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Who Are the Real Friends of Political Asylum?

RECENTLY the Trotskyites, from their new vantage point inside the Socialist Party, launched another masked attack against the Soviet Union and against the revolutionary movement everywhere. This time they covered themselves with the names of various persons of more savory reputation than their own, persons who from political naïveté or from considerations of factional advantage have lent their names to the Committee for the Defense of Trotsky.

This committee, setting itself the task of securing asylum for Trotsky, seems to think that it has placed the Communist Party in an embarrassing position when we oppose their demand for asylum. They charge that we have thereby become the enemies of the principle of political asylum.

Let these gentlemen know that we meet the issue that they have raised, squarely and without evasion. We declare that we stand unequivocally for the right of political asylum for those who suffer persecution at the hands of the enemies of democracy and progress, the reactionaries and fascists. At the same time we declare that we do not include in the conception of right of asylum, the right to use asylum to plot and conspire assassinations in another country. When political refugees thus use the right of asylum, as was done, for example, by the assassins of Barthou and Alexander, they are discrediting the right of asylum and furnishing its enemies with the most powerful weapon for its abolition. The same is true of those who would defend others in such a use of the right of asylum.

We apply exactly the same principle to Trotsky and his

accomplices in the murder of Kirov, and the plotted murder of a dozen other leaders of the Soviet Union. They have used, and continue to use, the right of asylum as the cover for their assassins' plots. Thereby they discredit the whole mass movement within the democratic countries which is demanding asylum for the hundreds of thousands of refugees from fascist terrorism. They turn the whole issue away from its true political significance, and try, so far as they are able, to establish that either there shall be no asylum at all, or it shall include protection for their assassination circles.

We speak out loud and clear on this question. We are against asylum anywhere in the world for those who make assassination their weapon of political struggle, no matter who they may be. We will support every sincere effort to outlaw assassination by international agreements. From the days of Marx and Engels, the Communist movement has always condemned assassination as a political weapon. We will still condemn it, we will not support it directly or indirectly, and when we fight for the right of asylum we specifically exclude from this right those who plot or execute assassinations.

We request that this issue be faced just as squarely by the gentlemen who have lent their names to the defense of Trotsky. We ask Norman Thomas, in particular, and the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, which authorized his speaking on behalf of Trotsky, just where they stand on this question. *Do you defend the right to use asylum to plot and execute assassinations?*

Please do not evade this question, gentlemen, by raising your extraordinary doubts about Trotsky's connection with the Kirov assassination. Sixteen of his collaborators confessed in open court, before the whole world; Trotsky accepted responsibility for them, after their conviction and execution by pledging to "avenge" them; and Trotsky has for several years openly written to prepare and condone assassinations in the Soviet Union.

Let me report some facts presented by Comrade Ercoli which will be of value to the entire working class in judging

the activities of the Trotskyite counter-revolutionaries in all countries. He cited the case of a scoundrel, connected with both the police and the Trotskyist group in Paris, who attempted to kill Marcel Cachin and was prevented from doing so only by accident.

There was the provocateur linked with the Trotskyist groups who killed Comrade Camille Montanari, one of the best Italian revolutionaries. There was Maria Reese, expelled from the German Communist Party for upholding Trotsky's defeatist views on German fascism, who later became one of the leaders of the German Trotskyists, and during the Saar plebiscite made a Hitlerite speech over the radio with the approval of the German Trotskyist press.

There was Nils Hyg, one of the leaders of the Trotskyites in Sweden, who received money from the notorious Ivar Kreuger, whose specialty was financing fascist organizations.

In Budapest, a Trotskyist sheet appears legally, although Communist publications are prosecuted as high treason. A Hungarian Trotskyist (Weisshauss) in 1926 organized an attack on the life of Rakosi when the latter was working illegally in the country.

Ruth Fischer, liaison agent between Trotsky and the terrorist sent by him to the Soviet Union, is a close collaborator of Doriot, renegade and fascist leader. In Poland, the police publish Trotskyist pamphlets and try to circulate them among the workers.

In Italy, Trotsky's autobiography, which is a cesspool of slander against the Communist International, is recommended by the police for prison libraries.

In Spain and France the People's Front, which is the bulwark against fascism, is attacked by the remnants of the Trotskyite sect, who furnish agents-provocateur in their attempt to disrupt the united front and the People's Front.

This list could be extended indefinitely. The connections between the police and the Trotskyites are an irrefutable fact. The French reactionary journalist, de Kerillis, has stated in *Echo de Paris*, that the French police possess proofs of the

close ties between the activities of the Trotskyites and Hitler's murderous Gestapo. These facts are known to every one who wants to know the facts. The very least that must be demanded of those who would defend Trotsky and seek to win a new asylum for him is a clear and unequivocal answer to this question. Evasion of this question will forever stamp the defenders of Trotsky as among those who opened the gates to the worst enemies of democracy and liberty, no matter how much they protest their innocence.

It is no accident that those who rush to put their names to the defense of Trotsky, and who speak on his behalf, have no such irresistible urge to have their names on committees for the defense of Spanish democracy, are not making speeches in that cause; they have formed no committees to secure asylum in America for the victims of Hitler and Mussolini. At a moment when hundreds of thousands of the heroic Spanish people are laying down their lives for the preservation of democratic rights, that is the moment chosen by these gentlemen to set up a committee to gain democratic rights, the right of asylum—but for Trotsky.

Class-conscious workers, yes, even simple but serious democrats, will have no hesitation in deciding who are really the friends of political asylum, who are the friends of democracy. Those who rush to the defense of Trotsky are giving service to the worst enemies of democracy, to Hitler, with whose Gestapo Trotsky had secret dealings. Those who fight uncompromisingly against the political assassins, against Trotsky, and demand their outlawing, are the same people who unhesitatingly rush to the defense of the Spanish people, who organize material help, who are sending from their ranks personal help, who are standing in the forefront of the struggle for democracy and liberation in their own lands.

These are facts which show the sinister character of counter-revolutionary Trotskyism, which show that it is nothing but an agent of fascism in the ranks of the working class. Five years ago, Comrade Stalin made a masterly analysis of the nature of Trotskyism in which he proved that it was nothing

but the vanguard of world counter-revolution. Let me quote his profound words:

... Trotskyism is the vanguard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, which is carrying on the struggle against Communism, against the Soviet government, against the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R.

Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie its intellectual weapon against Bolshevism, in the form of the thesis of the impossibility of building socialism in our country, in the form of the thesis of the inevitability of the degeneration of the Bolsheviks, etc.? That weapon was given it by Trotskyism. It is not an accident that all anti-Soviet groupings in the U.S.S.R. in their attempts to give grounds for their argument of the inevitability of the struggle against the Soviet government referred to the well-known thesis of Trotskyism of the impossibility of building socialism in our country, of the inevitable degeneration of the Soviet government, of the probable return of capitalism.

Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie in the U.S.S.R. its tactical weapon in the form of attempts at open attacks on the Soviet government? This weapon was given to it by the Trotskyists, who tried to organize anti-Soviet demonstrations in Moscow and Leningrad on November 7, 1927. It is a fact that the anti-Soviet actions of the Trotskyists raised the spirits of the bourgeoisie and let loose the work of counter-revolutionary sabotage of the bourgeois specialists.

Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie an organizational weapon in the form of attempts at organizing underground anti-Soviet organizations? This weapon was given to it by the Trotskyists who founded their own anti-Bolshevik illegal group. It is a fact that the underground anti-Soviet work of the Trotskyists facilitated the organized formation of the anti-Soviet groups within the U.S.S.R.

Trotskyism is the vanguard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

That is why liberalism towards Trotskyism, even when the latter is shattered and concealed, is stupidity bordering on crime, bordering on treason to the working class. (J. Stalin, *Leninism*, International Publishers, Vol. II, pp. 403-404.)

This warning of Comrade Stalin is of the utmost importance to the entire working class. It shows that mistaken tolerance, that ignorance of the counter-revolutionary nature of Trotskyism, are nothing short of a crime against the working class.

If the working class is to progress, if it is to build the

People's Front against reaction and fascism, it must worm out these agents of the fascists who are trying to conceal their murderous activity by playing on the confusion of certain liberals. Norman Thomas and the other leaders of the Socialist Party, who are covering up Trotsky, are enabling these counter-revolutionaries to perpetrate betrayals of the best interests of the working class. We say:

No asylum and no tolerance for political assassins and assassinations!

Political asylum should be sought for the victims of political reaction and fascism which, trying to maintain a dying capitalism, is murdering and oppressing whole peoples.

We must and will win the working class to this stand!

Extracts from the Closing Speech at the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, U.S.A., December 7, 1936.