

TROTSKYISM


AGAINST

WORLD

PEACE

By EARL BROWDER

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Trotskyism Against World Peace

By EARL BROWDER

THE world was shocked by the revelations of the trial in Moscow of Piatakov, Radek, and their fifteen co-defendants. Most people are beginning to understand its profound lessons, its historic significance, only as the result of sustained thought, of ever-deeper analysis, of accumulation of tens of thousands of corroborative details which reveal the tentacles of the world-wide plot of fascism and Trotskyism to plunge the whole world into war in 1937.

We have published in full in the *Daily Worker* the indictment, the presentation of the Prosecutor, Comrade Vyshinsky, and his summary of the evidence, the verdict of the court, as well as copious extracts of the most important testimony introduced. The facts are before us. We also have the evidence of numerous direct observers of the trial, of all political tendencies, as to its procedure and the full freedom of speech of the defendants.

What must be the conclusions of the world of honest men everywhere as to the lessons of this great trial? We of the Communist Party approach this question, not from any narrow partisan viewpoint, but from our desire to reach the broadest possible unity of progressive and democratic mankind to resist the menacing forces of fascism and war. Therefore, in establishing the conclusions to be drawn, I want first of all to make a few quotations, not from Prosecutor Vyshinsky's speech, not from any Communist source, not from any sympathizer or associate of the Communist Party—but on the contrary, from the words of a man who until a few days ago was a member of the Committee for the Defense of Trotsky, an editorial associate of the daily newspaper, the *Baltimore Sun*, Mr. Mauritz A. Hallgren. In a letter made available to the press, and published in the *New Masses* and *Daily Worker*, Mr. Hallgren, having approached the whole question from the viewpoint of defense of Trotsky, makes the following conclusions:

"The men now on trial . . . must know and they do know that they will be put to death. Despite this they do not hesitate to confess their crimes. Why? The only conceivable answer is that they are guilty. . . . I now see no valid reason for believing that the defendants in the first trial were unfairly dealt with."

That is, an open defender of Trotsky, one who approaches the Piatakov trial with doubts about the Zinoviev trial, comes to the conclusion that all the defendants were fully guilty, fairly tried, and that the essential truth about their plot was established beyond all doubt.

Regarding the absent chief of the plot, Trotsky, his defender Hallgren is forced by the evidence to conclude that the reports of the trial

" . . . provide us with an abundance of evidence . . . [that tends] to prove that Trotsky participated in the conspiracy, or that he at least had guilty knowledge of it. . . . We also have his writings and they tend greatly to strengthen the presumption, if not of actual guilt, at least of moral responsibility."

Then Trotsky's defender concludes that he had been duped, that the real purpose of the committee, into which he had been inveigled, had been from the beginning

"To win liberal support for Trotskyism, that is, for Trotsky's campaign against socialism in the Soviet Union . . . that the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky has, perhaps, unwittingly, become an instrument of the Trotskyists for political intervention against the Soviet Union."

With such conclusions having been forced, by the overwhelming weight of evidence, from the very ranks of Trotsky's avowed defenders, we may safely assure this minimum as proved beyond all necessity of further discussion. Anyone who any longer questions these proved conclusions merely proves that, as against his political prejudices which align him with the enemies of the Soviet Union, the weight of evidence means nothing whatsoever, that he is an irreconcilable enemy with whom discussion is impossible.

Given this foundation of established fact and sound conclusion, which must be equally accepted by all honest men of whatever political opinion who are willing to weigh the evidence, we

can proceed at once to an examination of those questions which still disturb some honest people who accept these conclusions, or who will inevitably accept them when they are clearly formulated.

Perhaps that question which disturbs the broadest number of people who are without detailed information about the historical background of the Russian labor movement is the Trotskyist charge that the defendants convicted of treason comprised all "Lenin's strongest colleagues and co-workers" in the 1917 Revolution. From this is drawn the theory that the trials are simply the elimination of the "natural leaders" of the revolution by some upstarts who have seized power in the Soviet Union. This vile slander depends for its effect upon lack of information of the American general public, reinforced by the capitalist newspapers' creation of those "reputations". A simple recital of historically established facts is sufficient to shatter this slanderous legend. Every prominent name identified with the treason trials is connected with a long history of struggle against Lenin during his lifetime and against Lenin's Party since his death. Their treason was not something suddenly descended upon them. It was the carrying to its logical conclusion of their long and stubborn struggle against the building of socialism in the Soviet Union.

Lenin's struggle against Trotsky, from 1903 to 1917, was sharp and bitter, and went to the foundation principles of the Bolshevik Party. When Trotsky joined that Party, in August, 1917, he did not abandon his principles which Lenin had fought against and defeated; again and again he tried to overthrow Lenin's leadership, outstandingly in the turning points of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty, and at the inauguration of the New Economic Policy. After Lenin's death his entire course was one of embittered struggle against the Party policy, always going to greater lengths, until, after years of debate and the overwhelming repudiation of Trotsky by the masses, the renegade was finally exiled.

Zinoviev and Kamenev began a stubborn career of opposition to Lenin in 1917, when they betrayed the October Revolution, with Lenin calling for their expulsion. In 1927, after fighting Trotsky, they suddenly went over to his side, joining him on the issue of opposing the building of socialism in the Soviet Union.

Radek and Piatakov fought against Lenin before the revolution, resisting his policy of the self-determination of nations, and were defeated by him. Piatakov was associated with almost every opposition that developed after the revolution, either in an open or concealed form. Radek was removed from any official posts since 1923 when, under Lenin, he was found responsible for disastrous mistakes made in relation to the German events. He was in opposition, and recanted and was re-admitted several times, but never again allowed to hold anything but an appointive post.

The same sort of history attaches to each and every name, not only of those already tried, but of those of the so-called "Right" oppositions who have been implicated by the confessions.

What nonsense, therefore, to assume that because the repeated oppositions of these people brought their names constantly into the capitalist newspapers, they were therefore the "natural leaders" of the Russian peoples. Exactly the contrary. Their connections with the masses had long been broken, and it was precisely because of this that they took the path of treason when they decided not to submit to the unanimous will of the 170,000,000 people united under the Soviets. That in spite of their repeated and crushing defeats, they were still permitted to return to positions of trust and responsibility is proof of one thing only—namely, that the Communist Party and the Soviet Union made its errors on the side of mercy, clemency, and forgiveness which have ended only when confronted with the final proof and confession of the blackest treachery known to history.

Now let us examine the question, which is not finally closed even for Mr. Hallgren: whether Trotsky was really the directing head of the conspiracy or whether he only had "guilty knowledge" of it. Given a successful outcome of the plot, I imagine there is not a single person in the world who can imagine any figure emerging at its head other than Trotsky—least of all the Trotskyites themselves. It is only the miserable fiasco to which their plot has come that has caused them to raise this hypocritical denial. But the proof is not alone in the confessions in Moscow of every outstanding former associate of Trotsky. It is to be found in Trotsky's writings and activity over many years which show one ascending line of reason.

The clear starting point of treasonable conspiracy, expressed from the beginning in a clearly formulated theory—Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, Piatakov, and their associates, united in the theory of the impossibility of building socialism in the Soviet Union, a theory which was the breeding ground of all oppositions and all treachery, and which was the connecting link to unite with the Right opposition of Bukharin and Rykov. Trotsky already in 1926, over ten years ago, pointed to its logical conclusion by his notorious “Clemenceau thesis”. This was the theory that, just as Clemenceau had seized the moment when German armies were less than 60 miles from Paris to seize the government of France in 1914, so would Trotsky and his associates be able to come to power only when the invading armies of capitalism had invaded the Soviet Union and were within similar striking distance of Moscow.

To come to power through the might of foreign armies, however, demanded from the Trotskyists an inner program acceptable to the capitalist powers. Trotsky formulated such a program in April, 1930, printed in his *Opposition Bulletin* No. 10. This called for the restoration of capitalism in Russian economy: I quote:

“Retreat is, nevertheless, inevitable. It is necessary to bring it about at the earliest possible time. . . . To discontinue mass collectivization . . . discontinue jumps in industrialization . . . to revise the question of tempo of industrialization in the light of experience . . . to abandon ‘ideals’ of a self-contained economy . . . to work out a new, alternative plan calculated on the widest possible interaction with the world market. . . . It is impossible to emerge from the present contradictions without crisis and struggle.”

That last-quoted thought of Trotsky was further concretized by him in his book, *The Soviet Union and the Fourth International*, published in the United States in February, 1934, in these words:

“No normal, ‘constitutional’ ways remain to remove the ruling clique. The bureaucracy [the Soviet Power] can be compelled to yield power into the hands of the proletarian vanguard [the Trotskyists] only by force.”

And from Mexico, on January 25 of this year, Trotsky sent

a signed statement to the Hearst newspapers, printed in the *New York American* of January 26, in which he said:

"Inside the Party, Stalin has put himself above all criticism, and above the state. It is impossible to displace him except by assassination."

That there can still be no mistake on the part of his followers, Trotsky for years has been tying up all his activities under the slogan: "Remove Stalin."

In the face of these instructions of Trotsky, of his well-established character as a so-called man-of-action who immediately translates his counter-revolutionary thoughts into corresponding deeds, who prides himself upon being the most reliable representative of every current hostile to the Soviet Union and its leadership which has successfully built a socialist society, in the face of the confession, full and complete, of every former associate in the Soviet Union who alone could possibly execute his plans for a return to power under any circumstances—what person is still so innocent of the world as to believe Trotsky's unsupported and hysterical denials of the mountain of evidence of his guilt?

Given all this proof, and accepting it as final because of its overwhelming weight, there are still people who say, yes, but after all what has all this to do with us as Americans who are appalled by the world's present course which is rushing into the abyss of fascism and war and who want nothing more than to keep America out of trouble? Why should not we Americans merely satisfy our intellectual curiosity, and then wash our hands of the whole affair? How are we affected? Why should we take sides?

But Trotskyism and its alliance with fascism is no mere private affair of the Soviet Union. True it strikes first and foremost against that bulwark of peace and democracy; thereby it weakens the whole world front against fascism and war. But it goes much further. Trotskyism is active and damaging in every land, not least in the United States. Many people belittle its menace, because of its small number of active adherents. But it works with the deadliness of cholera germs, and these germs are broadcast throughout our land by the tremendous capitalist press; it is

the first line attack of fascism among the masses, to paralyze their resistance through doubt and confusion.

Let us see how Trotskyism works in other countries, and see how it fits in with the whole world conspiracy of Hitler and Mussolini which has brought the clouds of war darkly over every land. In Germany the Trotskyists are the bitterest enemies of the unification of the anti-Nazi organizations, and have openly appeared as spokesmen for Hitler, as in the case of Maria Reese whose pamphlet denouncing Ernst Thaelmann was published by the American Trotskyists when Thaelmann was in Hitler's prison. In France they are the saboteurs of the People's Front, and one of their chief figures, Ruth Fischer, works in the apparatus of Jacques Doriot, hailed by French and world reactionaries as the "potential Hitler" of France. In Spain they fight for the dissolution of the People's Front government, the sole means of a single front of the Spanish masses against the Hitler-Mussolini-Franco war of murder and destruction, the sole barrier to new fascist victory.

In the United States, the Trotskyists, recent entrants into the Socialist Party, have reduced that organization in a few months to a maze of warring cliques. Organizing disruption in the trade unions, sabotaging the steel campaign, they have established connections with the worst reactionaries. Enemies to the death of the Farmer-Labor Party, they block its formation where possible, and where not they enter to disrupt it. At this moment in Minnesota, for example, the Trotskyists are the organizers of a bloc of reactionaries and unreliaables in the trade unions and among the Farmer-Labor members of the state legislature, which defeated one of the first measures of the Benson administration. Governor Benson proposed a State Liquor Control Bill, vital to his program not only as a revenue measure, but to break the power of the whiskey trust and drive its influence from the lower organizations of the Farmer-Labor Party. This bill is being fought by a combination of reactionaries and Trotskyists. He further proposed a bill to restore Party designation in the election of the members of the State Legislature, a bill designed to restore Party responsibility and Party discipline. It was the reactionary union officials and the Trotskyists who swung the few needed Farmer-Labor

votes over to the Republican and Democratic minority in the legislature to defeat that bill. This is only one little sample of the fruits of Trotskyist treason at work in America.

It was certainly the pressure of Trotskyist ideas upon the Socialist Party which, in the presidential elections, brought that party into the unenviable position of helper to Landon, with the slogan "There is no difference between Landon and Roosevelt, and perhaps it would even be better if Landon were elected".

On every issue, Trotskyism enters as the poison to block unity among the workers and their organizations, to break up the People's Front, to help the reactionaries and fascists, and, above all, to prepare the ground for war.

It is on the war question, above all, that the horrible nature of the Trotskyist-fascist alliance stands out most clearly. We have seen from the confessions of Piatakov and Radek, how Trotsky entered into an agreement with Hitler's lieutenant Hess and with the Japanese General Staff, on the partition of Soviet territory and the ceding of economic privileges to these two fascist powers for war purposes. One point in this agreement was the provision of Japanese imperialism with oil and other supplies needed for a prospective war against the United States.

Is there anything in the conduct of the Trotskyists in our country which would tend to contradict this agreement of their leader? No, on the contrary, the American Trotskyists could not have acted differently if they had known of and agreed to this policy. For several years now, the American Trotskyists have been hammering on the coming war between the United States and Japan, in order to demand, first, that all preparations must be made to insure the defeat of the United States in such a war, and second, consequently, that a fight be made against all idea of mutual assistance between the Soviet Union and the United States. These are exactly the things that would be required by Trotsky of his American followers in order to carry out his agreement with the Japanese General Staff.

Thus we find that even the most convinced adherent of American isolation, if he is not to shut his eyes and refuse to look at facts, must also become directly interested in disclosing and defeating the world conspiracy of Trotsky with fascism, which is

threatening the peace of the whole world. Trotsky moves now, as always, with the grand sweep of the would-be world-leader, but now there is revealed in its full nakedness that the force of his world-ideas is borrowed entire from German and Japanese fascism.

Trotsky here and everywhere works with two weapons, with the material and moral resources borrowed from fascism and reaction, and with honest but confused and disorganized liberals and Socialists who can be fooled with specious slogans of "fair play" and of "ultra-revolution", people whom he is using and simultaneously betraying. His relation to Mexico is a typical case. On the one hand, Trotsky has been foremost in fighting against the working class and Communist support to President Cardenas and his government against the plottings of General Calles and his American imperialist backers who are preparing a fascist insurrection in Mexico of the type of Spain. No words were too bitter for the Trotskyists in denouncing the People's Front in formation around the Cardenas government. In the midst of this campaign, Trotsky finds it quite natural to appeal to President Cardenas for asylum in Mexico, there to intensify his work against the People's Front everywhere including Mexico. Undoubtedly he would feel more secure in his asylum if the Calles plot should succeed in destroying that People's Front of which Trotsky is the arch-enemy.

No one can accuse the imperialists of not recognizing truly their friends and their enemies. That they see in Trotsky one of their chief weapons is attested by their unanimity in granting him the full freedom of their press. Those same newspapers, Hearst above all, which denounced even President Roosevelt as an embryo Bolshevik, make of Trotsky a hero beyond all others, and grant him unlimited space in their columns to spew out his poison. The *New York Herald Tribune*, leading Tory newspaper, prints a special article to advocate Trotsky's admission into the United States, in order to "help expose blackest Russia", and creates a case for him with the argument that in 1917 Trotsky did everything possible to keep Russia in the war, and finds a long-lost heroic act in which Trotsky saved the life of an American representative, a dark secret all these years. And here again, we find

one of the most revealing bits of corroborative testimony of Trotsky's role, in his relation to Mexico.

I refer you now to *The New York Times* of January 13, to a special story from Mexico signed by the special international correspondent, Frank L. Kluckhorn, who was rushed from the civil war in Spain to cover what was evidently considered equally important events to come in Mexico. President Cardenas, hesitating before the demand of the Mexican workers for the exclusion of Trotsky, and facing the extreme danger from the gathering reactionary conspiracy in his own land and the United States, wanted to improve relations with American imperialists. Kluckhorn rushed in to assure Cardenas that precisely the admission of Trotsky would be one of the chief things that would help him relieve his difficult situation, would make all the imperialists more lenient with him. President Cardenas' decision to admit Trotsky, Kluckhorn unwittingly gave the whole world a glimpse behind the scenes where Trotsky plays his fascist role in full. I give you a few quotations from the *Times* of January 13:

"President Lazaro Cardenas has removed virtually the last foreign complaints against his government. . . . He had a showdown with extremist labor over the entry of the anti-Stalinist Leon Trotsky as a political refugee, and won hands down. . . . He now agrees to indemnities on land seized. This, it is held here, lays the groundwork for sound international confidence and trade. . . . President Cardenas has shown willingness to make concessions to the Catholic Church. . . ."

There we have a true estimate of values: indemnities for foreign capitalists, concessions to the Catholic Church, asylum for Trotsky. These three things have caused foreign imperialist powers to soften their attitude to Mexico, *these things are concessions to imperialist reaction*. Perhaps President Cardenas can legitimately believe that it is necessary to retreat before the pressure of imperialism, but that should only make all of us the more keenly aware that Trotsky's entrance into Mexico was a service to reaction, to the fascists and war-makers, a blow against peace and democracy.

A gambler for great stakes is Trotsky; he thinks nothing of staking the lives of millions, the national existence of thirty million Ukrainian people, the independence of Siberia, the new

and flourishing socialist economy of one-sixth of the earth, the Spanish people's government, the French People's Front, the unity of the workers everywhere—all these Trotsky makes chips in his great gamble for power which he pretends he plays with Hitler, but in which Hitler and every reactionary in the world plays Trotsky against peace and democracy.

This ego-maniac firebrand is running through a world full of war-explosives, applying his torch wherever he may, hoping for nothing so much as a new world war from which alone he sees his hopes of glory and power.

This is the true issue presented by Trotsky and Trotskyism. This is no issue merely between Trotsky and the Communist Party. It is the choice between war and fascism on the one side, or democracy and peace on the other side. Trotsky is the advance agent of fascism and war throughout the world.

If one wants to fight against fascism and war, the first battle that must be won is to drive out Trotskyism and its influence from the ranks of the workers, farmers, and intellectuals. Without this victory over every Trotskyist influence, unity in the fight against fascism and war—unity which is the condition for any success—is impossible.

Nowhere is this shown with more sharpness and clarity than in Spain today. The Spanish people are in the trenches shedding their blood in torrents against the fascist hordes of Hitler and Mussolini and Franco, who are armed with all the most terrible modern weapons of war. The Spanish people's army has been hastily improvised by the masses themselves, who are moving toward unity and coordination under the people's government headed by Largo Caballero and the parties of the People's Front. And in the midst of this struggle of life and death, the Trotskyists come forward with the slogan of treachery, "Break the People's Front." "Turn your guns also against the government of Caballero." Even the little Trotskyist rats in the United States have the brazen effrontery to come to the halls of meetings held in solidarity with the Spanish people, and distribute their leaflets calling for destruction of the People's Front government of Spain.

The depths of infamy was reached by Trotsky when only the other day he issued the slogan through all the capitalist press

that "the Soviet Union has deserted Spain". The whole world knows that is a lie. Trotsky even knew that no one would believe him. What then did he expect to accomplish by this brazen and lying slander? It was a pure-and-simple act of fascist provocation. He hoped to create a spirit of panic which would force the Soviet Union to some step which could be used by Hitler to consolidate his help from the reactionary circles of Britain and launch his general war against the Soviet Union, France, and the smaller democratic countries.

But neither the Soviet Union, with its monolithic leadership headed by Comrade Stalin and the Central Committee of the Communist Party, nor the international labor movement which is moving steadily toward general unification, can be provoked by Trotsky or Hitler. They know how to help the Spanish people in the most effective way, materially and politically. And the proof that they are doing so is the halting of the fascist gangs at the gates of Madrid, by the new strength, enthusiasm, and solidarity of the Spanish people and their people's army, which with the help of the Soviet Union and the international solidarity of the workers of the world is bringing to realization their slogan: "Madrid will be the tomb of Spanish fascism."

Why is the Soviet Union a great world power today, the only country in the world with a constantly rising standard of living, which is able to give effective and powerful help to the Spanish people at a moment when they are deserted by every other government of the world?

Because the Soviet Union rejected Trotsky and Trotskyism, isolated them from the masses, drove them out of the country, and is now engaged in burning out the little poisonous remnants of Trotskyism that Trotsky left behind him and which had until now covered themselves in dark corners and operated as masked assassins, spies, and wreckers.

The Soviet Union is a great and growing power, because it has solidly built up socialism, eliminated all exploitation, brought the masses of the population into the active control and direction of the government and economy of the country, and capped it all with the great new Stalinist Constitution, the realization in life of the dreams of progressive humanity of all ages, the creation of a classless society.

The Soviet Union has come forward in truth as the helper and inspirer of all the oppressed, because it has never wavered in its loyalty to the great teachings of Marx and Engels, because it has Lenin as its founder, and because after Lenin's death it found in Stalin a worthy successor and continuer of Lenin's work, who could not only guide the actual construction of socialism but also protect it against every enemy, at home and abroad.

In this world of starvation, misery, oppression and war, only the Soviet Union can show a rising material and cultural life, the end of all oppression of class by class or nation by nation, the stronghold of peace, because it has united the mass of the people behind the Party of Lenin.

Stalin has said, speaking for the 170,000,000 population of the Soviet Union, that the defense of Spanish democracy is the cause of all progressive humanity.

The defense of Spain is at the same time and, first of all, the defeat of Trotskyism, the handmaiden of fascism, in Spain and throughout the world.

All progressive humanity, which wants to help save Spain and the whole world from fascism and war, must find the road to unity in its struggles.

The united front, the People's Front, the slogans of all progressive humanity, finds in Trotskyism its most immediate and bitter enemy.

The Soviet Union, by hunting out and exterminating the agents of fascism and war lurking within its own borders, has performed a signal service to the cause of progressive humanity all over the world.

Now, just as all progressive humanity must emulate the Soviet Union in its material, moral, and political assistance to Spanish democracy, we must also emulate the Soviet Union in doing battle with Trotskyism, in driving it out of the ranks of the working class and from among the people, in making it a pariah, branding it with the mark of Cain, of the enemy of human progress.

Against fascism and war, and against all its Trotskyist agents, we will organize the people to march forward to democracy, progress, and peace.

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