"As one perspective, Trotsky proposed defeatism in the event of war, but emphasized that 'there is a more imminent perspective for the advent to power of the Trotskyists—the perspective of the physical elimination of Stalin.'

"VISHINSKY: What was your attitude towards this idea?

"DAVID: I accepted this perspective." (1616f.)

Just like drinking a glass of water! And after another pleasantry or two, David accepts the commission to leave for Russia to kill Stalin. He too (unlike Olberg and the Luryes, but why unlike them?) is admonished against getting in touch with any of the Russian terrorists, and off he goes.

So he met Trotsky in Copenhagen? But Berman-Yurin says that David was not in Copenhagen, that he spoke to Trotsky *about* David and recommended that he be taken on for the job, that Trotsky said he would write to his son in Berlin to investigate David before hiring him! If David was in Copenhagen during Trotsky's eight-day stay in Denmark, there would, obviously, be no need of writing to Sedov about him. David, in explaining how he went to meet Trotsky, testifies: "I traveled with a false passport. In one of the conversations I had with Sedov, he told me that Trotsky is journeying to Europe and wishes to meet me." (1616.) If Trotsky already knew about David, why did the latter have to be investigated? Clearly, either Berman-Yurin or David is lying like a trooper. What are we saying—"either or"?

The right way to put it is: Both of them are lying. Does Vishinsky confront them with each other's testimony, given a bare 24 hours apart? Of course not!

David gets to Russia in March 1933. He lays plans with Berman-Yurin to shoot Stalin. "The first attempt was to take place at the 13th Plenum of the E.C.C.I., the second at the 7th Congress of the Comintern. These plans failed because comrade Stalin did not attend the 13th Plenum." (1617.) Unutterably gullible assassins, to take seriously the legend about the "beloved leader of the international proletariat"! Didn't they know that the "chief of the world revolution" hasn't enough interest in the International to attend its Plenums? Or did some seventh sense, which makes Stalin such an admired genius, warn him against attending? Anyway, he did not attend, and apparently there was nobody of importance left at the Plenum to shoot at; so nothing happened.

But there is still the Congress! No card is obtainable for Berman-Yurin, so David goes alone. What caliber Browning he took along, we do not know, for the president of the court disconcertingly failed to ask David as he had asked N. Lurye. But it doesn't matter so much, for David never got a chance to shoot. Berman-Yurin explains that "a few days later I met Fritz David and he declared that he had been unable to shoot. He, Fritz David, sat in a loge, there were a lot of people in the loge and there was no possibility to shoot. Thus, this plan of ours also failed" (1612). Did he never leave the loge, was it forbidden to move around the hall, couldn't he ask for the floor so as to get to the platform where Stalin sat? Couldn't he do one of the hundred things that a *terrorist* would have done? Or did the plan fail because Stalin, so absorbed in the work of the Comintern, did not attend its sessions except for the ceremonial opening session, at which all delegates and visitors are nailed to loges? Or perhaps David has the 7th Congress mixed up with some other meeting? Let us see.

Berman-Yurin testifies that "the Congress was to be convened for September 1934" (1612). David testifies that "after the 7th Congress emissaries of Trotsky's son, Sedov, appeared twice at Fritz David's home and accused the terrorists in Sedov's name of insufficient activity. . . ." (1617.)

This is confirmed by Berman-Yurin who specifies that "in December (1934) Fritz David told me that an emissary of Sedov and Trotsky had appeared a short time ago and demanded information as to why the terroristic act had not been carried out" (1612). Thus, the first emissary appeared in December 1934, *after* the 7th Congress convened in September 1934, and at which David failed to shoot. But the 7th Congress of the Comintern was held not in September 1934, or at any other time in 1934. It opened in July 1935! Consequently, nobody could have reproached David, during any of the 12 months in 1934, for having failed to fire a shot at a Congress which opened in the seventh month of 1935! There can be no question of typographical error in the record, for both the English and German translations are identical in this respect.

Now, who was Fritz David? We bring his case to a close with a statement by Erich Wollenberg. Wollenberg, an army officer during the war, distinguished himself as a leader of the Red Army during the short-lived Bavarian Soviet Republic in 1919. Forced to flee to Russia in 1923, he entered the Red Army there and rose to the rank of captain. In 1932, he returned to Germany and became editor of the C.P. daily organ, the *Rote Fabne*, and a leader of the anti-Fascist League. Back in Russia after the débâcle, he demanded the right to leave for Germany to work for the re-creation of a communist party. For this he was expelled from the party. He is at present in exile in Czechoslovakia. As an authority on the matter in hand, he is unquestionable. His statement is an open letter to the editors of the official organ of the German Stalinists, *Deutsche Volkszeitung*:

"Concerning the so-called Moscow 'trial,' which is a milestone in the proletarian St. Bartholomew's Eve that has been dragging on for years in the Soviet Union, I make the following declaration:

"1. In 1932, I worked as editor of the Berlin *Rote Fabne* together with the then trade union editor, Fritz David, alias I. I. Krugliansky, who was a defendant in the Moscow 'trial' and at the same time a crown witness.

"2. Leading editors of the *Rote Fabne*, now intimate collaborators of the *Deutsche Volkszeitung*, who, like myself, were in opposition to the leadership and line of the Central

Committee of the German Communist Party in 1932, warned me against David, whose function as trade union editor was merely auxiliary to his main function as agent of the G.P.U. (he directed the Soviet-Russian factory espionage in Berlin) and as spy of the central apparatus of the C.P.G. inside the editorial board. I learned from them that from 1919 to 1925 Fritz David worked in the organizations of the Social Revolutionaries (S.R.'s) as an *agent provocateur* of the Cheka.

3. In the Summer of 1932, several oppositional *Rote Fabne* editors, among them the closest present collaborators of the *Deutsche Volkszeitung*, were disciplined on the basis of denunciations of Fritz David who, moreover, combined the most contemptible toadying to the party leadership with unbounded personal cowardice.

"I call upon the editors of the *Deutsche Volkszeitung* not to withhold from their readers the rôle of Chekist *agent provocateur*, with which they are familiar, played by the now allegedly executed David (Göring killed his accomplices in the Reichstag fire, why not the G.P.U. its David?)

"ERICH WOLLENBERG."

## 7. Valentin Olberg

We arrive, finally, at an examination of Trotsky's seventh and last agent-in-assassination, who puts in the shade all the other defendant-witnesses for sheer glibness, falsehood and self-contradiction. At the same time, we come to the last two of the three sole pieces of material evidence—the exhibits. Consequently, we come to the end of the trial proper.

Olberg is Vishinsky's star witness. He not only admits everything, but he is the first to do so. He admits that he was Trotsky's emissary in Germany; that he was sent by Trotsky and Sedov to Russia to kill Stalin; that he and the Trotskyists were linked with the Nazis, all of whom collaborated to get him a false passport. No prosecutor in the world could wish for a more voluble and congenial witness.

"In 1930, began his contact with Trotsky and with Trotsky's son Sedov." (1609.)

Let us first read what Trotsky has to say about this "contact." In a statement made in Norway on August 20, 1936, he wrote:

"In the beginning of 1930, I was looking for a secretary

who understood Russian. My German friends, Franz Pfempfert (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 (Turkey) as my secretary. The Pfempferts invited Olberg to their home in order to find out what kind of person he was. On April 1, 1930, Franz Pfempfert wrote to me: 'Olberg produces the most unfavorable and the most untrustworthy impression.' The letter explains that Olberg, a former Stalinist, had pretended to change his ideas overnight 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,' continued Pfempfert, 'not underestimate the Stalin clique. 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 24 hours an insufferable burden upon you. Possibly—no, surely, even for the future. He will use his visit to you for his 'writings'—if not for reports to the G.P.U.'

"A letter from Mrs. Pfempfert on 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. . . .

"Mr. Franz Pfempfert is now in exile in Karlsbad, Czechoslovakia, working as a photographer. He will surely confirm the above." \*

Trotsky's statement is confirmed by a number of easily verifiable facts. Valentin Olberg first appears anywhere in the communist movement (to our knowledge) in 1928. In that year and the next his name appears regularly in the official Comintern press as a writer of reports from Latvia.

\* Is that why the Czech Stalinists are now so violently demanding Pfempfert's deportation from the country as an "undesirable" and an "assassin"? It goes without saying that there is a price on his head in the country of his birth, Germany.



All of them are written in the classic Stalinist style (a typical one is entitled "The Latvian Social Democracy as Aiders and Abettors of Fascism"). *International Press Correspondence* for 1929 contains half a dozen of his contributions (Nos. 16, 20, 26, 32, 33, 61). But in 1930, the year in which he sought to worm his way into the Opposition and the position of Trotsky's secretary, his articles no longer appear in the Stalinist press (to be absolutely exact, the last one of the "first series" appears at the very beginning of 1930, in Vol. X, No. 1 of the German *Inprekorr*). But if he has disappeared from the Stalinist press, this "emissary" of Trotsky, now turns up in the Trotskyist press. At the significant, corroborative period of July 1930, he appears with a brief three-inch article, "*Epoche Stalin*" in the then German Trotskyist monthly (*Der Kommunist*, Vol. I, No. 5). This is his one and only contribution to any Trotskyist periodical in any country in the world.

Having, as we saw from Trotsky's statement, failed to make any headway during 1930 with his G.P.U. agent's work among the Trotskyists, he drops his pretense of agreeing with their ideas and returns to work openly again for his masters. The Summer of 1931, he resumes his daylight collaboration in the Stalinist press with an article—again typically Stalinist in line and tone—entitled "*Zur Krise in Lettland*" (*Internationale Presse Korrespondenz*, Vol. XI, No. 60, June 23, 1931).

Olberg does not mention his attempt to become Trotsky's secretary. But he tells a story of how Sedov showed him Trotsky's appeal to the Soviet government on the question of his citizenship (the notorious secret murder summons found in the double-bottom of Holtzmann's trunk!), and in connection with it proposed that Olberg go to the Soviet Union to assassinate Stalin. Did Olberg hesitate for a moment? Was he assailed by doubts either as to the compatibility of such an enterprise with his principles or as to his ability to carry out such a job—no bagatelle!—as the killing of Stalin? Not for an instant. His only concern was over a passport, he himself not being a citizen of any country at that time. But that proved to be a triviality. "Soon, however, I succeeded in fixing that up and I left for the U.S.S.R. with a passport which I obtained in the name of

Freudigmann." (1610.) From whom? We learn that elsewhere:

"Olberg further testifies that to obtain a passport he used the services of a certain Friedmann, a Berlin Trotskyist, who was at the same time an agent of the German police." (*Moscow Daily News*, Aug. 22, 1936.)

And who was Friedmann? We have already learned from Olberg's testimony (see p. 120) that he "heard about" Friedmann being "connected with the German police." But since the "totalitarian Fascist dictatorship" was established only after the Reichstag fire, February 28, 1933, and Olberg obtained his passport before the formation of the *Fascist* police (the *Gestapo*), it appears that the Trotskyists were in league with the Weimar-Republican police as well as with their Fascist successors. More is to be said on this score later on.

Olberg, in company with Sedov, was then supposed to visit Trotsky during his stay in Copenhagen, but as we have seen, the journey did not take place and instead, Sedov's wife, Suzanne, made the trip and came back with a letter from Trotsky to his son, "in which Trotsky gave his agreement with my journey to the U.S.S.R." (1610.) Let us leave aside the petty detail that Sedov's wife is not named Suzanne—only a carping critic would demand exactitude in such trifles—and proceed with the ensuing court dialogue. In connection with Friedmann, Vishinsky asks:

"Were the connections of the German Trotskyists with the German police a systematic affair?"

"OLBERG: Yes, it was a system and it was done with Trotsky's approval.

"VISHINSKY: How do you know that this was done with Trotsky's knowledge and approval?"

"OLBERG: One of these contact lines passed through me personally. My contact was organized with Trotsky's sanction.

"VISHINSKY: Your personal contact with whom?"

"OLBERG: With the Fascist secret police." (1610.)

Note first that "German police" suddenly becomes "Fascist secret police." Friedmann was first a member (necessarily, in 1932) of the Republican police.

Note secondly, that Trotsky approved (in his letter to

Sedov) of affiliation with the *Gestapo* while he was in Copenhagen, that is, the first days of December 1932 at the very latest, that is, months before the *Gestapo* was founded! But this is not all. Olberg, who is now picking up speed, continues to testify that "in 1933, there began an organized system of contacts of the German Trotskyists with the German Fascist police" (1610). These "contacts," therefore, could not possibly have "begun" more than a month or two before Olberg made his first trip to Russia, at the end of March 1933. Good. But in 1935, two years later, *en route* in another trip to Russia from Czechoslovakia, he decides to go through Germany. There he stops to see an old Trotskyist acquaintance, Slomowitz, also recommended to him by the Prague Nazi agent, Tukalewski. That Slomowitz is a name entirely unknown to the Trotskyist movement, is of course only another detail. But Olberg went to see her early in 1935 and he relates how she told him that

"... during my absence only very few of the Trotskyist cadres were left and that we now stand before the dilemma: the Trotskyists must either liquidate themselves or else come to an agreement with the Fascists. The question of the preparation and carrying out of terrorism against the leaders of the C.P.S.U.(b) and the Soviet government serves as the basis for the agreement. Trotsky sanctioned the agreement of the Berlin Trotskyists with the *Gestapo* and the Trotskyists actually remained at large." (1610.)

So the story runs as follows: The Trotskyists were already connected in 1932 through Friedmann with the Republican or Fascist police (you have a choice of either or both). Trotsky approved of the alliance with the *Gestapo* in his November-December 1932 letter to Sedov, even though the *Gestapo* did not yet exist. Early in 1933, the Trotskyist-*Gestapo* alliance "began," one of the lines of contact passing directly through Olberg. Yet, early in 1935, two years later, the Trotskyists "*now* stand before the dilemma" of dissolving or uniting with the *Gestapo*! Trotsky, presumably angry with his followers for not having acted on his "approval" of 1932, then sanctions the alliance a second time, whereupon, we suppose, everything went off smoothly.

Isn't this just a little bit too thin? It will not wash.

That there may have been and, for that matter, still be,

*Gestapo* agents in the ranks of the Trotskyists, is not difficult to believe. They penetrate the ranks and even the leadership of virtually every anti-Fascist German group abroad. Only recently, one was exposed in Prague, where he worked in the confidential emigrants' bureau of the social democratic party. As for the communist party, it was literally infested with Fascist agents, who found their work rendered less difficult by the fact that the bureaucratic Stalinist régime puts a premium on careerists and yes-men who come from nowhere. Take the example of Kadner, a *Gestapo* agent. He was a member of the Central Committee of the communist party, whose functions brought him the acquaintance of most of the middle and upper functionaries of the party. He was finally exposed and a courageous worker entered Kadner's home near Berlin and shot him dead. Or take Hellmuth Brückner, *Gestapo* agent, editor of the *Rote Fabne*, and after Hitler's triumph, a most intimate collaborator of the illegal communist Central Committee inside Germany, which consisted of three men, two of whom were John Scheer and Lambert Horn. Scheer, finally murdered by the Nazis, and two others were arrested immediately after a meeting with Brückner, to whom were transmitted orders for party work in Hamburg and Königsberg. Brückner was exposed as a *Gestapo* agent by his own wife.

Imagine for one instant what a furor and din, what unspeakable accusations would be raised by the Stalinists against Trotsky's followers if *Gestapo* agents, *real ones*, were disclosed as having occupied posts among them corresponding to the posts occupied among the Stalinists by Brückner and Kadner! But back to Olberg.

He left for Russia at the end of March 1933, with the famous Freudigmann passport. "Olberg remained in the Soviet Union until the end of July 1933. The aim of his trip was the preparation and carrying out of the assassination of comrade Stalin. Upon his arrival in the Soviet Union, Olberg concealed himself for a month and a half in Moscow, after which he went to Stalinabad where he established himself as a history teacher. Since he had no documents regarding his military service, he had to return abroad and went to Prague." (1610.)

What a first-rate assassin we have here! He arrives in

Moscow, Stalin's residence, in order to murder Stalin. A good beginning, at least the first elementary step an assassin must take in such an enterprise. What does he do in Moscow? Does he get in touch with the already established "Trotskyist-Zinovievist Terrorist Center?" No. Does he buy a Browning (medium caliber)? No. Does he work out plans, does he do any reconnoitering, does he at least stand around street corners to watch how fast official Soviet automobiles travel, as N. Lurye did? No. What *does* he do? Clever conspirator that he is, he hides! He conceals himself for a month and a half! Then, after he has dug himself in, he decides to execute a bold manœuvre in the battle of wits with Stalin. Without a word of notice, he picks up his Freudigmann and . . . leaves for Stalinabad. Why Stalinabad? The capital of Tadjikistan is almost 2,000 miles away from Moscow, which Stalin almost never leaves. Olberg's mission was to assassinate Stalin, wasn't it? Would a man seeking to assassinate Roosevelt leave Washington for Bolivia in order to do it? Did Olberg plan to do the job by long distance, by means of a pistol? or by wireless waves? or by special delivery letter? Or did he plan to curse Stalin to death from afar? Or perhaps, like the African and Caribbean witch-doctors, he planned to make a wax image of Stalin, stick a needle through its heart and then, by wishing hard, transfer the fatal wound from the image to the original?

Whatever he planned to do in Stalinabad in the murderous capacity of history teacher, was promptly foiled by the authorities. Where is the record of military service on your passport? You can't teach history—not in Stalinabad, you can't—without having done your military service. Poor Olberg, all the train fare spent for nothing. And why no military service recorded on his passport? Because the Weimar Republic, which issued the passport, *had no military service* for citizens, that being specifically forbidden by the now bedraggled Versailles Treaty! Military service was first reintroduced by Hitler on March 16, 1935. How could the Dean of the School of History of Stalinabad or the local police have demanded a record of German military service from Olberg some time in July 1933?

Olberg goes back to Prague and leaves it for his second trip to Russia only in March 1935, this time with a Honduran

passport, obtained for him through the *Gestapo* and its agent, Sedov. What was he doing in Prague for some 20 months? Resting from the rigors of concealment in Moscow and history-teaching in Stalinabad? Was assassination merely a side-line with him, to be followed when he didn't have a regular job? Or why did it take the resourceful *Gestapo* so long to get him another and a better passport? Olberg does not say. He merely reports that he wrote Sedov his forlorn story, received a soothing reply not to be discouraged, and that he finally got his Honduran passport through the medium of a Vladimir Tukalewski, director of the Slavic Library of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague, also a *Gestapo* agent; for this passport, Sedov paid the neat sum of 13,000 Czech kronen. Whereupon, Olberg left for Russia again, stopping, as we saw, to see his old acquaintance Slomowitz in Berlin.

### Exhibits No. 2 and 3

And thus we have our second exhibit, the second of the three which constituted, so to say, the *only* material "evidence" against the sixteen accused. Vishinsky presents it triumphantly: Olberg's Honduran passport!

On this aspect of Olberg's tale, we have, in addition to our eyes and the common sense given us by nature, three statements which tear Olberg's story to shreds. The first is by Mr. Tukalewski:

"One of the accused in the Moscow trial, V. Olberg, has stated that I, as an agent of the *Gestapo*, am supposed to have obtained a passport from the Republic of Honduras to enable him to travel to the U.S.S.R. V. Olberg appeared in the Slavic Library for the first time in 1933, presented himself as an instructor in the pedagogical institute of Stalinabad, in Tadjikistan, wrote on the questionnaire submitted to him so that he might get a reader's card, that he was a German citizen and declared that he wanted to acquaint himself with the latest publications in the field of history. On September 29, 1933, this reader's card was handed him. For a certain period of time, he frequented the reading room, then left, he said, for the U.S.S.R. In the Spring of 1934, he reappeared in the library and on May 4, 1934 his reader's card was renewed. He frequented the reading room for a long period

of time, declaring that he would still stay here for a time because the German Embassy had refused to prolong his passport for abroad. That is why he endeavored to get the aid of the Pedagogical Institute of Stalinabad for a visa for the U.S.S.R. in order to continue his pedagogical activities in Stalinabad. On January 21, 1935, his reading card was prolonged. He frequented the reading room with some interruptions. Late in the Spring of 1935, he appeared at the library and said he was leaving for Stalinabad. Since that time I heard no more of him. . . . WŁADIMIR TUKALEWSKI." (*Prager Tageblatt*, Aug. 27, 1936.)

So much for Mr. Tukalewski, with whom we need not concern ourselves any further at this time, except for one final point. The third and last "exhibit" in the trial was announced by Vishinsky in his concluding speech: "Tukalewski's visiting card likewise exists and is to be found among the documents; it wasn't even taken from Olberg but dug up in Stalinabad at a secret address. It is not simply a visiting card with 'Wladimir Tukalewski' on it, but a card with two cabalistic letters 'P' and 'F,' '1936,' which served as a code and a password previously agreed upon between Valentin Olberg and Tukalewski." (1630.)

The third and final piece of evidence is undoubtedly the most crushing blow the defendants could possibly have suffered. The mere fact that the letter "P" could be written on this visiting card, is already damning enough, and the sensation it caused in the courtroom can be imagined without difficulty. But when there is added to it the letter "F," that is more than the toughest criminal could stand without breaking down and confessing. The "1936" on the card would be crushing enough by itself, but added to the two letters, it becomes absolutely irrefutable proof. Proof of what? Well, we do not know exactly what it is supposed to prove. That detail, too, was not brought out at the trial; Olberg didn't tell, and he was not distinguished by reticence. Vishinsky didn't bother to ask. So that what this last exhibit was supposed to indicate, we are not in a position to say.

The second statement is, to be sure, anonymous, but made by what the editors of the French syndicalist paper in which it appeared, call an "absolutely trustworthy person who knew Olberg personally" and who is ready to testify under oath

before an investigation committee. The statement bears all the earmarks of verisimilitude:

"The affirmation of the prosecutor of the Republic, Vishinsky, is well known: the accused of the sensational big trial in Moscow are agents of the Hitlerist *Gestapo*. The proof? There is no proof. Or rather, what was produced in the course of this 'trial' as convicting evidence, the only tangible item, was a passport.

"Olberg was the bearer of the passport; he entered the Soviet Union, provided with this passport, and with a visa in good and proper form: the passport was a passport of the Republic of Honduras, and the prosecutor excoriates this 'mad dog,' this 'vomit of the counter-revolution' for having utilized this 'false passport.'

"A whole scaffolding has been built around this passport. It was supposedly bought in Prague, through the medium of a *Gestapo* agent and the 13,000 Czech kronen that it cost are supposed to have been given Olberg by 'the Trotskyists' of Prague. This muddled story is false from one end to the other.

"Firstly, Olberg did not at all enter the U.S.S.R. without being authorized to do so. Moreover, it is not possible for him to have entered clandestinely, for he was given employment there. He entered, on the contrary, very legally, with his passport, visaed by the Soviet Legation in Prague.

"The tribunal conducted the questioning in such a manner as to hide this first fundamental point.

"Second declaration: Olberg had announced, in advance, to the Soviet Legation in Prague that he was going to obtain this exotic passport. The Soviet legation itself had suggested the idea to him because Olberg, fugitive emigrant from Germany, deprived of all nationality, had gone to the Soviet Legation in Prague and had asked for the authorization indispensable for anyone going to the U.S.S.R. He was told, substantially, the following: Since you are not a citizen of our country; since you are not a communist, either; we have no right to give you any papers. But get yourself any kind of passport, a valid and proper one, and we shall see.

"Third declaration: There is nothing irregular about the acquisition of this passport. Olberg, son of a former Russian citizen, immigrated to Germany and, deprived of German



citizenship by Hitler, established connections in Prague with one of those agents there who obtain, for money, valid passports, not at all counterfeited, but emanating from the legations of certain countries. Olberg, to acquire a nationality, bought a passport of this kind. The price of it was fixed at 6,000 Czech kronen.

"Last and most important point: The persons who furnished Olberg with the sum he needed to buy the passport are known.

"In fact, this man, who finished his history studies at the University of Berlin, receives from relations and friends the sum of 6,000 kronen. In addition, to complete the sum demanded, he sold his library to the Masaryk Library in Prague. The painful collection of this sum took two months.

"The sum once in his hands, Olberg looked up his agent again. But since passports of the Republic of Honduras were very much sought after, the latter had raised the price and demanded 9,000 kronen. Olberg didn't have this sum. He bargained, and succeeded in lowering the price to 7,000 kronen.

"As for the 1,000 kronen he was lacking, Olberg borrowed them. The persons 'touched' live in Prague. They can be heard before an international commission of inquiry.

"These facts demolish the fragile edifice of the accusation of the Moscow prosecutor. There is no *Gestapo*, no 'Trotskyists,' no 13,000 kronen, no clandestine entry into the U.S.S.R. What there is, is the almost banal story of a passport bought on the market. One could cite other German emigrants who possess the same passport.

"The Soviet legation in Prague knew and still knows absolutely everything about the origin of this passport, and knows that Olberg, though he entered the Soviet Union in a regular manner, with a visa from the said Legation, accused himself before the tribunal of being an agent of the *Gestapo!* . . ." (*La Révolution Proletarienne*, Vol. XII, No. 230, Sept. 10, 1936, pp. 269f.)

Finally, the statement made in the authoritative *Manchester Guardian*, outstanding liberal periodical in Europe, always so friendly to the Soviet Union that the Soviet Ambassador to London, Mr. Maisky, recently expressed his appreciation for its past position. In its issue of August 29, 1936, we are in-

formed, reliably, that Olberg . . . "belonged to no political party, but was greatly attracted by the land of his childhood, Russia. He tried to get an academic post in Russia, and applied for a visa at the Russian Consulate in Prague in 1934, but was told that he could not have a visa unless he had a passport. It is possible to acquire the passports of certain states by purchase, and this has often been done by émigrés who have been deprived of their own. Valentin Olberg succeeded in buying a Honduran passport for 7,000 Czech crowns (not 13,000, as 'admitted' in the trial). To raise this sum he sold a part of his library. His wife's parents also contributed a sum which they raised by the sale of old jewelry. That he obtained the money from the German *Gestapo* is, therefore, untrue."

Let us now continue with the itinerary of Olberg's second trip to the Soviet Union. "This trip again yielded no results, for it was taken on the basis of a tourist visa which was not dated for very long, and a few days later Olberg had to return to Germany." (1610.) Another trip wasted! But why did he start out in the first place if his Soviet visa was valid for such a brief stay that a few days after his arrival he had to turn back? Did he think that what he failed to do in the four months of his first stay in Russia, he would be able to do in the few days of his second stay? And how did he manage to hold converse with Sedov, as he testifies, "during my second journey"? His second journey was in 1935. He traveled, he says, from Prague to Berlin (to see Slomowitz) and from Berlin to Moscow, none of which lines passes even near Paris. How did he see Sedov? In 1933, the latter had left Germany and moved to France, which he has not left to the present day. Did Olberg see him in France in 1933? He doesn't mention a voyage to that country at all. Or is anything as specific as a country where a meeting occurred to be avoided? Or perhaps France is not named because the G.P.U. agents who designed the testimony are unacquainted with the name of any hotel outside the frontiers of the Soviet Union except for the Bristol Hotel in Copenhagen?

In any case, urged on by the long-suffering Sedov, Olberg tried it a third time and left for the U.S.S.R. again in July 1935.

"VISHINSKY: Tell us now how you prepared the terroristic act?

"Olberg relates that already before his arrival in Gorky, he had learned from Sedov that an illegal Trotskyist organization exists in the U.S.S.R., which is led by Smirnov and Mrachkovsky. He also knew about Bakayev, to whom Sedov referred as a man with 'extremely terroristic' inclinations. In Gorky, Olberg learned from Fedotov that the combat units were already organized before his arrival. All that Olberg had to do was to work out the plan for the attempted assassination. The terroristic act was to be committed on May 1, 1936 in Moscow." (1611.)

Why didn't he go to see and report to Smirnov, during his 1933 trip or the two he made in 1935? Was he held back by the technical detail of Smirnov's incarceration on January 1, 1933 in a prison from which he was never released, except by death? Why didn't he go to see Mrachkovsky, or the "extremely terroristic" Bakayev? No answer, and for good and obvious reasons. What plans, furthermore, did he elaborate in Gorky? Did he intend to wheel a howitzer into place and aim at the Kremlin in distant Moscow? Or send Stalin a letter which, when opened, would eject a poisoned needle into his thumb? Or did he intend to march upon Moscow with the serried ranks of Fedotov's "combat units" and take both the Kremlin and Stalin by storm? No answer, and again for good and obvious reasons.

One final aspect of the Olberg testimony. He relates elsewhere that he left a third time for Russia. "After a brief stay in Minsk, Olberg proceeded to Gorky, put himself in touch with the Trotskyists, Yelenin and Fedotov, soon obtained employment in the Pedagogical Institute of Gorky and remained there until the day of his arrest." (1610.)

Why did he stop in Minsk? To see an uncle, to visit the cathedral, or to blaze away at Stalin in Moscow on the long chance that a bullet might take effect? No elaboration; no explanation. And how did he get a job so quickly at the Gorky Pedagogical Institute? Was his record of military service in the Republic of Honduras better than his record of service in Weimar, Germany, which didn't have any? Are we asked to believe that it is quite the custom in the town of Gorky for Honduran citizens, who do not speak a word

of Spanish but who speak Russian fluently, to drop into the institutions of learning and be given a job immediately, without being too closely scrutinized? Thereupon, Olberg remembers that his brother Paul, who had a good German passport and who was already settled in Moscow as an engineer, obtained the school position for him. Paul Olberg is also under arrest for the same crime as his brother, although he was not produced as a witness in Valentin's case.

This assertion brings us to a crucial point in the frame-up. V. Olberg could not conceivably have obtained the position at Gorky (considering the papers with which he was equipped) without the knowledge and consent of the G.P.U. There is, moreover, every reason to believe that he had worked, at one time or another, or for that matter, ever since 1930, if not earlier, as an agent of the G.P.U. The latter holds such gentlemen in reserve; it does not lose sight of them and it does not lose its records of them. Olberg was allowed to remain in Gorky "until the day of his arrest."

It is not difficult to construct a plausible hypothesis on how the frame-up was prepared. Why was Olberg suddenly arrested? Who exposed him? Who could "expose" a man guilty of no offense? Nobody needed to expose him. The G.P.U. knew where he was and knew also that it could always put its hands on him when he was needed. In concocting the frame-up, they started with their weakest link. There is good reason to believe that Olberg, of all those arrested (and there were far more arrested than the sixteen who were broken down, made to "confess" and brought to trial), was among the first, if not the very first. In the indictment, the statements made by the defendants during the preliminary investigations are often referred to, sometimes with dates given. The earliest date given for any "confession" is February 25, 1936; the name of the man is Olberg!

They got to him first and broke him down by means of those unspeakable refinements of cruelty known to us from the direct evidence of Sukhanov and Dr. Ciliga. With his "confession" they went on to the next man, threatening to use Olberg's statements as evidence with which to sentence him to death unless he too made a "confession" such as the prosecutor and the fatherland required, in which case his life would be spared. Little by little fifteen other men were

broken down in this dastardly manner. The earliest reference to a "confession" by Reingold is July 3; Karev on July 5; Mrachkovsky on July 20; Moses Lurye and Holtzmann on July 21; Kamenev on July 23; at his May 20 hearing, Smirnov "denied everything" but on August 5 he is already admitting perfectly preposterous things—what unmentionable days Smirnov must have passed in the ten weeks that separated those two hearings! Ter-Vaganian "originally adopted the same attitude of denial, but on August 14 he gave more truthful evidence" (1629); he had held out until the very last minute, until August 14, the day the prosecutor made public the indictment!

That's how this most sinister and appalling of all frame-ups was constructed and carried through to its ghastly end. That's why men who had nothing to confess except the revolutionary principles for which they once stood and which, perhaps, many of them still inclined towards—told such fantastically contradictory stories when they took the stand, lies at both ends and everywhere in between, lies which are an eternal condemnation not so much of those who uttered them as of those who invented them and forced others to utter them.

That is why the real criminals were not the wretched defendants, but the men in the highest Soviet places who directed the frame-up and the executions that ended it. That is why a true proletarian court will some day have to retrieve the tarnished honor of the revolution by placing on trial the traducers and murderers of the sixteen who died on August 24, 1936, the gruesome offenders—Stalin and his clique.

## Why Stalin Needed the Trial of the Sixteen

Two main aims were pursued by Stalin in perpetrating the Moscow trial and carrying it to its sanguinary conclusion. One, broadly speaking, was to further his reconciliation with the world bourgeoisie, particularly with the so-called "democratic" imperialisms. The other was to strengthen the shaky foundations of his own power in the Soviet Union.

The maturing of a revolutionary situation in France and the actual outbreak of a bitterly-fought civil war in Spain,

confront the ruling classes of Europe with the most serious and imminent threat to their bankrupt domination that they have faced in a long time. The Soviet bureaucracy, at the same time, feels compelled to maintain and extend its military alliances with a section of the world bourgeoisie at whatever the cost. The full price which the European (and American) bourgeoisie demands for *assured* aid to the Soviet Union is the abandonment of the international proletarian revolution and the basic conquests of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. This price, the Stalinist bureaucracy has been paying in larger or smaller installments ever since it came to power in 1923-1924, sometimes reluctantly, perhaps, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously. The Stalinist epoch will be recorded as the period of the gradual liquidation of the proletarian revolution in Russia. Now, with the working class again faced with the prospect in France and Spain of a new and decisive victory, which would change the map of the world, and with the bourgeoisie faced with the prospect of a decisive defeat, the latter is demanding from Stalin the payment of several installments—large ones.

Ever since the outbreak of the Spanish civil war, in particular, the European bourgeois press was filled with inspired stories about secret meetings in various parts of the continent between representatives of the Third and Fourth ("Trotskyist") Internationals, at which the former consigned to the latter the task of agitating openly for the proletarian revolution in Spain, while the former made a pretense at being for bourgeois "democracy" and against revolution. One of these stories had Trotsky meeting with Bukharin somewhere in Holland; another, in Norway. The ultra-reactionary Parisian *Le Matin*, for example, not so long ago reported Bukharin in Prague, presiding over a meeting of the two Internationals, at which Trotsky was given the leadership of the Spanish revolution and several million gold rubles towards this end. The noted publicist of the Right wing of the Radical-Socialist Party of France, Pierre Dominique, who vigorously opposes the inclusion of the communists in the People's Front, and demands a break with Moscow, has written articles recently in *La République* to the same effect.

The dramatic indictment of Zinoviev, Kamenev and the others, their ruthless execution, the indictment of Trotsky—

that is, the assault upon those figures that symbolize the dread words "World Revolution" to the international bourgeoisie, is Stalin's way of taking the blood-oath to the latter that the international proletarian revolution, so long as the Kremlin is concerned, has long been interred. That is just it: Stalin has dug the grave of the Third International, its founders, its traditions and literally filled it with corpses. In their place, he erected an institution which resembles the dead one only in name. In fact, it is a border police patrol of the Soviet bureaucracy and the police guardian of law and order throughout the bourgeois world. The new institution has functioned for some time now, but the trial was intended to establish that fact *sensationally*. The Boston capitalist paper which gleefully commented on the trial with the statement that the Third International has been stood against the wall and shot, summarized it perfectly.

In the same sense, one can consider another aspect of the relationship between the trial and the Spanish revolution. The success of the latter would deal a death blow to the "great contribution" made by Stalinism to the theory of the movement: "socialism in a single country." It was only in the third week of the uprising that the solidarity action in the Soviet Union was allowed to get under way. The collections among the masses for aid to the Spanish revolutionists mounted finally to the pitiable sum of 12,000,000 rubles. If we accept the official estimate of trade unionists alone in the Soviet Union (the figure is 20,000,000) this comes to an average of 60 copecks per head—the equivalent of two fares on the new Moscow subway.

The Spanish civil war began on June 18; the first announcement of the trial came on August 15. In all that time, the Soviet Union did nothing, literally nothing really to aid the sorely pressed proletariat of Spain. The few shiploads of food and bandages were not aid—they were like alms given with a sneer. While the workers were being driven back, inch by inch, by the reaction, excellently armed and equipped by the cynical Fascist powers, the most that Stalin could summon himself to do for them was to spend his time playing the macabre farce of "neutrality" at Geneva and London, jockeying for diplomatic position, religiously refraining from sending indispensable arms and ammunition to Spain, and

bluffing, bluffing, bluffing about the aid which he "threatened" to send.

The trial also served the purposes of the bureaucracy in distracting the attention of the Soviet proletariat, and the workers in the capitalist lands, from the base betrayal of the Spanish working class by the Stalinist apparatus.

This combination of domestic and foreign interests of the bureaucracy has marked every one of the big trials staged by the Stalinists in the last seven years. In the 1929-1930 trials of the "Wreckers" (Ramzin and his associates), the difficulties and defects of the first Five Year Plan were loaded on the shoulders of the defendants, so that the bureaucracy could piously shake off all responsibility. And since the international position of the Soviet Union at that time made France and the Versailles system the principal opponents of the Russians, the "Wreckers" were presented as the allies of the French General Staff and the origin of the conspiracy was located in Paris.

The trial of the so-called Mensheviks in 1930 occurred during the height of the "Third Period" insanity. Since "social-Fascism" was the "main danger" at that time, the trial against the scapegoats at home was quite artificially and groundlessly combined with a trial of the international social democracy. The plotters were not merely the Russian Mensheviks, but Abramovich, Blum, Vandervelde and the Central Committee of the German social democracy which financed the plot.

The first trial in connection with the Kirov assassination bore the same characteristics. Here, it is true, the bureaucracy, taken by surprise, vacillated. At first, it gave definite assurances that the guilty were White Guards who smuggled themselves in from the border countries, like Finland, Latvia, Poland and Rumania. It was only later that the decision was made to involve Trotsky and the consul of a small country like Latvia which was, more or less, under the influence of Germany, and the "home opposition" in the persons of the former Zinovievists. The foreign political orientation of the bureaucracy is now towards France; consequently, we no longer hear of that country or of the General Staff of its army being involved in any way.

The third Kirov trial, just concluded, omits Latvia. Poland,



for an alliance with which Stalin still holds out hope, is not mentioned, nor is Yugoslavia, about which the same hopes are entertained. Rumania, which is still largely within the French sphere of influence, also escapes being involved. As for France and her General Staff, they have ceased to plot for the simple reason that between the trial of the "Mensheviks" and the present day, Soviet foreign policy has undergone a drastic change: the Franco-Soviet military alliance has become the "guarantee of world peace." In the place of the traditional French imperialist enemy there now appears Nazi Germany. In the place of the Latvian Consul, who has been so completely forgotten or ignored, there appear the agents of the *Gestapo*. Together with them, Stalin puts on trial *all* of his present or past inner-party opponents and links them with the Hitlerites, who do indeed represent a formidable foreign enemy and whom Stalinist policy helped to bring to power in 1933.

## The Killing Off of the Old Bolsheviks

The killing off of all his present or past inner-party opponents—that means the killing off of the whole stratum of Old Bolsheviks, that remarkable selection of tried revolutionists who passed through the great struggle for the emancipation of the Russian masses side by side with Lenin!

Stalin is driven to this appalling goal by the logic of his bureaucratic position, both on the international and the domestic fields. The liquidation of the conquests of the Russian revolution could be accomplished only in a period of lasting reaction and carried out only by an ever-narrowing reactionary bureaucracy. It cannot but arouse a movement among the masses in which their increasing discontentment, however muted, begins to make itself felt.

As the spurious "irrevocable socialism" of Stalin is established, neither the classes nor the institutions of state coercion disappear. On the contrary, the Soviet Union is experiencing a growing social-economic differentiation, in which new strata are separating from each other and giving promise of developing into new classes. State coercion, far from vanishing or even diminishing, is enormously intensified. The Stakhanovist movement has not improved the conditions of the masses as a

whole, has not improved them socially, that is, in relation to the national income. It has, however, created an aristocracy of labor which, in some sections, has an income and standards of living which are five, ten, twenty and more times higher than the income and living standards of the average worker. This aristocracy is most closely linked with the highly privileged Soviet and party bureaucracy, and together form an upper caste which puts an increasing social and economic distance between itself and the gray masses.

In agriculture, a similar process is taking place, directly fostered by the Stalinist governors. In recent times, the "private sector" of the so-called collectives has been greatly extended; land has been turned over to individual or group ownership "in perpetuity"; the peasants are having every one of their petty-bourgeois and individualistic inclinations spurred on by the government which calls upon them, above all, to "Become Well-to-do!"

The same process also in the armed forces. That close, democratic inter-connection between officers and men, is being cut down relentlessly, and the morals and customs of bourgeois armies put in its place. Titles are now restored; "Marshals" are created; the principles of national patriotism and of blind obedience are the order of the day.

In the domain of the family, reaction is displacing the progress for which the Soviet republic gained such a world-wide renown. The new law on abortions, which wipes out all the progressive legislation in this field, has been jammed down the throats of the masses, and as is always the case with such laws in all countries, it works exclusively to the disadvantage of the poorer sections of the population, the less educated, while having no effects on the well-to-do and the well-schooled. The command to breed is not the socialist ideal for woman's status in the future society.

The bureaucratic régime has also triumphed completely in the factories, where the last remnants of workers' control have been eliminated, the powers of the factory councils cut down at the root, the system of "unit direction" established in its place, thus giving the "Red" factory directors unlimited and uncontrolled powers.

In the field of education, likewise, the hated Czarist heritage of uniforms, wiped out by the October revolution, has been

re-adopted, and with them all the reactionary concepts of relationships between pupil and teacher (absolute obedience, intervention of parents, report cards, marks, etc.). The care of children, in which Soviet legislation was the most progressive in the world from any and every standpoint, has felt the dead hand of reactionary bureaucratism. Everything is said when the fact is mentioned that on April 7, 1935, the government decreed the application of the death penalty for offenses committed by minors beginning with the age of 12 years! A 12-year old who commits a theft is now punishable by death in Stalin's "socialist" society. No country on the face of the earth has such a barbarous piece of legislation on its books. It hasn't prevailed since the dark Middle Ages, when the stealing of a loaf of bread was a crime for which the culprit paid for his life on the scaffold. What a vivid commentary is this decree on the *true* state of the distribution of the necessities of life, so much more revealing than all the panegyrics about "socialism accomplished" written by the literary retainers of the Stalinist bureaucracy!

The growing dissatisfaction with these and a multitude of similar measures and social trends, must be headed off by the bureaucracy, which has no firm social base of its own. The wiping out of the Old Bolshevik Guard is an anticipatory decapitation of any possible leadership of the rumbling movement of discontent. Every living representative of the old revolutionary movement, even if he has capitulated once or more to Stalin, every living representative of all that was great, noble, progressive in Bolshevism, every living representative of Lenin's Old Guard, of its tradition, of its ideas—must be wiped out. With the conquests of the Russian Revolution, with the conquests of the early Comintern, must go the men who made them possible.

That is why the Society of Old Bolsheviks has been dissolved. That is why the League of Red Partisans, whose members fought under the Bolshevik banner in the civil war, has been dissolved. That is why the League of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles has been dissolved. All of them existed for periods between 15 and 17 years. Stalin could not tolerate any association that assembled the old revolutionists under one roof. That is also why, at the other end, the Communist Youth League has been dissolved as a political

organization and converted into a doughy "partyless" mass which is forbidden any intervention into economic or political affairs and is rigorously confined to "sports," "culture" and similar fields.

Finally, the trial is a fitting prelude to the inauguration of the "most democratic Constitution in the world," the "Stalinist Constitution." What opponent of his policies does Stalin need to fear in the elections to be held under the new Constitution? What difference does it make whether the elections are by secret ballot or not? Who will dare to run as a candidate in the elections who does not at the very beginning vociferously proclaim his one hundred percent agreement with Stalin, with everything he has done, is doing and will do? With the trial behind them, all the Stalinists need do to wipe out any criticism is to label the man who utters it a "Trotskyist assassin." For the bureaucracy, this is the simplest formula imaginable. Nobody will challenge its application; at least, the officialdom calculates upon nobody daring to challenge it. In the face of the trial and its aftermath, all the "democratic" provisions of the new constitution are revealed for what they were from the beginning: a cruel hoax.

The culminating point, to date, in the process of liquidating the October revolution and the October revolutionists, is the trial.

If a list were to be drawn up of the whole Leninist Guard, the men who directed the Russian movement, who made possible the October revolution, who directed its destinies through the civil war, who founded the Communist International, the list would include virtually every one of the men and women charged to one degree or another with participation in a terrorist plot against Stalin! Whom does the indictment include in the men who knew about or took part in this terribly "conspirative" plot? *More than two hundred persons!* And what persons! We have given altogether too brief biographies of some of them; virtually all the others are of the same caliber. Let us list them, as compiled for us in the latest issue of Trotsky's *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition*:

The sixteen who were shot: Bakayev, Berman-Yurin, David, Dreitser, Holtzmann, Kamanev, M. Lurye, N. Lurye, Mrachkovsky, Olberg, Pikel, Reingold, Smirnov, Ter-Vaganian, Yevdokimov, Zinoviev. Total: 16.

Mentioned by the indictment as defendants in a similar trial to come: Esterman, Faivilovich, Gaven, Gertik, Karev, Konstant, Kuzmichev, Matorin, P. Olberg, Radin, Safonova, Schmidt. Total: 12.

Accused of terrorism or of sympathy with the terrorists: Anishev, Arkus, Bogdan (suicide), Bukharin, Dreitser (sister of Yefim, who was shot), Eismont, Elin, Fedotov, Friedland, Friedmann, Gayevsky, Hertzberg, Kuklin, Kunt, Lipshitz, Lominadze (suicide), Medvediev, Mukhin, Okudjava, Piatakov, Putna, Radek, Riutin, Rykov, Seidel, Serebriakov, Sharov, Shatskin, Shliapnikov, Shtykhold, Sliepkov, Sokolnikov, Sten, Tomsky (suicide), Udin, Uglanov, Yakolev, Yatsek. Total: 38.

Zinovievists sentenced in the January 1935 Kirov trial but not included above: Bashkirov, Bravo, Fedorov, Gorshenin, Hessen, Perimov, Sakhov, Tarasov, Tsarkov. Total: 9.

Zionvievists sent to concentration camps in January 1935 Kirov trial: Zalutsky, Vardin and others. Total: 78.

The "organizers of the plot" abroad: Trotsky, Sedov, Fischer, Maslow. Total: 4.

A partial total of 157 persons in the "conspiracy." And whom do they include?

If we take the names of the 25 persons who were members of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party in Lenin's time, between the beginning of 1919 and the beginning of 1921, that is, during the harshest years of the revolution, we find that under Stalin today the 25 are divided as follows:

Died of natural causes: Lenin, Dzherzhinsky, Artem, Stutchka. 4.

Executed by Stalin: Zinoviev, Kamenev, Yevdokimov, Smirnov. 4.

Driven to suicide or murdered: Tomsky. 1.

Charged with terrorism: Trotsky, Radek, Serebriakov, Rykov. 4.

Suspected of terrorism: Bukharin. 1.

Ex-Oppositionists who capitulated and are kept under heel: Rakovsky, Bielogorodov, Smilga, Preobrazhensky, Krestinsky.

5.

Removed from Central Committee for other reasons: Muranov, Stassova. 2.

Still on Central Committee: Stalin, Kalinin, Andreyev, Rudzutak. 4.

Take another comparison: The Political Bureau under Lenin. Lenin died in 1924. Zinoviev and Kamenev have been shot by Stalin. Tomsy has been driven to suicide by Stalin. Trotsky and Rykov are charged with an assassination plot. Only Stalin remains!

In his "Testament," Lenin mentions six men by name. Of the six, Zinoviev and Kamenev have been shot. Piatakov and Bukharin, "in my opinion, the most able forces (among the youngest)," are suspect, Piatakov awaiting judgment and Bukharin spared for the time being only. Trotsky is charged with terrorism. Again, only Stalin remains!

Still another comparison: Among those shot or implicated in the trial, are 18 former members of the Central Committee: Bukharin, Rykov (both still formally members of the present C.C.), Yevdokimov, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Riutin, Kuklin, Lominadze, Piatakov, Serebriakov, Sokolnikov, Radek, Tomsy, Trotsky, Uglanov, Fedorov, Shliapnikov, Smirnov; and 3 former members of the Central Control Commission: Bakayev, Gaven, Sten.

What tremendous symbolic significance there is in the fact that these old Bolsheviks, pioneers of the proletarian revolution in Russia, artisans of the October Revolution, should be indicted as "mad Fascist dogs," "the scum and dregs of humanity," "the counter-revolutionary terrorists and assassins," and sent to their death, or the living death of solitary confinement in a Siberian prison by . . . by whom? By Vishinsky!

By Vishinsky, whom even the carefully edited official biographies of present-day Stalinists contained in the *Malaya Entsiklopedia* (Moscow, 1929) records as a Menshevik for the greater part of his life! A Menshevik from the beginning of the century; a *Right wing* Menshevik during the February Revolution and the October Revolution and throughout the hard years that followed. Did he take up arms against the Soviet power, in company with the forces of Allied imperialism, as so many others of his kidney did in the period of the civil war? The official biography does not say, but it would be no occasion for astonishment. How many of the most servile defenders of the Stalinist régime today were Menshe-

viks, Social Revolutionaries, Zionists, Petlurists, Denikinists and all other brands of White Guard counter-revolutionists in the days when it meant something to be a Bolshevik! Ambassadors Maisky, Troyanovsky, Potemkin, Khinchuk, such Stalinist servitors as Suritz, Chubar, Zaslavsky (Lenin's favorite word for him in 1917-1918 was "scoundrel") and hundreds of others that could be named—where were they during the heroic days of the revolution except on the other side of the barricades?

Vishinsky who first joined the Bolshevik party in 1920 (according to the official account), who wrote such laudatory articles about Zinoviev as the paragon of Bolshevism when Zinoviev was still in power (in his 1925 work, *Sketches in the History of Communism*), is the most appropriate agent of Stalin in the wiping out of the old Bolshevik Guard. . . .

Finally, add to the 157 names given above, the 103 "White Guards" shot in December 1934 (who included, Dr. Ciliga asserts, numerous non-Russian communists), the 14 shot in direct connection with Nikolayev, and the 12 condemned G.P.U. agents in Leningrad (Medved and others, who knew about the "plot" but did nothing to prevent its culmination), and you get the grand total of 286 men and women, many of whom never had anything to do with each other, nor could have, who were involved in the "secret [!] conspiracy" to assassinate Kirov.

And how many more have been shot in the dark of the moon, without publicity? And how many have been imprisoned, sent to concentration camps in the same manner? And how many more times is the corpse of Kirov to be used as the basis for sending men and women to prison or to their death for a crime they never committed and never could have committed?

The answer is that Stalin will not rest until the last possible opposition to his despotic rule has been put out of the way. What good did it do Radek to write his putrid articles condemning Trotsky as the "hetman" of terrorists, and demanding immediate death for the sixteen? He was arrested and charged with the same crime anyway. What good did a similar article do Piatakov? What good will his frightful article do Rakovsky? How long before he is reminded that, since he was the leader of the Russian Trotskyists until his

capitulation in 1934, he must have known about and been the leader of the "Center" organized in 1932? The fact that Smirnov was in prison during the whole period of the so-called Center's "activities" did not save him from the accusation and the final bullet. And unless the workers everywhere raise their voices in vigorous protest, the Trotskyists who have been in prison or deported since 1928 will not be spared, either. What is in store for men like Muralov, Dingelstedt, Alexandra Bronstein (Trotsky's first wife, 60 years old, 40 years in the movement, recently sent to a Siberian hamlet for no crime whatsoever), Boris and Victor Eltsin, Pankratov, Papermeister, Lado Dumbadze, the Saprnovs, Vladimir Smirnov—and the hundreds of other Trotskyists and other revolutionary opponents of Stalin who now fill the prisons and concentration camps of the Soviet Union?

We already know that new frame-ups are being prepared against them. Stalin has now made that clear in his official organ. *Pravda* informs us of the new judicial massacres in store for both present-day and former Oppositionists. "The facts and the candid [!] confessions of a number of prominent Trotskyists," it writes on October 8, 1936, "prove that these rogues, not only out of fear but out of conviction, carried out the work of spies and wreckers in the Soviet Union, to the glory of their imperialist and Fascist bread-lords, in the hope of bringing closer their own ascent to power." And again: "The counter-revolutionary Trotskyist wrecking work in our industry, in the factories and pits, on the railroads, in building construction and in the agricultural enterprises, has now been proved and admitted by a whole number of prominent Trotskyists. . . . Can the Trotskyist scoundrels expect pardon from the proletarian dictatorship?"

This is the first announcement of a new series of framed-up trials, in which the "assassins" will be "revealed" also as "Fascist wreckers," on the basis of "confessions" which the refined bestiality of the G.P.U. is obviously capable of extorting even from those who were once considered the strongest.

Nothing, alas! can be done to bring back to life those who have already fallen victim of this hideous, criminal frame-up. But the frame-ups to come can and must be thwarted! It is the Russian Revolution that is at stake. At stake also are the lives of the men who have given everything to the prole-



tarian cause, whose deeds gilded the annals of the struggle for a new, free society. The voices of the international working class movement must ring out in such a mighty protest that Stalin will no longer dare to repeat the horror of August 24, 1936.

## The Trial and the Revolutionary Socialist Movement

There is one final aspect of the trial that deserves close attention. By means of the frame-up, Stalin hopes to compromise and discredit the revolutionary socialist movement throughout the world, especially those in it who are commonly called the Trotskyists.

As the policeman for bourgeois law and order, the Stalinist International must help along in the destruction of the movement for revolutionary socialism, which is directed at the "law and order" of private property, of exploitation, of oppression, misery and war. The Stalinists are perfectly well aware that the Trotskyists and the Fourth International have been the victims of reactionary persecution throughout the world, that the bourgeoisie sees in them that incipient movement which will some day effectively challenge its domination. The Stalinists know that in the last year alone, the French bourgeoisie, with its Premier Blum, have sought to suppress the organ of the Fourth International. They know that in April 1936, the illegal organ of the Austrian Fourth Internationalists, *Der Bolschewik*, was seized by the Fascists and a number of comrades arrested. They know that the Fourth Internationalists in Belgium have just undergone a series of police raids, during which they were accused of plotting [!] the collection of arms for the Spanish workers and the precipitation of civil war [!] in Belgium because they agitated for a worker's militia against the Fascist Rexists. They know that only the other day eight leaders of the Trotskyist movement in French colonial Indo-China were sentenced at Saigon to 64 months imprisonment for being affiliated with the "International Communist Grouping, section of the Fourth International."

They know further that the increasingly obvious bankruptcy of the Second and Third Internationals, so disgrace-

fully demonstrated in the course of the Spanish civil war in which the two old Internationals have left the workers in the lurch again, must call forth a growing movement for the regrouping of the genuinely revolutionary forces of the world into a new international association. They therefore bend all their efforts towards discrediting and crushing those whom they consider the spearhead of the movement to restore the proletarian vanguard to a sound Marxian foundation. The trial of the "Trotskyist-Zinovievist assassins" is one of the weapons with which they hope to accomplish their aims.

In the United States, the Stalinists have launched a full-blown campaign against the hated Trotskyists. They ask for nothing more or less than the expulsion of the defenders of revolutionary Marxism from the Socialist Party. Their fury at the presence of these revolutionists in the Socialist Party is only heightened by the fact that the party's secretary, Clarence Senior, cabled a protest to Norway against Trotsky being deprived of his right of asylum, and that the party's two members on the Bureau of the Labor and Socialist International, Norman Thomas and Devere Allen, took similar action.

At the base of their frenzy is the fact that the Socialist Party has been moving in a revolutionary Marxian direction. It has broken from the classic representatives of social reformism, the Waldman-Oneal Right wing. It has refused to become a party to the subordination of the proletariat to the "democratic" bourgeoisie which goes by the name of "People's Front" and which manifests itself already in the miserable manner in which the American Stalinists stood behind the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party. It has refused to adopt the latest Stalinist line, borrowed bag and baggage from the social democratic patriots during the last World War, which seeks to justify proletarian support to the "democratic" imperialist side of a war. It constitutes, in a word, an increasingly solid obstacle to the Stalinist attempt to corral the American proletariat for the "democratic" capitalist allies of the Soviet bureaucracy and for a new war "to make the world safe for democracy."

The heaviest guns of the Stalinists are directed at the Trotskyists because they consider them the "easiest" target now that the Moscow trial is over. It is easier to fight revolutionary Marxian ideas when you say that its defenders are

"Fascists" and "assassins," than if you fight them on political and objective grounds.

"We hope," shrieks the official organ of the Stalinists, "that there will be found enough working class consciousness within the Socialist Party to spew out the Trotskyist filth now in that party. We look to the Socialist Party to declare itself, strongly and clearly, against this cowardly conspiratorial gang." (*Daily Worker*, Aug. 25, 1936.)

"That is what's the matter with the Socialist Party," explains Stalin's American Governor-General in a speech on August 27. "It has become a prisoner of Trotsky. . . . Throw out this Trotskyist poison and join with us in driving it out of the ranks of the working class to protect the working class movement in the name of socialism from a band of self-confessed assassins and degenerates. Our socialist friends should also understand that it is from Trotsky that they got their slogans against the People's Front in France and their slogan against the People's Front in Spain and their efforts to break up the People's Front just at the moment when it is facing the danger of Fascism, which required the full unity of the people in order to beat back and destroy the Fascists. Socialists, don't you realize that your slogans play right into the hands of Hearst?" (Earl Browder, *The People's Front in America*, pp. 10f.)

The tender affection and concern for the welfare of the Socialist Party that throbs in the breast of American Stalinism, is not only well-known and of long standing, but is deeply touching. Browder also accuses the party and its presidential standard-bearer, Norman Thomas, of playing into the hands of Hearst because they condemn Roosevelt as a more effective breakwater for American capitalism than Landon, because they insist on conducting an independent socialist campaign in the elections instead of the mock "communist" campaign the Stalinists have conducted for Roosevelt. The demand for the "expulsion of the Trotskyist filth" on the lips of the Stalinists is—not unnaturally—similar to the denunciations of the Left wing of the Socialist party by the ousted Right wing, which constantly refers to the former as the "Thomas-Trotskyist" party. "It is a departure from principle," argues the Right wing organ in Reading, "to permit Trotskyists . . . to enter the party and bring their anti-democratic doctrines

with them." (Quoted in the *New Leader*, Aug. 19, 1936.)

What are these arguments, made jointly by Browder and O'neal, aimed to accomplish? To scuttle the Socialist Party as a revolutionary organization! Both of them aim to convert the S.P. into another social reformist movement, into a social-patriotic party, into a "People's Front" party, into a plaything of Stalin or Roosevelt. To achieve this end, they must first rid the Socialist Party not merely of the "Trotskyists," who are bending their energies towards building the S.P. into a powerful revolutionary socialist organization, but also of every true Left wing socialist who refuses to accept the discredited old doctrines and slogans of reformism as the good coin of revolutionary Marxism.

We have no doubt of the reply that the overwhelming majority of the Left wing socialists will give to the blood-thirsty appeals against "Trotskyism" now being made by the Stalinists who, dropping overboard the theory and practise of "social-Fascism," have suddenly developed such an overpowering love for the Socialist Party and a concern for its future development. The revolutionists in the party will only strive the harder and the more consistently to make their movement the force that it must become if the tragedies of the European proletariat are to be averted and if a working class victory is to be achieved.

\* \* \*

The struggle to preserve the proletarian revolution in Russia is a struggle for revolutionary socialism throughout the world. The movement for revolutionary Marxian socialism, in the capitalist world as well as in Russia, bears within itself the best guarantee—the only real guarantee—of the defense of the conquests of the October Revolution. We proceed from these simple axioms.

Stalinism, which is a new edition of classic social reformism, intensified, enormously bureaucratized, and possessing the advantage of the usurped power of the workers' state, is the principal danger to the proletarian revolution within the ranks of the labor movement. In the Soviet Union, it is the cruel hand that is wiping out the magnificent achievements of the Bolshevik Revolution. It is the embodiment of a terrible reaction. Every word of criticism of the despotic

régime can now be silenced, together with him who uttered it, by labelling him a "Fascist assassin." The Stalinist bureaucracy has itself wiped out the possibility of the peaceful reform of the régime; it underscored that fact with lines of blood in the Moscow trial; it will seek to repeat its emphasis in trials to come. The despotism which is killing the Russian Revolution can only be removed by revolutionary methods—it has left the proletariat no other alternative.

In these difficult days through which the Russian working class and its vanguard are passing, they have the right to count upon the support of the revolutionary movement throughout the world. It was the world revolution—the revolutions in Europe right after the war—which, even though temporarily unsuccessful, made it possible to save the Russian Revolution in its first difficult years. The world revolution and the international proletarian movement are the only forces that can save the Russian Revolution today.

Stalinism does not represent our conception of socialism. It oppresses men instead of liberating them. It debases and humiliates and demoralizes men, instead of raising them to the lofty level of a new dignity and freedom and independence which we have always associated in our minds with the birth of the coming social order. It does not build, it destroys. It does not wipe out vicious bourgeois morals; it reincarnates them in a new and not less evil form. It does not integrate; it disintegrates and disorganizes. It does not advance us to socialism; it brings us back to capitalism.

The struggle against Stalinism is a sacred duty of the revolutionary socialist. It is the struggle for the honor of the movement and for its future. It is an inseparable part of the great struggle against all iniquity, injustice, exploitation, oppression, despotism. It is a part of the struggle for that social order which, in freeing the proletariat, emancipates the whole of humanity.

New York, November 1, 1936.

# Die Totengräber Rußlands



Lenin (richtiger Name Ujanow). Der Russe Ujanow war allerdings der Stiefvater Lenins. Lenin hatte eine Jüdin zur Frau. Die Kinder lernten hebräisch. Lenin hat den Sonntag in Rußland abgeschafft und den jüd. Sabbat als Feiertag eingeführt. Er hat die Kirchen in Kinos und Tanzsäle verwandelt, während die Synagogen unbehindert bleiben und die jüdischen Rabbiner nach wie vor ihr Amt ausüben.



Der Jude Trotzky (richtiger Name Braunstein), wurde 1917 auf Vorstellungen der Juden hin in Frankreich aus der Haft entlassen, in New York auf Geld umgestellt und auf das russische Volk losgelassen.



Der Jude Jankel Jutowsky, Mörder des Zaren und Familie.



Der Jude Sinowjew (richtiger Name Apfelbaum). Der Massen-schlächter von Moskau.



Der Jude K. Radek (richtiger Name Sobelsohn), später Sowjet-agent in Berlin gewesen.



Der Jude Sverdlov II. Vorn. des 4. Kongresses d. Arbeiter- u. Soldaterräte.



Der Jude Moses Uritsky, Kommissar z. Bekämpfung d. Gegen-revolution (Tschecha). Massen-mörder.



Der Jude Efremow-Chaimowitz, Leiter der politischen Abteilung der X. Armee.



Der Jude Steklov (richtiger Name Nischanski). Pressediktator der Sowjet-Regierung.



Der Jude Schreider (ein Kommunist für d. Innere)



Der Jude Avanesov, Sekretär des Volksrates.



Der Jude Martow (richtiger Name Zederbaum), Mitglied der Exekutive der Arbeiterräte.



Der Jude Samuel Berkman, Moskauer, Agent in Amerika.



Der Jude Volodarsky (richtiger Name Cohen), Mitglied des Volksrates.



Der Jude Kamkov (richtiger Name Katz), im Kommunistrat f. d. Pressewesen.



Der Jude Sukhanov (richtiger Name Gimmer), Mitglied des Volksrates.



Der Jude Levine (richtiger Name Nisson), Müllerveranstalter des Münchener Geistigenodes.



Die Jüdin Emma Goldman. Die russische Rosa Luxemburg.



Der Jude Bela Kun (richtiger Name Cohen). Vormalig Oberhaupt d. ung. Räterepublik, später russischer Kommissar zur Revolutionierung des Balkans.

A typical anti-Bolshevist leaflet issued by the Nazis in the German elections of 1932. The "grave-diggers of Russia" depicted above are as follows, reading from left to right and from top to bottom: Lenin, Trotsky, Yurovsky, Zinoviev, Radek, Sverdlov, Uritsky, Efremov, Steklov, Schreider, Avanesov, Martov, Berkman, Volodarsky, Kamkov, Sukhanov, Levine, Goldman, Bela Kun.

## Appendix

### Stalin's Demand For Trotsky's Deportation From Norway

This brochure would be incomplete without some observations on the infamous aftermath of the Moscow trial. Stalin has demanded that the Norwegian Labor party government deport Trotsky. A keen summary of what is involved in this demand is contained in a communication from my Oslo friend, Walter Held, sent under date of September 30, 1936. It is quoted in full:

"The Soviet government has demanded of the Norwegian government the *deportation* but not the *extradition* of Trotsky. According to prevailing Norwegian law, the Soviet Union had the full liberty of taking the latter road. What prevented it? Aren't assassination and attempted assassinations involved, after all? The Norwegian extradition law, however, requires that the legitimacy of the accusation be examined by a Norwegian court before extradition is granted. But could this offer an obstacle? Hasn't the terroristic conspiracy under Trotsky's direction been 'proved'? The strength of the proof must have been quite irresistible, otherwise 16 men would not have been shot! Why, therefore, wasn't Trotsky's extradition demanded even before the trial opened? In this way, the distrust of the entire civilized world with regard to the trial would have been eliminated with one stroke, and in addition, Trotsky, the alleged criminal-in-chief, would have been extradited and punished. Yet, Moscow diplomacy did not take this road. Why? Precisely because there is no proof that would have stood up under an

examination by a Norwegian court, because the whole thing is a flagrant and cold-blooded frame-up, which cannot stand the slightest contact with independent criticism. The diplomatic procedure of Moscow, the demand for *deportation* instead of *extradition* is a *testimonium paupertatis* made by Soviet justice itself.

"In this connection, another interesting question is raised. Besides Trotsky himself, Trotsky's son was also found guilty. It was Trotsky's son who was supposed to have selected the remarkable *Gestapo* terrorists and sent them to Moscow. Trotsky's son is now in France. The Soviet government, however, sent its unfriendly note only to the Norwegian and not to the French government. Why? Perhaps because France—plus her colonies—is bigger? Is it part of the principles of socialism in a single country to calculate justice according to square mileage? Was the existing military alliance with France taken into account? Whatever the underlying reason may be, the fact remains and is of the highest significance: Moscow sought to exercise pressure *only* upon the Norwegian government.

"The reply of the Norwegian government also deserves a critical evaluation. In substance the Soviet government says in its note: *Trotsky is organizing terroristic acts, we want him deported.* The Norwegian government answers: *But haven't we interned him?* This can—and will—be interpreted by the forgers in the service of the Soviet government as if the Norwegian government had interned Trotsky because of his 'terroristic' activity. The actual situation, however, is quite different.

"The action of the Norwegian authorities against Trotsky began before the first telegram of the Soviet news agency on the impending trial was made public. However, the Norwegian authorities never even mentioned the accusation against Trotsky of having organized terroristic actions, to say nothing of making such an accusation the object of their investigations. The report of the Central Passport Bureau on Trotsky's activity in Norway, which was approved by the government as the basis for interning comrade Trotsky and his wife, speaks only of Trotsky's political-literary activity. I quote literally a few passages from this report:

"The Central Passport Bureau is of the opinion that the



activity of Trotsky is not a violation of the conditions of the right of asylum provided that it is confined to historical or other scientific presentations of social, economic or political questions.

“In the event, however, that these observations are linked with topical political situations and give directions for them, the Central Passport Bureau is of the opinion that Trotsky’s literary activity is a political activity of such a kind as to conflict with the conditions put for the granting of continued residence.

“The Central Passport Bureau is of the opinion that there is ground for the belief that Trotsky’s activity during his residence in Norway includes such expressions and advices relating to topical political situations as must be designated as a violation of the conditions of continued residence. This is evident, among other things, from a newspaper article \* which advises the establishment of Soviets for the purpose of preparing a continuous revolutionary movement in France.’ (The bureaucrats of all countries seem to be in permanent struggle against language.)

“It thus follows that the Norwegian government does not for a moment accuse Trotsky of wanting to *overthrow* the Russian Soviets by means of terroristic actions in league with the *Gestapo*. No, on the contrary, the accusation culminates in the charge that Trotsky, by means of articles and letters, wanted to help *establish* Soviets in France. In other words, the Norwegian ‘Labor government’ has interned comrade Trotsky because he is active in the spirit of the Fourth International, because he remains true to his revolutionary, Marxian philosophy, and because he refuses to take the road of the Noskes and Vanderveldes or of the super-Noske, Stalin. It is of the greatest importance to underline this fact again and again in order to counter every false and calumnious interpretation of the Stalinists and their agents concerning the reason for Trotsky’s internment.

“The second note of the Soviet government to Norway says that ‘the Norwegian government has taken upon itself the full responsibility for the consequences of Trotsky’s continued

\* “The French Revolution Has Begun.” See *Whither France?* Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1936.

residence in Norway.' It would be wrong to take this sentence as a diplomatic flourish to cover up a retreat.

"Considered in the mirror of world public opinion, the Moscow trial is a terrible fiasco. Not for nothing was the yesterday still omnipotent head of the G.P.U., Yagoda, degraded to the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs. The task of his successor in the direction of the G.P.U., Yezhov, consists in staging new 'attempts at assassination,' 'conspiracies,' etc., in order the better to motivate the accusations against Trotsky. Undoubtedly efforts will be made to shift Trotsky's 'terroristic base of operations' from Copenhagen to Oslo.

"The reference to Copenhagen as the place where Trotsky met the 'terrorists,' one of the weakest points in this extraordinarily fantastic edifice, has meaning only as a parallel or a prelude to Oslo, that is, as a means of pressure and menace against the Norwegian government. No hundred percent success has been attained thus far. The task of the new chief of the G.P.U. therefore consists in producing an Oslo-amalgam.

"Naturally, only hypothetical assumptions can be made about the road that will be taken by the G.P.U. to realize this aim. Among the 16 executed 'Trotskyists' there was not, as is well known, a single Trotskyist. Zinoviev, Kamenev, Mrachkovsky—the spies of the G.P.U., the Bermans and Luryes, can be left entirely out of consideration here—capitulated as far back as 1928-1929 and bitterly combated Trotsky and the Left Opposition since that time. Comrade Trotsky and all of us always treated them in our press, in the course of the past years, as characterless creatures and traitors. These elements, who have been crawling on their bellies before the bureaucracy for years—the G.P.U. was able to knead like dough. Yet there are *genuine* Trotskyists in the Soviet Union. Thousands of our comrades are in prison there. These people could not, up to now, be used for the amalgams and judicial comedies of the divine Stalin. (Which explains one of the main contradictions in the whole trial, namely, that Trotsky prepared the 'terroristic' conspiracy not with his real friends and supporters, but with capitulators and personal enemies!) Now, however—after the trial—all Trotskyists in the Soviet Union are once and for all labelled as terrorists. They thus become the game of the G.P.U. which will now put the

revolver to their breasts too: 'Confession or death!' It is conceivable that some of the comrades will succumb to this fearful pressure and allow themselves to be used for a new amalgam. The art of the G.P.U. will consist in digging up new Olbergs, Davids, Holtzmanns and Bermans, whose instructions will have come directly from Oslo or Hønefoss. These *provocateurs* are probably already at work. In this manner, the Stalin government is also preparing a new diplomatic action in the question of Trotsky. That is the meaning of the second Soviet Russian note's threat at the end about the 'full responsibility' of the Norwegian government for the consequences of the further residence of Trotsky in Norway."

\* \* \*

The conduct of the leaders of the Norwegian Labor party, who also head the government, has been utterly contemptible throughout this affair. At first, they granted Trotsky that elementary right of asylum for political refugees which is supposed to exist in every "democratic" country. They thought thereby to purchase a cheap renown as "good social democrats" in contrast to MacDonald, in his time, Vandervelde and Blum. The first threatening gesture of Stalin torpedoed their assumed dignity and democratism. Trotsky was not only interned without the slightest opportunity to defend himself either against Stalin's charges or the charges of the Norwegian Fascists, but he was placed under the absolute and arbitrary control of the Fascist head of the Central Passport Bureau, Konstad. The N.A.P. leaders allow this narrow-minded reactionary to pass upon all of Trotsky's incoming and outgoing mail, (even including such conservative papers as the Parisian *Temps*, which was forbidden Trotsky!).

In effect, the "democratic socialists" of Norway have put Trotsky and his wife into a concentration camp for two! Trotsky is a prisoner who, to all intents and purposes, has been sentenced and incarcerated without a trial!

Why this disgraceful accommodation of the Norwegian Fascists and the Stalinists? Because Trotsky has violated the conditions under which he was granted asylum by the Norwegian Laborite leaders? But this is absurd. From the very beginning, they were aware of his political views and of his literary activity in which these views were systematically ex-

pressed. Not a word of criticism did they make of his right to hold and assert these views. Four weeks after his arrival in Norway, on July 19, 1935, he granted a requested interview to Martin Tranmael, editor of *Arbeiderbladet* and political leader of the N.A.P., who visited him together with another N.A.P. journalist, Colbjornsen and the present Minister of Justice, Trygve Lie. A few weeks later, the N.A.P. publishing house issued a Norwegian edition of his autobiography, together with the introduction to the popular French edition in which Trotsky argues for the Fourth International. The N.A.P. editors received regularly the various journals of Fourth Internationalist groups throughout the world, containing Trotsky's articles, written during his stay in Norway, in which his opinions were unambiguously expressed. Yet no action was taken until Quisling, the Norwegian Fascist chief, discovered for the N.A.P. leaders the fact that Trotsky was still a revolutionary internationalist!

Or is his internment due to the charges made by Stalin? But Trotsky has offered time and again to submit his case to any Norwegian tribunal, and to meet the Stalinist accusations openly. The Fascist press has agitated violently against allowing Trotsky to bring his case to trial. So have the Stalinist papers in Norway! The latter threaten Soviet reprisals if the Norwegian government allows Trotsky to defend himself in court!

What are they afraid of? Don't they have a conclusive case against Trotsky? Shouldn't they welcome his libel suit against the Fascist and Stalinist press, in the course of which the Soviet prosecutor or his representatives can prove to the hilt the charge of terrorism and connivance with the *Gestapo*? Isn't Trotsky merely asking, not for a "socialist right," but for an elementary democratic right that is usually accorded to anybody, automatically, in any but a Fascist country?

Or are they all afraid that Trotsky will be able to furnish conclusive proof that the Borgias of the Kremlin perpetrated a ghastly frame-up against him and his son and the 16 men who were executed? Apparently: for on October 29, the government, taking an unprecedented action, issued an Order in Council prohibiting Trotsky from bringing to court his libel action against the Stalinist and Fascist press. There the matter rests for the time being. Stalin, on the one side, the

Norwegian Fascists on the other—with the “democratic” socialist leaders of the N.A.P. trailing shamefacedly along—have temporarily succeeded in imprisoning and gagging Trotsky, in preventing him from exercising those elementary rights always granted a man accused of a crime.

Immediately after the trial, one of the specialists in anti-Trotskyism among the American Stalinists, Mr. M. J. Olgin, wrote: “By the way, what happened to his [Trotsky’s] promise of ‘revelations’? When the trial began over three weeks ago he boasted he was going to make such exposures as would transform the accusers into accused. Where are the promised facts? When Trotsky wrote those words he knew very well he could ‘reveal’ nothing.” (*Daily Worker*, Sept. 9, 1936.)

Contemptible as these words sounded then, how much more so are they today in the light of the hysterical efforts of the Russian and Norwegian Stalinists (flanked, do not forget, by the Fascists) to prevent Trotsky from making precisely those revelations for which Mr. Olgin so jeeringly baited him? Nobody honestly interested in the truth behind the Moscow trial can allow the Stalinists to rest until they have answered this question: Why don’t you make it possible for Trotsky to face your “evidence” in the courts of Norway?

One last aspect of the trial must be indicated. The Soviet government demands Trotsky’s deportation, the revocation of his right to asylum in Norway, on the grounds that he is a common criminal offender. To what country is he to be deported? Turkey will not take him back. He has already been deported from France. Residence in Germany, Italy, Austria or any other Fascist country is of course out of the question. Czechoslovakia and England have already refused him visas. The American authorities have indicated that they would take a similar position. There remains, on this “planet without a visa” only one country that would gladly accept him—the Soviet Union—but only for the purpose of burying him by the side of Stalin’s 16 other victims. In this respect too, the demand for his deportation is only a cowardly way of demanding his extradition, an outright request which Stalin does not make for reasons already indicated.

There is another phase of this demand. By means of it, the Soviets bolster up a reactionary precedent. In his struggle against the revolutionists Stalin has been unable to invent a

single new method; he has borrowed all his weapons from the arsenal of reaction and Fascism. This holds true for the present instance as well.

Let us compare the Stalin demand for Trotsky's deportation with the Nazi demand for the extradition of Heinz Neumann, the German Stalinist leader whom the Hitlerites demanded from Switzerland in 1935. The two cases have striking similarities. The Nazis wanted Neumann in order to put a prominent political opponent to death, after a trial no less farcical than the one enacted by Stalin in August 1936. The German-Swiss extradition treaty of 1873 is quite specific about political refugees from each country. The Nazis thereupon argued that they had a right to demand Neumann's extradition *not* as a political opponent, not for the crime of holding different political views, but for a common criminal offense! Neumann was not accused of being an anti-Fascist or a communist, but with being an assassin! He was charged with being the "*intellektueller Urheber*" (intellectual initiator) of the killing, on Berlin's Bülowplatz, August 9, 1931, of two police officers, Captain Anlauf and Lieutenant Willig. "It is not a question of a political act in the spirit of the extradition agreement," wrote the German government to the Swiss authorities. "The deed represents an avowed act of vengeance."

The Nazis accused Neumann of having planned the assassination of Anlauf and Willig, and of having urged on the actual assassins—just as Trotsky is supposed to have urged on "his agents." In 1935, too, there was no lack of Nazi agents who, pretending to be Neumannist assassins, gave plenty of "evidence" with which to convict Neumann. One such agent, a worker named Michael Klause, testified before his Nazi masters that Neumann had declared impatiently, in a conspiratorial meeting in the Reichstag office of communist deputy Kippenberger and in the presence of several of the "assassins": "What sort of lousy business is this, they're still on their feet and nothing is done about it. If I had arranged this business they would have been cleaned up long ago."

Doesn't all this have a familiar ring?

In a public appeal against the extradition demand, the communist Red Aid of Switzerland wrote at that time: "As was to be expected, the jurists of the Fascist Third Realm have

built up a construction according to which they are to get their claws into Neumann not for a political action but for a common assassination. . . . To complete the picture, there is of course not lacking, in the juridical construction, the *provocateur* and the spy who is ready to give any evidence at all in order to dispatch Heinz Neumann from life to death and who appears as crown witness." (*Rundschau*, Vol. IV, No. 2, Jan. 10, 1935, p. 101.)

And the Stalinist "World Committee for the Victims of Hitler-Fascism" added a week later, truthfully, moreover: "It is of the greatest importance to emphasize once more the generally known fact that the Communist party of Germany, in countless manifestoes, resolutions and articles expressed itself against individual terrorism and that the *Rote Fabne* of August 9, 1931 especially warned the Berlin workers expressly against going to the Bülowplatz on the evening of that day because provocations were to be expected on the part of the police."

Where are the Stalinist "Red Aid" organizations now, where are the Stalinist intellectuals throughout the world, where are all those who rightly protested against Neumann's extradition in 1935? Why are they silent today, when Stalin is taking the same vindictive steps against his political opponent Trotsky that Hitler took against Heinz Neumann? How can they look themselves in the eye—all those who are silent today in face of the infamy of Stalin, or, worse yet, who join in the hue and cry for Trotsky's blood? What will they say tomorrow when the Hitler régime demands the extradition of German communists from France, or England, or the United States on the ground that they are common assassins or incendiaries (the Reichstag fire!), and bases its demand on the "revolutionary" precedent set by the Stalin government? What will they be able to say then? Will they at least demand that Hitler's prospective victims be tried in a "democratic court" before deportation or extradition? Then why don't they join in the demand that Trotsky be granted the same right in Norway! Why don't they support Trotsky's proposal for an impartial international commission to hear his case? Why don't they protest against the reactionary measures taken by Stalin in his attempt to gag Trotsky and then to shoot him?

We do not know to what extent Stalinism has corrupted and debased all the communist intellectuals. We do not know if all of them will continue silent in face of the shocking crimes now being committed by Stalin. But we are confident that men and women will be found in sufficiently large numbers, and with sufficiently vigorous voices, to demand that Trotsky be granted again the right of asylum in Norway and that he be given the opportunity to present his case before an international commission whose authority, impartiality and competence will be beyond question.

Stalin wants the head of Trotsky. Stalin's persecution of Trotsky's daughter, Nina, brought her to a premature death of pulmonary tuberculosis in a Moscow hospital in 1928, at the age of 26. Deprived of Soviet citizenship, her papers taken from her at the Russian embassy in Berlin, homeless, driven from pillar to post, Zinaida, Trotsky's other daughter, was driven by the Stalinists to suicide on January 5, 1933. Sergei, Trotsky's son, who was a school teacher entirely unengaged in political activity of any kind, was arrested in January 1935 and not heard from since.

Now Stalin wants to complete the circle of his personal and political revenge upon Trotsky. He wants the blood of Trotsky's other son, and of Trotsky himself. Many are the old Bolsheviks who have already died at the hands of this despot against whose brutality, disloyalty and abuse of power Lenin warned the communists with virtually his last breath. Many more are the old revolutionists whom Stalin is even now preparing to shoot down like dogs because they represent the tradition of the October Revolution, because they refuse to become the fawning flunkeys with whom Stalin surrounds himself.

In face of the crimes committed and the crimes planned, we expect nothing but dithyrambic praise from Stalin's mamelukes and janissaries. But from the uncorrupted and undebased in the working class movement, the true Russian Bolsheviks now in prison and exile, those who are the gold reserve of the Russian Revolution, have the right to demand:

Raise your voices in resounding protest! Stay the hand of the executioner!

The conscience of the labor and revolutionary movements would be stone if it did not reply to this summons as it must.



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