

## XI

## Lessons of the Moscow Trials

THE treason trials just finished in Moscow, in which Bukharin, Rykov, Yagoda, Rakovsky and their seventeen co-defendants revealed at last the full scope and extent of the international fascist conspiracy to overthrow the Soviet government, are not to be considered the domestic affair of the land of socialism. The murderous conspiracy there revealed, throws a bright light on current events all over the world; in Spain, 30,000 new Hitler storm troopers join Franco's new offensive, with a new army from Mussolini, and hundreds of airplanes and heavy guns, while simultaneously the "Fifth Column" of fascism, behind the Loyalist lines, composed mainly of Trotskyists, tries to raise panic and demoralization; in Austria, Hitler consummates the obliteration of an independent nation, prepared by treachery and conspiracy from within; the Chinese people develop their heroic and history-making resistance to the Japanese invasion, but only at the price of systematic weeding-out and shooting of the generals and other officials in the pay of the Japanese secret service. In the United States itself, the smallest tip of the tail of the espionage rats was caught, with the arrest of a half dozen Nazi agents engaged in military espionage against our own land, while the Japanese espionage still operates with relative freedom. There is no part of the world whose fate was not involved in the net-work of treason, murder and war-provocation revealed in the Moscow trials.

Our *Daily Worker* has printed verbatim all the most important evidence of the trials, with the last words of the defendants, as well as the indictment, the prosecutor's summing-up and the sentence of the Supreme Court. Within a few

weeks the complete transcript of the Trial proceedings will be available to all in book form for more complete study. But we already have the complete picture with all its essential details. We can all give our considered judgment on the trials, and draw the lessons for our own particular problems in our part of the world.

After the first two Moscow treason trials, in August, 1936 and January, 1937, the capitalist press and the papers of the Second International joined in a cry of "frame-up." They tried to convince the world that even the confessions of the accused were faked, and that the conspiracy was on the side of the Soviet government itself and not of the accused, who were suddenly pictured as "saints of the revolution," "Old Bolsheviks" and so on, who for their revolutionary virtues must now be defended by the capitalist press and the Second International. The Soviet government, and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, had betrayed the pure doctrines of Marx and Lenin, they said, which are now being jointly defended by Trotsky, the capitalist press and the Labor and Socialist International Executive Committee. Even our own New York *Herald-Tribune* came out as the defender of Leninism! And of course, William Randolph Hearst, Eugene Lyons and Max Eastman were in the front lines!

Now with the last trial over, the evidence before us, the Court's verdict given and executed, now even the most hardened newspaper defenders of the traitors have been forced to drop the cry of frame-up, have been forced to admit the overwhelming proof of the guilt of the accused. The entire world is convinced that there actually was such a conspiracy, that it was accurately identified, that the accused were justly convicted. Even the most bitter-end opponents of the Soviet Union, including those without scruples or conscience, realize the old game is up, that it is useless any longer to repeat the old "frame-up"

cry. The facts of the case are now established, once and for all, for the whole world.

Today the journalistic and political defenders of Trotsky and his executed collaborators take up a new line. Admitting the facts, they now cry out that either way, true or false as the charges may be, the Soviet Union is equally discredited and disgraced before the world. If it had been a "frame-up," as they originally charged, then the Soviet government was the arch-criminal of all history; now that the old cry is completely discredited, the facts established, the Soviet Union is to be made responsible for the appearance of such extreme criminals in its ranks. Ha, ha, they cry, look at what enormous criminality is produced by the Soviet system, and in its very highest ranks too! That is enough by itself to prove the Soviet system is unsound, because it produces rotten fruits! It is enough, they shout, to admit the existence of such treason in high places, to automatically condemn the whole Soviet government! Some of the most brazen of these journalistic harlots even write imaginative stories involving all Soviet officials as traitors, and demand complete distrust toward everything connected with the Soviet Union.

How shamefully un-American, how anti-American, this position is, is clear to everyone with any knowledge of American history. If such an argument could hold against the Soviet Union, then American democracy would have been condemned from its beginnings. If Stalin, Molotov, Kalinin, must be made responsible for Trotsky, Bukharin, Tukhachevsky, as these defenders of wrecking demand, then George Washington must be made responsible for Benedict Arnold and Thomas Jefferson responsible for Aaron Burr. It needs only to draw this parallel, to completely expose the falsity of the argument, at least to anyone whose Americanism is deeper than his anti-Soviet prejudices!

It will help all Americans to understand the historic signifi-

cance of the trials, if we review our own history more at length, in the light of recent events.

The establishment of the United States as an independent nation was a vanguard event in the development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the whole world; it was the opening of a new stage in a world revolution. In this respect there is a valuable analogy between the position of the United States in world affairs at the close of the eighteenth and opening of the nineteenth centuries, and the position of the Soviet Union today. And both countries, in the period of revolution, suffered from treason and wrecking from within, in low and high places. We can safely say, making allowance for enormous differences in historical epoch and social relations, that America suffered much more than has the Soviet Union from treason, relatively speaking. Let us recall some of the details.

First, there is Benedict Arnold, whose name for Americans takes its place alongside that of Judas as synonymous with the utmost depths of treachery. Arnold was a close intimate of George Washington; he was described as "brilliant" and "gallant." He was ordered to be tried by court-martial, by act of Congress, but was let off with a reprimand. Washington defended Arnold, disapproved of the court-martial, and afterward invited Arnold to resume a post of honor in the Army and, on his request, gave him command of the principal military post in the country, West Point. One and a half years before receiving this appointment, Arnold was already in treasonable connections with the British. Within a few weeks after receiving this command, Arnold plotted to surrender West Point to the British at a date and hour when Washington, Lafayette and others were to arrive at West Point. The plot failed only because the go-between, Major Andre, was caught returning through the lines with the documents of the plot—Trotsky and his friends a century and a half later had learned to burn their documents! Arnold escaped, and openly joined the British, re-

ceived a reward of thirty thousand dollars and brigadier's commission.

A mayor of New York was involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Washington, a plot which included a member of Washington's bodyguard, who was executed.

A widespread plot arose inside the Revolutionary Army similar to that headed by Tukhachevsky in the Soviet Union. Headed by Thomas Conway, and called in history the "Conway Cabal," this plot included General Horatio Gates, Thomas Mifflin, Charles Lee and others; at one time they controlled the Continental Congress; their scheme centered on the assassination of Washington and his closest comrades, just as the Trotsky-Bukharin plot centered on assassination of Stalin and his closest co-workers.

In 1797, Congress impeached Senator Blount, of Tennessee, for treasonable conspiracy with Britain to involve the United States in war with Spain. As in so many other treasonable adventures, the traitor found protection in the Senate of which he was a member.

With the advent of Jefferson and the Republican-Democratic party to power in 1800, the Federalist Party quickly passed over to wholesale treason, which lasted for fifteen years. Hamilton was the leading figure in the treason, for the first period but, due to rivalry with Aaron Burr for leadership, later split the Federalists and opposed Burr when he took over leadership of the treasonable forces. The conspiracies involved such well-known and formerly powerful figures as Gouverneur Morris, George Cabot, Higginson, Fisher Ames, Pinckney, Rutledge, Ross, White, Tracy, Pickering, Cutler, Dayton, Hillhouse, Griswold—men who had controlled the destiny of the country during Washington's and John Adams' administrations.

How did these "eminent" Americans fight against Jefferson? Allow me to quote from an outstanding authority, Claude G. Bowers, who cannot be suspected of bias in favor of the argu-

ment I am making. When the Napoleonic counter-revolution was straining relations with the United States, in the difficulties which led up to the Louisiana Purchase, Bowers describes the beginning of the general treachery as follows:

Instantly the strategy of Federalism was clear—to force a war if possible, to furnish the West with a pretext for separation if necessary, and to make impossible by every human means the success of any peaceful negotiations Jefferson might plan.

Describing the situation in the government circles, Bowers says:

All the while the Federalist leaders in House and Senate were secretly planning treason—but that did not enter into the gossip then, nor for a long time afterward.

But while, as in the Soviet Union, the conspirators kept themselves hid for a long time, they were during the whole period, in Bowers' words, "up to their armpits in a conspiracy of secession."

During this period these gentlemen opened up their systematic connection with foreign powers. At one point Bowers describes this as follows:

They had not scrupled to approach Merry, the British Minister, with a proposal that Britain reject the boundary treaty on the ground, plainly expressed, that this would help in the steps already commenced toward a separation from the Union. . . . They naturally look to Great Britain for support and assistance whenever the occasion shall arrive.

Already in 1803, the conspirators were planning an armed *coup-d'état*. Bowers records that "If a resort to arms were necessary it was hoped that Hamilton would agree to become commander-in-chief."

Pickering, writing to Gouverneur Morris ten years after, in 1814, formulated the conspiratorial policy as follows:

For many years past I have said: "Let the ship run aground! The shock will throw the present pilots overboard; and then competent navigators will get her once more afloat, and conduct her safely to port."

Senator Pickering of Massachusetts continued regular correspondence, giving confidential information and advice, with the British government through many years up to and including the period of the war with England of 1812.

Double-dealing of the Federalists, on the model followed by the "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyists" in the Soviet Union, was followed especially in the period of the war with England. While in Congress they voted for the war, they privately assured the British Minister that this was only to create conditions for overthrowing the Republicans, and prepare a peace advantageous to England.

The New England state governments, controlled by the Federalists, openly sabotaged the military and financial measures of the U. S. government, and secretly trafficked with the enemy. British confidential reports of the period said:

Two-thirds of the army in Canada are at this moment eating beef provided by American contractors, drawn principally from the states of Vermont and New York.

Were it not for these supplies, the British forces in Canada would soon be suffering from famine, or their government be subjected to enormous expense for their maintenance.

It was wholesale treason in the American army that opened up the national capital, Washington, to the British Army, resulting in the sacking of the city, the burning of most public buildings, including the White House, from which President Madison escaped only a few hours before it was occupied by the British soldiers.

Aaron Burr furnished the classical American analogy to Trotsky in the Soviet Union. While he was vice-president of

the United States, under Jefferson, he opened his treasonable relations with foreign powers. Although the Supreme Court of the U. S., under Chief Justice Marshall, later acquitted him when he was brought to trial, his guilt was apparent not only to Americans but to the whole world.

British Minister Merry, writing to Lord Harrowly, on August 6, 1804, reported:

I have just received an offer from Mr. Burr, the actual Vice-President of the United States, to lend his assistance to his Majesty's Government in any manner in which they may think fit to employ him, particularly in endeavoring to effect a separation of the western part of the U. S. from that which lies between the Atlantic and the mountains.

Burr's conspiracy also extended to arrangements with the Spanish government, in developing which he suffered the same embarrassments that the Trotskyites complained of when confronted with the rival demands of their dual masters, Japan and England.

In Burr's scheme a central role was played by General James Wilkinson, formerly Chief-of-Staff of the U. S. Army and then Governor of Louisiana Territory. Wilkinson went enthusiastically into the plot, but later when he saw the dangers of defeat, like many Trotskyites in the Soviet Union, he turned states' evidence and helped the government to unearth and smash the conspiracy. Later on, however, like the oppositionists in the Soviet Union in past years, he used his immunity to again enter treasonable conspiracies against his country.

Burr's plot, like that in the Soviet Union, was definitely designed to destroy the new system that had been established by the Revolution, and return to the old discredited and overthrown regime. As reported by Minister Merry, in a report to Mulgrave in London:

He (Burr) observed that when once Louisiana and the western country became independent, the Eastern states will separate themselves immediately from the Southern, and that thus the immense power which is now risen up with so much rapidity in the western hemisphere will, by such a division, be rendered at once unformidable.

Burr planned not only an armed coup to separate the Western territory, but also an uprising in Washington. The scheme was to bring armed men into Washington, one by one, and at a given signal seize the President and Vice-President (Burr was by that time out of office himself), capture the arsenal and naval base, and throw the central government into confusion.

In the Burr conspiracy was involved many of the highest Army officers, Judges of the U. S. Courts, Senators and Congressmen, federal and state officials of all sorts, and the whole leadership of the Federalist Party at one time or another.

Like the plots of the Rights and Trotskyites in the Soviet Union, the Burr conspiracy had no roots in the population. The historian, Adams, described Burr's circles in the following words:

Burr's conspiracy, like that of Pickering and Griswold, had no deep roots in society, but was mostly confined to a circle of well-born, well-bred, and well-educated individuals.

As in Trotsky's conspiracy, the broadest circle of its agents and allies worked under cover, and when it was exposed they were loud in the defense of Burr and their denunciation of Jefferson. At the same time they washed their own hands of any responsibility for the affair, as Norman Thomas does today. But we can, as Comrade Foster has already pointed out in his foreword to a pamphlet on "The Meaning of the Soviet Trials," answer the apologists of Trotsky with the identical words of Thomas Jefferson, who wrote on April 20, 1807:

The Federalists, too, give all their aid, making Burr's cause their own, mortified only that he did not separate the Union, or overturn the government, and proving, that had he had a little dawn of success, they would have joined him to introduce his object, their favorite monarchy, as they would any other enemy, foreign or domestic, who could rid them of this hateful republic for any other government in exchange.

Jefferson also gave the perfect answer to those who argued then, as Norman Thomas argues now, that the charges are too fantastic to be believed. As Comrade Foster has already quoted, Jefferson said:

Burr's enterprise is the most extraordinary since the days of Don Quixote. It is so extravagant that those who know his understanding would not believe it if the proofs admitted doubt.

Like Burr, Trotsky relies mainly upon the extravagance of his plots to obtain non-belief in their exposure.

Jefferson answered the argument, now so popular among Trotskyite apologists, that the trials weakened and discredited the new republic. He said:

On the whole, this squall, by showing with what ease our government suppresses movements which in other countries requires armies, has greatly increased its strength by increasing the public confidence in it.

It took the United States government thirty-eight years before it finally suppressed the treasonable circles that had arisen in the first days of the revolution, and which had occupied high posts in the government established by that revolution. The Soviet Union has dug out and liquidated its treasonable sects in only about half of that time. The United States government, during that thirty-eight years of fight against treason, had to deal with tens of thousands of traitors in a population of three to six millions; the Soviet Union has had to

deal with a few thousand traitors in a population of one hundred eighty millions.

Altogether, the relative showing of treason in the early years of American bourgeois democracy and the early years of Soviet socialist democracy is not unfavorable to the land of socialism. And just as every American democrat must indignantly reject the idea that our traitors were the fruits of our new democratic system, just so must we also reject, for equally valid considerations, the identical argument that the Soviet traitors are the fruits of the socialist system of society, instead of, as the truth is, the fruits of the reactionary and fascist conspiracies against the Soviets.

Treason in the United States was not finished, however, even with the War of 1812 and the burning of the White House. When our country was face to face with the vital issue of slavery and the preservation of the Union, in the years leading up to 1860, we had traitors in control of the White House, of both houses of Congress, and of the Supreme Court, as well as in the Army. These traitors in high places deliberately prepared the dismemberment of their country, dispersed its armed forces, sent its supplies to the conspiring insurrectionists, surrendered its fortresses to the enemy. During the Civil War that ensued, the government began operations with a Chief-of-Staff who worked in agreement with the enemy. A confederate spy attended the meetings of the General Staff, and was subsequently arrested. When, at the conclusion of the war, Lincoln was assassinated, the deed was clearly protected and organized from within the government circles, as was the assassination of Kirov in the Soviet Union in 1934. And if Jefferson had his Burr, let us not forget that Roosevelt has his Garner.

If there are Americans still sufficiently naïve to think that the days of treason ended with the Civil War, let them ponder the words of William E. Dodd recently resigned as Ambassador to Berlin, who publicly declared:

There is no doubt that the Nazi Government has paid spies in America and that many of these are ranking American officials.

It is clear that the arrest of a few lower-class Nazi spies during the past few weeks is still far away from the centers of fascist espionage and treason that infest the upper circles of American society. The open incitations to assassination of President Roosevelt that have been published in the *New York Herald-Tribune*, the *New York Sun*, and the McClure Syndicate confidential dispatches, are only a little whiff of the devil's brew of treason that boils in Wall Street circles. The recent column of the well-known Republican commentator, Mark Sullivan, in which he compares President Roosevelt with a skunk, and proposes to remove a skunk from the national premises by writing polite letters to him, was but a cowardly echo of this assassination propaganda in high places. Treason is afoot in America today. Let the Moscow trials arouse the American people to more alertness toward it!

Since the Trotskyites and their collaborators, the Bukharin-Lovestone groups in all countries, entered into the organized intelligence services of Hitler and Japan and became their agents, they have worked overtime to put "revolutionary" slogans to work for the fascists, trying to confuse and disrupt the revolutionary working-class movement and divert it to irresponsible actions planned by the fascists.

Thus in 1933 the Trotskyites in the United States concretely raised the slogan of "turn the imperialist war into civil war," used by Lenin in the World War of 1914-1918, and demanded that this slogan shall govern the attitude of American workers in the event of war between Japan and the United States. When the Communist Party definitely repudiated this scandalous misuse of Lenin's famous slogan, and pointed out that this was encouragement to Japan's aggressions in China, and a promise to aid Japan if the United States should in any way

come to the help of China, the Trotskyites accused us of "abandoning Leninism." When the Bloc of Rights and Trotskyists had adopted a full program of dismemberment of the Soviet Union, the destruction of socialism and the return to capitalism, they launched their new phase of activities under the slogan that Stalin had betrayed the revolution. At every turn, in every country and locality, in every workers' organization, the Trotskyites and Lovestoneites-Bukharinites have reduced this scheme of treachery to a science; for every dirty job the reactionaries and fascists want done among the workers, these vermin will find a high-sounding "revolutionary" theory and slogan.

This was the technique by which the Trotskyites recruited many of their dupes in the Soviet Union; and this is also the means they rely upon especially in the United States. This was how they got their hold on Norman Thomas, with his political collapse inevitably ensuing. The case of Norman Thomas and Trotskyism is worthy of a more detailed examination in the light of the last trials.

Thomas was not always the pitiful figure that he now presents on the political scene, with no one so poor as to do him honor, not even the Trotskyites whom he serves. We are apt to forget that only a few years ago Thomas was a powerful political force in the country, far beyond even the measure of almost a million votes which he gathered in 1932. The story of his seduction by Trotskyism is the story of his political bankruptcy, so that today his chief significance is that of defender of self-confessed traitors, murderers and spies.

It was the rise of Hitler to power in Germany, which marked the new phase of activity of the spies and wreckers and their collection into a new general bloc or alliance in the Soviet Union, that also started Norman Thomas moving in the same direction. He was frightened and thrown into a deep panic by the collapse of his German comrades of Social-Democracy; he

began to look for new guidance, a new orientation; lacking any theoretical ability of his own, and stubbornly rejecting any serious united front with the Communist Party, which we systematically urged upon him and his associates for years (even to the extent of offering to make great sacrifices for it), Thomas closed one after the other all doors except that leading to union with the Trotskyites. He has been uniting and splitting with them ever since, and with each move he drops still more of his past political influence and prestige.

On the most crucial issue of the day, the fight for peace, we have the most sharp example of the political corruption of Thomas by the bloc of traitors and spies. Thomas is today one of the most frantic in denunciation of the Communist Party for our line toward concerted action for peace; at the same time he denounces the Communists for "inconsistency" in changing our position over the years. But Thomas has never yet uttered a word of explanation for his own changes, for in 1932 he occupied a position on this question very close to that of the Communists today in many respects; the difficulty between us is this, that as we tried to approach and unite with the broad democratic position Thomas then occupied, Thomas himself abandoned that position and moved over to Trotskyism.

Let me make this point very clear and explicit, by giving you a series of quotations of the position of Norman Thomas in 1932.

In the *New Leader* of February 6, 1932, Thomas wrote the following:

The disarmament Conference at Geneva opened to the horrible tune of Japanese bombs and guns in Shanghai. Disarmament must succeed if there is to be peace in the world, but disarmament cannot succeed while such cruel imperialism as the Japanese military clique has forced upon the Far East stalks abroad in the world.

If the United States weeks ago had deliberately sought co-operation

in the League of Nations with Russia in economic pressure on Japan, almost certainly the present crisis would have been avoided.

While the United States lost an opportunity that will not come again, whatever hope there is lies in the substitution by the nations of effective economic pressure. This requires co-operation with the nations in the League and with Russia.

After this fundamentally correct statement, which is even more true today, Thomas wrote three weeks later an answer to the Thomas of today. He said:

Certainly I do not agree with Senator Borah that economic embargo means war. Properly handled, it might be the alternative to war. . . . I still think that it would be well to see a frank conference with both the League of Nations and Russia on united moral and economic pressure against an aggressor nation.

It required the Trotskyites and Bukharin-Lovestoneites to convince Thomas that this was wrong, because it was against the interest of the fascist aggressors and would impede their hopes of seizing power in the Soviet Union.

The following week, Thomas wrote again a statement which is entirely correct today, but which Thomas has now abandoned under the influence of Trotsky. He said:

The United States government should have taken the initiative in seeking a world conference to impose on Japan world-wide embargoes on loans and war supplies. If this had been done sooner I think a great victory would have been won for peace. It is still the best method to use against a recalcitrant Japan.

If Norman Thomas had stood firmly by and further developed his correct position of 1932, he would not be the tragic figure he is today, isolated and discredited before the American masses. He would be a powerful figure in the broad democratic movement against war and fascism. But then he would have had to fight against the Trotskyite and Lovestoneite ideas and

groupings, instead of surrendering to them and joining their pro-fascist "anti-Comintern" alliance. Thomas, following the same logic as Trotsky and Bukharin, that springs from lack of faith in the people, and panic before fascism, surrendered his correct position of 1932, capitulated to Hitler, and joined with Trotsky. The Moscow trials have thrown a light upon all such problems, including the political degradation of Norman Thomas.

Over almost two years, we have become so accustomed to the systematic defense of the fascist spies and wreckers by the American newspapers, that we are in danger of tending to take it as a law of nature, a matter of course, something not even to be remarked about. But this is a political phenomenon of the first order, one which shows how deep the influence of the Hitler-Mussolini-Mikado "anti-Comintern" alliance penetrates into American life. It is of the same seriousness and significance as the spectacle of the newspapers in 1936 going overwhelmingly for Landon when the people were going overwhelmingly for Roosevelt. It is a sign of the profound reactionary forces driving toward fascism in our country.

But there are two new points on this question, raised by the last trials. In his testimony, Bukharin told about how he had arranged in advance, through his connections with the Second International leaders, that they should take the lead in mobilizing the press of the capitalist countries in their defense. Evidently Bukharin's friends did an effective job and responded without hesitation to this call.

But in the United States we have our own special example of this technique. It will be recalled that in January, 1936, on the occasion of the Piatakov-Radek trial, a Trotskyist agent by the name of Romm appeared, who had been stationed in Washington for some time as a correspondent of the Soviet press. When Romm confessed to being a liaison agent for connections with Trotsky, a group of his former associates in



Washington, of the American press, came forward with a statement declaring their confidence that he was not a traitor despite his confession. Apparently this was a spontaneous and voluntary help from fellow-craftsmen to a comrade in difficulties. However, we have made our own investigation in this matter, and have learned without the slightest possibility of doubt, that Romm himself had pre-arranged this defense before he left America, knowing beforehand that when he was recalled to Moscow he might be called upon to explain some evidence against him. If Romm had been innocent, why would he have considered it necessary to make such pre-arrangements? And what shall we think of our American newspaper men, who made this public appeal for Romm, without revealing that Romm had asked them, before he left, to be prepared for such an action if the issue arose?

The second special American angle to this question that is new, is the entirely unprecedented and unexplained complete suppression of an item of the trial which, by all newspaper standards, was one of the most sensational items for Americans. If, in a trial of world importance, a well-known American is named as an active agent in the very center of a plot involving the peace of the world and the fate of the world's first socialist society, that would seem to be news, to say the least. Perhaps it would have to be denied, and evidence brought forward to prove that it was not true. But when an American was named by Christian Rakovsky, as the agent who had secured from the British government agreement to Rakovsky's appointment as Ambassador, on the grounds that Rakovsky was closely identified with Trotsky and therefore valuable to the British, this news was completely suppressed by every newspaper and other publication in America, with the exception of the *Daily Worker*, the *Midwest Daily Record* and the *San Francisco People's World*. Not a line, not a word, has been printed to make known to America that a well-known American writer

was so accused in a world-historical trial. Was this item suppressed by the correspondents in Moscow? It is almost unthinkable that this would be so. By what means was this suppression achieved in America? That is one of the most interesting questions of the day, and its answer might reveal much to us of the technique of control of a free press in a capitalist democracy.

This complete suppression of the charge against a widely-known American, this contemptuous refusal to even allow the question to be made known, is one of the most revealing incidents of the trial in its relation to America, and the forces in our country working hand in hand with the fascist agents.

The capitalist newspapers, Norman Thomas, and the Trotskyite-Lovestoneite groups, are working overtime now to propagandize the idea that the Soviet Union is an enemy of democracy, that all Communist support of democracy is hypocritical, and that the Moscow trials furnish proof of this. Let us face this issue fundamentally and squarely, and force these gentlemen—if they are not too slippery for us—also to come down to brass tacks. Let us systematically examine their main arguments.

They say the fundamental error, the original sin, of the socialist state was that it originated in a revolutionary overthrow of the old order. We throw back into their faces the well-known fact that all democracies, including the United States of America, also originated in a revolutionary overthrow of the old order. If the Soviet Union is to be condemned on this count, then the U.S.A. is also condemned. We support the origin of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

They say the socialist state violated democracy when it drove out and disfranchised those who took up arms to restore the old order. We throw back in their faces the well-known fact that all democracies, including the U.S.A., did the same thing, and that the U.S.A. drove out a much larger part of its population than did the Soviet Union, with at least equal violence,

and that this was essential to the very establishment of democracy. We support the energetic crushing of the enemies within of the republic of the United States, just as we support that of the Soviet Union, and proclaim that both were services to democracy without which democracy would have been crushed.

They say the land of socialism violates the principles of democracy by its political set-up of a single party. We throw back in their faces that the original conception of the democracy of the United States was that of the single party, the party of all convinced adherents of the new system, that the United States operated on that system for more than twenty years, and that the system of dual parties arose only because a small exploiting class, controlling that Federalist Party, forced Jefferson and the masses of the people to organize a new party to prevent the complete crushing of democracy. Our Constitution was amended to allow for the operation of two parties only after more than a quarter-century of independence. The Soviet Union operated with many parties for years, and they were dispersed only when they took up arms against the Republic. We support the idea of uniting all convinced adherents of democracy into one party at the origin of the U.S., even though it failed, we support the idea of a single democratic front in the U.S.A. today, and we support the successful inclusion of the overwhelming mass of the population behind the single party of socialism in the Soviet Union. In all these instances, these are examples of the struggle to realize democracy, under different conditions, which all go in the same direction.

They say the Soviet Union violated democracy by carrying through collectivization of agriculture over the opposition of a few hundred thousand kulaks, at the cost of a severe struggle and great hardships. We throw back in their faces, that the democracy of the U.S.A. was forced, eighty-six years after its foundation, to carry through an agrarian reform much less

far-reaching but against greater resistance, and only at the cost of four years of Civil War, millions of casualties and twenty years of military rule in almost half of the country afterward. We declare that, for all its costs, the Civil War in the United States was a service to democracy all over the world, that the collectivization in the Soviet Union was a greater and more fundamental service, more successfully carried out with much less cost, and that those who attack the Soviet Union today are by that token repudiating our own American history and revolutionary heritage. Precisely because we are Americans, and value and love our American revolutionary heritage, we are the enthusiastic supporters of the Soviet Union in its tremendous democratic achievements, including collectivization.

They say that the democratic tradition, exemplified by America, is a method of settling political problems without violent struggle, while the Soviet Union shows that its system breeds violence. We throw back in their faces the long history of armed insurrections, conspiracies, assassinations and civil violence, which has been the constant accompaniment of every stage in the development of American democracy, and declare that the Soviet Union, a nation twenty times the size of the U.S. in its formative period, has shown a development a hundred times more peaceful than the early stages of bourgeois democracy anywhere in the world, whether in France, England or in the United States.

Precisely because we love and would protect the achievements of American democracy, we love and protect that higher form of democracy which is being surely and firmly established in the Soviet Union, showing the way to the whole world of the twentieth century, just as the United States was showing the way to the whole world in the eighteenth century.

All the enemies of progress and democracy, all the weak-minded dupes of developing fascism in the United States, have taken up the Trotskyite cries of slander against Joseph Stalin,

the genius who inspires and guides the successful construction of socialism in the Soviet Union, who makes of that land a bulwark of peace for the entire world. All their venomous hatred, the putrid essence of their murderous souls, is spewed out in the American press, trying by all means including the most foul, to smear the name of Stalin before the American people.

As we witness this disgusting spectacle, we remember our American history. We recall how the same forces carried on exactly the same kind of campaign against Thomas Jefferson in our own land, even to the point of organizing mob violence against him. We recall the long campaign of slander and abuse against Tom Paine, which lasted a hundred years after his death. We remember the murderous incitations against Lincoln, which stopped at no slander, however low, and which led up to the assassination of the most loved figure in American history. We cannot ignore that today, we have a campaign against our own American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, which behind the curtains is equal in virulence to that against Comrade Stalin, and which is more and more breaking into the open also in open incitations to assassination, and which is organized and cultivated by Wall Street circles.

And we declare before the whole world, that even if we had nothing to guide us except this hatred of President Roosevelt by the worst enemies of the people, this alone would be enough to bring us actively to his support, and to declare that any man who wins such hatred from our enemies, thereby wins a certain admiration from us. And with regard to Joseph Stalin, who has shown the way to the peoples of the whole world, as to how our enemies can be decisively defeated, how the eternal crisis and starvation of the capitalist world can be overcome, how a life of growing prosperity, well-being, culture and happiness can be won for the broad millions of the whole population, we declare before the whole world with the deepest pride,

that we have been brought to admire, to love, to respect, and to learn from, the greatest leader of democracy that mankind has ever produced, the greatest helper and guide of the common people of every land, the symbol of the united strength of the toiling masses in victory over their oppressors, none other than the man who is the object of the concentrated hatred of every exploiter in the world, Joseph Stalin.

Every open and concealed enemy of American democracy, is trying to make use of the incitations against the Moscow trials as a weapon, also, to make the American people believe that it is the Communists in America, and not the Trotskyite-Lovestoneite groups and their masters, the fascists, who are guilty of conspiracy and violence against democracy in our own land as in the Soviet Union. With this Red-baiting, they try to split open the progressive and democratic forces, and set them to fighting one another so that the reactionaries may slip back into power, using the tactics in our country which the fascists so successfully used in Austria, to that country's doom.

Allow me to use this occasion to repeat, to again put on the record, the answer of the Communist Party to the effort made in Albany to use this tactic to put through a new law to bar Communists from public office. Allow me to state again, that the Communist Party opposes with all its power, and will help to crush, by all proper and democratic means, any clique, group, circle, faction or party, which conspires or acts to subvert, undermine, weaken or overthrow, any or all institutions of American democracy whereby the majority of the American people have obtained power to determine in any degree their own destiny. Allow me to categorically state, that we stand one hundred per cent, under all circumstances, for the power of the majority of the people to control the destinies of our country. We of the Communist Party will fight with all our power to defeat, offering our lives if necessary, any and every

effort, whether it comes from within or from without, to impose over the American people and nation the will of any selfish minority group or party or clique or conspiracy.

On March 15, I had occasion to express this in a telegram to the Chairman of the New York Senate Judiciary Committee at Albany, which I want to read here. The telegram said:

Today's press carries news of Senator McNaboe's bill which would bar persons believing in overthrow of government by force and violence from holding public office. The McNaboe bill, while it does not apply to the Communist Party which repudiates any theory of overthrow of democracy, nevertheless has given rise to wide misconceptions and may make necessary a public hearing to clarify the situation. The bill as drafted is clearly unconstitutional and can be used against all civil servants and public officials who take a progressive position on any question. For the information of your committee and your fellow legislators let me state that the Communist Party unreservedly supports American democracy and the American constitution and fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy. Irrespective of what may have been said or may have been written to the contrary, the following is a true statement, in brief, of the Communist position:

1. The Communist Party opposes the overthrow of American democracy. On the contrary, it supports American democracy and urges the widest possible common front of supporters of democracy in order to maintain it.

2. The Communist Party does not advocate force and violence. It is not a party of anarchists, terrorists, or conspirators. By no stretch of the imagination does it come under the terms of the criminal anarchy statute or any law patterned after that statute.

3. The Communist Party is an American party and is not subject to any foreign control. The Communist Party is an American party from the ground up. Its policy is based entirely upon American needs and it is absolutely not subject to any decisions except its own conventions and officials elected thereby.

The Communist Party reminds the Committee that undemocratic legislation like the McNaboe measure can only lead the country along the road to Hitlerism. The McNaboe bills start off ostensibly with the Communists but always wind up, as we see in the tragic case of Austria, with the Schuschnigg, the Miklases, the Catholics, Jews and

liberals. You and I and our fellow-Americans in the State legislature certainly do not want such developments here.

(Signed) EARL BROWDER  
General Secretary, CPUSA.

This position, stated by myself on behalf of the Central Committee, was already adopted by formal resolution at our Ninth National Convention, in 1936; it will surely be unanimously endorsed by our coming Tenth National Convention, which will write these principles into our Party Constitution so clearly that even a capitalist newspaper editor cannot distort the question.\*

It is interesting to note, that our capitalist newspapers carry on a great campaign to convince the masses that to adopt the Communist program must mean to adopt a line of forceful and violent overthrow of democracy. They refuse to print our repeated official statements to the contrary. Thus, while we are trying with all our power to make all Communists into clear-headed and convinced fighters for democracy, these newspapers are trying, with all the power of their millions of circulation, to destroy and undo our work. They *want* the Communist Party to adopt a conspiratorial line of force and violence by a minority. When we refuse their proposals, they ignore our most solemn declarations, and try to make the people believe we are only lying. The result is this, that in those isolated cases where, among our new party members, we find tendencies toward conspiracy and force and violence, always and invariably this is the result of newspaper education or the work of stool-pigeons hired by employers' associations, which we must constantly fight to overcome and eradicate.

Just as the newspapers come to the defense of the wreckers, spies and fascist agents in the Soviet Union, and misrepresent

\* See the Preamble and Article VI, Section I of "The Constitution and By-Laws of the Communist Party of the United States of America" adopted at the Tenth National Convention of the Party held in New York, May 27 to 31, 1938, where these principles are officially set forth.

the trials in Moscow and their significance, just so they work to confuse and obscure the true position of the Communist Party in the United States. In both cases, they act against the interests of democracy and progress, at home and throughout the world.

The Soviet Union, through Comrade Litvinov, but yesterday came forward with a history-making proposal for a conference of all peace-seeking governments to halt the fascist aggressions that are shaking the whole world. On the same day, the city of Barcelona was shattered with a terrible aerial bombardment by German and Italian planes, dropping bombs, to our shame must we say, some of which were but recently shipped from the United States. And on the same day, Secretary of State Hull of the Roosevelt cabinet, made a speech calling for concerted action to maintain the sanctity of treaties and world peace.

Let these events, outstanding among the thousands which cry for the same judgment, be the test of the Moscow trials and their significance to the world. If the Soviet Union can confidently take such initiative for peace, if the whole world can be confident that the Soviet Union has the solidarity and power to back it up with action, if this can so clearly coincide with the interests of America, as interpreted by our most representative and respected officials—then clearly we must declare, and all honest people must join us in declaring: "By their fruits ye shall know them." The spies and wreckers condemned in the recent trials, represented all the dark forces of decay and corruption, leading to war, fascism, and destruction of civilization. Such forces are at work everywhere throughout the world, not least in the United States. The Soviet Union has cleansed itself of these vermin, and stands strong and ready for the supreme test which will decide the destiny of the world; it stands shoulder to shoulder with the best thought and the best men produced by American democracy. In a world of chaos and disintegration and economic crisis, it is forging a new life of

plenty and happiness for its people. The Soviet Union, with Comrade Stalin at its head, can do these things because it had united 180 million people into an indissoluble solidarity, based upon socialism, and because it has learned to search out and destroy all the enemies of progress, of democracy, and of peace.

These are the main lessons of the Moscow trials. Let us ponder them well, let us study them in all their detailed ramifications, let us make them clear to the millions of the American people, and let us use these lessons to forge still more strongly together the common front of all democratic forces in our own land, to fight for democracy, for jobs, for security, and for peace, for the entire American people.

Address delivered at the Hippodrome, New York, March 18, 1938.