

# WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL NEWS

---

VOL.1 NO.11

NOVEMBER 1938

TWOPENCE

---

## THE SOVIET UNION MUST BE DEFENDED

### 21 Years After

Twenty-one eventful years have elapsed since the workers and peasants of Russia overthrew their ruling class and pointed the road for the rest of humanity by establishing the first workers' state under the banner of Marxism.

The Soviet Union arose from out the ruin and devastation of the last World War. Engels clearly foresaw this outcome, as his writings testify. In his preface to Borkheims book: *In Memory of the Supreme German Patriots 1806-1807*, he wrote:

"And finally no war is any longer possible for Prussia-Germany except a world war and a world war indeed of an extension and violence hitherto undreamed of. Eight to ten millions of soldiers will mutually massacre one another and in doing so devour the whole of Europe until they have stripped it bare than any swarm of locusts has ever done. The devastations of the Thirty Years' War compressed into three or four years, and spread over the whole Continent; famine, pestilence, general demoralisation both of the armies and of the mass of the people produced by acute distress; hopeless confusion of our artificial machinery in trade, industry and credit, ending in general bankruptcy; collapse of the old states and their traditional state wisdom to such an extent that crowns will roll by dozens and there will be nobody to pick them up;

absolute impossibility of foreseeing how it will all end and who will come out of the struggle as victor; only one result absolutely certain: general exhaustion and the establishment of the conditions for the ultimate victory of the working class. This is the prospect when the system of mutual outbidding in armaments, driven to extremities, at last bears its inevitable fruits. This, my lords, princes and statesmen, is where in your wisdom you have brought old Europe. And when nothing more remains to you but to open the last great war dance—that will suit us all right. The war may perhaps push us temporarily into the background, may wrench from us many a position already conquered. But when you have unfettered forces which you will then no longer be able again to control, things may go as they will: at the end of the tragedy you will be ruined and the victory of the proletariat will either be already achieved or at any rate inevitable."

This brilliant prophecy was made possible because of the light which Marxism casts on the path ahead. But thanks to the treachery of the Second International it was only in Russia, under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, that the working class was able to establish its rule.

After the World War which Marx and Engels so clearly foresaw came the "peace" which now turns

out to be merely an armistice between two World Wars. But during that armistice the workers of the Soviet Union, isolated by the failure of the workers in the rest of the world to achieve a similar victory, have been forced into retreat. One by one the achievements of October has been wrested from them by a usurping bureaucracy.

Workers' control of industry, established by the October Revolution, has been replaced by bureaucratic control with the inevitable result—waste, mismanagement, lack of balance. The bureaucracies, forced to find scapegoats for their crimes, have conducted a series of trials and purges unprecedented in history.

The state set up by the workers, the dictatorship of the proletariat, instead of withering away, has been replaced by a bureaucratic regime of violence and repression, moving inexorably in the direction of fascism. Where the October Revolution armed the people, they have been again disarmed by the bureaucracy which has established a standing army under their control, an army which they did not hesitate to behead in the course of their factional disputes.

The October Revolution liberated woman from her slavery, opened the doors to the equality of woman with man, but Stalinism has re-enslaved her, re-established the laws against abortion. It has sent her back to the kitchen stove and the wash tub and the maternity wards in its efforts to preserve the middle-class family.

The October Revolution liberated youth, abolished the Czarist uniform for students and the tyranny of examinations. But Stalinism has re-enslaved the youth, forced them back into uniform, re-established the tyranny over them.

The October Revolution set free art, science, culture. But under Stalinism a police regime has been established over the poet, the musician and the savant, so that the poems are panegyrics of Stalin, the songs glorify the chauvenist fatherland, the discoveries coincide with bureaucratic requirements. Education has become falsification, history has been re-written and then erased and re-written over again.

The October Revolution liberated the subject nations, and freed the Jews from pogroms. But Stalinism re-established Great Russian chauvenism and did not hesitate to exploit anti-semitic prejudices to further its ends.

The October Revolution found its leaders in the generation of Old Bolsheviks which Stalinism has now annihilated. Zinoviev, who shared Lenin's exile and accompanied him when he was driven into hiding by Menshevik slander has fallen under Stalin's gun. And Bukharin, whom Lenin described in his "Testament" as "the favourite of our party" now figures in the latest Soviet film as the leader of a fascist gang plotting the assassination of Lenin, and his corpse too has been added to the mound of corpses which Stalin has piled up to cele-

brate his position as the great Red Vozd of Russia.

And to crown all, the Comintern which arose from the social-patriotic betrayal of the Second International has become the disseminator of social-patriotism in the world to-day.

What then remains of the October Revolution which transformed the world of twenty-one years ago? There remains one thing: the Soviet Union is still a workers' state, in spite of bureaucratic distortions, and has demonstrated once for all the superiority of socialist methods of construction in the re-organising of human life.

The bureaucratic clique will pass away, will be swept away in the stormy events that are about to erupt. The Czechoslovakia crisis was a warning that the armistice between the world wars is rapidly reaching an end. The new war is about to be resumed, and the world proletariat will take up the threads where they were dropped in 1919. Engel's prophecy will be fulfilled to the letter.

The world-wide piling up of armaments can culminate only one way—in war. The battleships will go into action, the bombers will rain destruction on the cities, the artillery will be fired, the bombs will explode. That is what they are for. Not all the pious wishes of the bourgeoisie, terrified by the Frankenstein they have themselves created, can prevent this outcome.

War is inevitable as long as capitalism lasts. The longer it is delayed, the greater the piles of armaments that are heaped up, the more terrible the consequences of war, the more agonising the sufferings and privations of mankind.

Confronted with this fate, the working class will revive the memory of the revolution of twenty-one years ago, will revive its aims and ideals. This is the main significance of the October Revolution to the toiling masses of the world. It stands as a symbol of what the working class can achieve with a revolutionary party at its head.

After twenty-one years of degeneration, the Soviet Union still remains a state in which the means of production are collectively owned by the people. While this fundamental conquest of October stands, the workers of the Soviet Union are faced with the necessity of re-establishing workers' democratic control to regain the positions lost since the death of Lenin, but the Soviet Union is a workers' state.

As such it must be defended from the imperialist bandits who are closing in around it, seeking to transform the Soviet people into their colonial slaves. Only the workers of the world can defend the Soviet Union. To organise that defence, to preserve the conquest of the workers as a base from which new conquests can be made—this is the task of the world proletariat, welded together in the new, Fourth International.

Long live the Soviet Union!

Long live the Fourth International!

# The Shadow of Coming Events

The panic in the United States created by the broadcasting of a too realistic play is symptomatic of a frame of mind that exists in every part of the world among the masses who are painfully aware that humanity lives on the slopes of a smouldering volcano. Each morning paper that appears brings fresh evidence of the imminent catastrophe. Each newsreel in the cinemas shows the ruins of bombed cities. A New York in flames, a London laid waste—such eventualities are not merely possible, each passing day makes them more and more inevitable.

Mr. Louis Johnson, Assistant Secretary for War in the United States announced on October 28th the commencement of a £200,000,000 national defence and power programme. The British rearmament programme, originally planned to cost £1,500,000,000 has now been increased to the neighbourhood of £2,000,000,000, and these figures are approached by all the Great Powers. Six times as much is being spent on arms this year as was spent in 1913.

In this atmosphere all the signs of incipient war hysteria flourish. Spy-trials have become a commonplace of political propaganda, and with the last crisis hardly over, the "next crisis" is being seriously discussed in all quarters.

Cautiously the bourgeois politicians raise the question of imposing fascist methods without disturbing the "democratic" institutions of Britain. The rapid decisions of the totalitarian Leader are contrasted with the "inertia" and the "vacillation" of the democratic state. Churchill and Duff-Cooper, those champions of democracy, now raise the cry of "National Unity," the need for sacrifices. In the House of Commons and the Lords the questions of industrial and military conscription, the National Register, etc., appear again and again, each time more boldly and emphatically.

The British bourgeoisie, envious of the totalitarian war machine, wishes to have its advantages without paying its cost, its repressive methods without its host of officials, its regimentation without its inso-

lence. But the British workers, profiting by the lesson of Germany, will not permit fascism to be imposed on them as it was on the German workers—without a civil war. And the British bourgeoisie turns more and more persistently to the thought of a civil war in Britain.

The army manœuvres this year are again conducted on the supposition that a civil war is in progress in Britain, and the rebel forces are concentrated in the industrial parts of Britain. Against a background of developing slump, declining trade and colonial revolts, the bourgeoisie institutes economy cuts in the social services and faces the problem of shifting the burden of the hard times which are coming on to the backs of the workers.

The fascist bogey is raised before the workers and they are asked to give up their liberties in order to avoid having them taken away by force. "Democracy" is threatened by "fascism" and therefore it is necessary, they urge, to merge all parties and to sink class differences for national unity. The first sacrifice the workers will be asked to make is the sacrifice of trade union rights in the interests of pushing forward the rearmament programme.

The growth of the number of workers organised in trade unions to six millions, the strike of the railway workers in London for the closed shop—this is the answer that the British working class is giving in advance to the bosses' demands. But the lackeys who stand to-day at the head of the trade union movement constitute the main danger to workers' conditions and workers' liberties, because they stand ready to urge upon the workers the "patriotic" duty of surrendering their hardwon liberties and sacrificing their class interest in order to oppose the "fascist aggressor" with a united national front.

The National Government came into power seven years ago. If these years have been seven fat years of British recovery, this has not been due to any inherent recuperative capacity in senile British Imperialism, but rather to a "favourable"

conjuncture of events which have tied the hands of Britain's rivals. While concessions were being wrung from the bosses in the United States and in France by means of the sitdown strikes, Japan has been pre-occupied in Manchuria, Italy in Abyssinia, Germany in South-eastern Europe.

To-day Britain is confronted with a Japan which lays claim to the whole of China, a Germany which has whet its appetite in South-eastern Europe and now makes a decisive bid for world trade. The seven fat years are over, the slump approaches, the seven lean years come to swallow up their predecessors. Britain, with archaic equipment, with revolts fermenting in the colonies now turns to face rivals who are re-armed and re-equipped and driven to desperation by the developing crisis.

To enable itself to face competitors who have converted their industries into vast prisons for the proletariat, the British bourgeoisie is compelled to begin an onslaught on the conditions of British workers. The seven peaceful years during which there have been no major conflicts with the working class are now at an end. Industrial mobilisation, new methods, this is the cry to-day. British Imperialism has been compelled to bolster up the tottering regime of its rivals, to permit and connive at the conquest of China, Abyssinia, Spain, for fear of the consequences to the totalitarian states if their expansion was checked. And now Britain is compelled to adopt totalitarian methods in order to survive.

In the past months a series of minor strikes has taken place in Britain, foreshadowing the class-battles of the coming years. In July a stay-in strike occurred at Bryn-teg Colliery, and 10,000 South Wales miners struck to force 150 men into the union. The strikes of the Sheffield engineers like that of the builders and railwaymen have been on trade union issues, against attempts at dilution, victimisation and employment of non-union labour. In thus resisting the first tentative moves of the bosses to weaken the trade unions, the workers have met with sabotage from the trade union leaders who have raised the monotonous chant of "Go back to work! Go back to work!"

The bourgeoisie indignantly shakes its fist at the labour leaders and complains bitterly in its press at the failure of its lackeys to keep the men under control. The strike of several thousand London railwaymen against the employment of a man who defied the demand that he join the union was followed by a furious editorial in the *Times* of October 17th in which the executive committee is scolded for failing to prevent the strike, for allowing several days to elapse before they ordered the men back to work, for failing to condemn the strike

promptly and unequivocally as did the union secretary, Mr. Marchbank, who receives a grudging pat on the back because he declared immediately and "straightforwardly" that the union had not countenanced the strike.

The workers, in spite of the sabotage of the union bureaucracy in declaring the strike illegal and stopping strike pay, fought on for the principle of 100% trade unionism. Even if the bureaucracy does display a cynical indifference to the interests of the workers in the union, they might at least be expected to display the solicitude of a peasant for the cow that he milks. Out of sheer self-interest the bureaucrat might be expected to protect the organisation that provides him with his income. But no, the task of defending the integrity of the union is not only left to the rank-and-file membership but they are deliberately obstructed in their efforts, refused strike pay and told: Go back to work, go back to work.

Building workers, railwaymen and engineers, faced with this sabotage from their official leaders, have organised behind the shop committees, and appealed directly to fellow-workers. In this manifestation we see the first instinctive turning of the workers to their own committees, embryo soviets, as the natural expression of their interests. As the slump deepens, the isolated minor strikes will merge into the general broad struggle of the workers in defence of their standard of living. Continued sabotage from the traitors who stand at the head of the union will force the workers to turn in increasing numbers to the factory committees which will wrest the leadership of the unions from the servants of the bosses, the bureaucracy.

Behind the angry scolding of the bosses at the trade-union leaders for "losing control" is the fear that they will not be able to keep the reins in their hands in the coming period. The bosses will then be compelled to turn to armed bands of fascist thugs to maintain their domination. And so inevitably their thoughts gravitate to the question of civil war.

The social barometer now points to stormy weather ahead. Day after day the boss press pleads for united national effort, for "sacrifice of leisure and still more, of prejudice." The workers' prejudices about labour dilution, wages and hours, black-leg labour, are to be the first sacrifices on the altar of national unity. And if persuasion cannot bring about the sacrifices (and the bourgeoisie has gloomy forebodings that it cannot) then the sacrifice must be brought about by force.

In the present period, the question of defending workers' conditions from the onslaughts of the bosses

cannot be separated from the question of overthrowing senile capitalism. The shop committees which are set up by the workers make demands that the capitalist class cannot concede without abandoning all hope of competing with its rivals. To carry out the elementary task of guaranteeing a livelihood to the workers leads the shop committees into the life and death struggle with the boss-class. The routine officials who now head the trade unions do their utmost to oppose the bold onslaught of the workers by making the strikes illegal, by cutting off the workers from their own funds, by pleading with both

bosses and workers to moderate their demands.

They must be swept aside, replaced with a genuine militant leadership conscious that the day to day struggle is no longer a struggle to force capitalism to yield a larger share to the workers but a struggle against the attempt to reduce the workers to the totalitarian level of sub-human existence.

The fat years are over, the peaceful period ends. In the famine years ahead the British working class is faced with the task of setting up the vanguard to lead its bitter struggles, the revolutionary party of the British proletariat.

## POUM Leaders Sent Back to Prison

After 17 months of imprisonment during which trial was postponed again and again, nine members of the National Executive of the P.O.U.M. (Workers' Party of Marxist Unity) were tried in Barcelona, Spain, on October 11th, on charges of espionage and high treason. In spite of the fact that the proceedings served to establish the utterly fantastic character of the Stalinist accusation that P.O.U.M. was a fascist spy agency, 15-year prison sentences were passed on four of the accused and 11 years on a fifth. The Court declared that the prisoners were anti-fascists, but it considered them to be rebels against Government authority.

Largo Caballero was War Minister during the May days when the Spanish workers in Barcelona were provoked by the Government attack on workers' control into an armed uprising. He declared in evidence given at the trial of the P.O.U.M. prisoners that the May events were not organised by P.O.U.M., which he said was an anti-fascist party. Like other working class parties, like the Communist Party, it had made political attacks on his Government, but this fact did not make it an agent of fascism. He himself, he said, had been forced to resign from the Government because he was not prepared to sanction the crushing of P.O.U.M. which he considered to be an anti-fascist organisation. Similar evidence was given by Senor Araguistain, former Spanish Ambassador at Paris, who described Nin and Andrade as sincere anti-fascists.

The trial was prepared and stage-managed for the bourgeois government by Stalin's G.P.U., the tool of Negrin in the crushing of the Spanish workers' movement. Modelled on the Moscow frame-ups,

the Stalinists provided forged documents and perjured evidence, but the Spanish bourgeois court, less cynically indifferent to world opinion than Stalin's gangsters, has been compelled to admit that the prisoners were anti-fascist, and to find them guilty only on the charge of treason against bourgeois rule.

During the trial the Stalinist press let loose throughout the world its usual torrent of lies, distortions and slanders. Evidence which proved the monstrous character of the espionage charge is omitted, while readers of the *Daily Worker* are deliberately given the impression that the accused were found guilty on the charge of espionage. To compare the *Daily Worker* accounts with the bourgeois press accounts is to observe that they are united in hatred of the revolutionaries, while the *Daily Worker* goes further than the bourgeois press would ever dare to go in filth, distortion and barefaced lying. The treatment accorded to the P.O.U.M. trial account shows up the *Daily Worker* gang as the kept staff of the Kremlin, consciously and deliberately playing their trade as the hired penmen of Stalin.

Among the accused, tried in absentia, is Andres Nin who was murdered by Stalin's G.P.U. in Spain. In all solemnity the tribunal went through with the grim farce of trying the ghost of one whom they all knew had fallen a victim to the assassin's bullet.

The P.O.U.M. leaders have gone to prison because they opposed the bourgeois republican government which is anxious to prove to Britain and France that it is prepared to crush and stamp out the revolutionary workers' movement no less ruthlessly than the Fascists. Even the vacillating opposition

made by P.O.U.M. was intolerable and was crushed all the more easily because of its vacillating irresolute character. In failing to take up a clear determined stand against the Popular Front, from the very beginning the P.O.U.M. leaders not only led the workers to defeat but put themselves behind bars. The political irresolution which is centrism not only loses the battle for the workers but dooms the centrist leaders themselves to inevitable ruin.

The I.L.P., British counterpart of the Spanish P.O.U.M., only more irresolute, has learned nothing from the tragic fate of P.O.U.M. Confronted by the monstrous vilifications of the Stalinists, the barrage of lies and slander, they attempt to "reason" with the murderous gangsters who lead the Communist Party, hoping, no doubt, to conciliate the thugs. This will not save them!

Says the *New Leader* on October 7th: "Except for the Communist Parties, no section (of the working class movement) believes the charges of fascist espionage brought against the P.O.U.M. leaders." In this way, the workers are left with the impression that the C.P. genuinely believes in the guilt of the accused. And no attempt is made to remove this

impression and to point out to the workers that the Communist leaders deliberately and consciously besmirch and murder militants.

It is necessary for comrades who stand in the ranks of the I.L.P. to draw the lesson from the fate of P.O.U.M. By its vacillating leadership the centrist I.L.P. inevitably dooms itself to suffer a similar if not a worse fate. At the crisis in the coming class struggles, even a resolute stand will not in itself guarantee victory. How much less the chances of winning when leaders waver and temporise. Then defeat is absolutely certain. And can we expect the I.L.P. leaders to face up to the capitalist class when they tremble before Pollitt and Company?

Joining with the comrades in the I.L.P. in condemnation and protest against the foul repression of P.O.U.M. and the imprisonment of its leaders, we urge upon them the necessity of learning the lesson of these events. An uncompromising stand against the Popular Front: uncompromising condemnation of the Stalinist and reformist "leaders" who help to perpetuate the monstrosity of capitalism: join in the task of building the Fourth International which opens the only road to workers' victory!

# Purged by the Million

by J. G. Wright

No official statistics relating to the Stalinist purge have been issued. None will be forthcoming. Nevertheless on the basis of indirect data in the Stalinist press the number can be roughly approximated. A figure of 1,000,000—1,500,000 for the past two years would be a conservative estimate.

In December 1937, Walter Krivitsky, leading Soviet diplomat who refused to return to Russia, stated that in May of that year he had learned from an authoritative source that the number of political arrests had at that time reached the total of not less than 300,000, the majority being party members and members of their families. In the period since May, the number of arrests had considerably increased and Krivitsky estimated it to be in the neighbourhood of half-a-million.

Krivitsky's estimate is indirectly borne out by a dispatch from Denny during this same period: "The purge continues unabated although it has now been going on so long that its trials and executions have become routine news stripped of all dramatic value." (*N.Y. Times*, Dec. 2, 1937).

However, we have a far more authoritative verification. In January of this year *Pravda* asserted that: "More than 100,000 people have been advanced to leading posts during last year alone—in dis-

tricts, provinces, federated and autonomous People's Commissariats. *More than 100,000!*" . . . The advancement has acquired a mass character, it is becoming almost everywhere a mass phenomenon. (Jan. 27. Emphasis in the original).

It goes without saying that for every individual who was "advanced" another one was removed, *i.e.*, purged. It is equally clear that for every "leading" functionary a number of subordinates, to say nothing of relatives, were caught in the dragnet. A ratio of 5 to 1 is hardly exaggerated. Thus on the basis of *Pravda's* boast, the number of those purged during "last year alone" can be set at not less than 500,000. The appalling implication of the figure mentioned in *Pravda* becomes clear if we bear in mind that *Pravda* cited it only to call for an *intensification* of this campaign of "advancement." It was only a modest beginning! In March came the Bukharin-Rykov frame-up as part of the machinery of speeding up the purge.

At that time Webb Miller, United Press staff correspondent, reported from Moscow: "Many thousands of persons have been arrested—the number perhaps running into five figures—throughout the Soviet republics since the recent treason trials." (*N.Y. Post*, March 8).

In July, Walter Duranty was able to state with satisfaction that "there is no doubt that it (the purge) cut a deep furrow through every phase of national life. To prove this it is sufficient to compare published membership lists of official bodies from the high military council to local soviets, of two years ago and now, or to read reports of changes of the personnel in Communist party secretariats, both provincial and municipal, and in government administrative positions." (*N.Y. Times*, July 26). The spheres and the changes enumerated by Duranty embrace not isolated and administrative apparatus of the country, that is to say, thousands upon tens of thousands of people.

We continually meet with this refrain of "new thousands." Thus, in August, *Izvestia* stated that "in the recent period thousands of new people have been advanced to leading posts in People's Commissariats and the administrative bodies" (August 28. Our emphasis). And only the other day, Denny reported on the Army purge as follows:

"The purge that is still continuing in the Red Army, though apparently on a smaller scale, is being accompanied by promotions of thousands of junior officers to responsible posts." (*N.Y. Times*, Oct. 17. Our emphasis).

The scope of the "promotions" provides a yardstick for the real extent of the purge. Let us apply it to those isolated cases in which the Stalinist press provides us with some statistics.

In *Pravda*, for July 22, A. Akopov, director of the Ural Heavy Machinery Plant made the following boast: "There are more than 400 engineers and technicians in the construction department of Ural-mash. Of these only 3 completed their studies prior to 1917, all the others are from among the Soviet youth." We also learn that "more than 250 Stakhanovists from among the labour and technical personnel have been promoted to leading posts." Here we have a purge of more than 60 per cent in a single department. So we are not shocked to discover that in this plant there were: "a foreign specialist, the spy Z—; former chief metallurgist, the diversionist P—; head of the central laboratory, the spy D—; former head of the forging-press department, Z—; chief engineer, the wrecker L— former head of the order bureau, the spy K—."

Here is a report of the results of the Party Conference in the city of Stalinsk: "In the Kuznets metallurgical plant named after Stalin, the cadres of the party have been vigorously renovated in the last year. The majority of the secretaries of shop committees and group organizations are new people—their past record in party work does not exceed one year." (*Pravda*, July 22).

Finally, we take the instance of the Don Basin. Time and again has the administration been purged,

culminating in the sweeping changes effected by Kaganovich in October of last year. *Pravda* commented as follows: "The People's Commissar of Heavy Industry, com. L. M. Kaganovich has reorganized 'Glavugol'; he has expelled from there the apologists of wreckers' theory . . . the bureaucrats and the office holders; he has reinforced the apparatus of the chief administration with young engineers, tested communists, people who know their jobs and are desirous of fighting for the convalescence of the coal industry." (Oct. 2, 1937).

On June 11, 1938, *Pravda* announced the removal of these "worthless directors" and boasted of a new leading staff embracing: 260 mine superintendents; 240 chief engineers, 610 heads of sectors, 400 "leaders of tens", 650 Stakhanovists, 120 organizers and 140 chairmen of mine committees.

Said *Pravda*: "The chief task of the directors of 'Donbasugol' was to transmit the experience of the advanced mines in the struggle for coal to the lag-gard mines, to put an end once and for all to criminal negligence and to proceed to root out the consequence of wrecking . . . The former leaders of 'Donbasugol' failed to do this. Departmental-bureaucratic methods of management predominated in their work. The worthless directors have been removed." (June 11). In October of this year, the Donbas has been reorganized once again, this time into three separate units. No purge was reported in connection with this reorganization but it doubtless took place. If the purge elsewhere assumed the same proportions it would involve not 1½ but several millions. We presume that these are exceptional cases.

Of the 28 Commissariats (established in January) 11 have been purged from top to bottom. These include the commissariats of Agriculture, Trade, Mechanical Construction, Light Industry, Food Industry, Land Transport, Finance, and Farm Products Storage. On Oct. 2, came the news of the reorganization of the State Bank, with the appointment of Bulganin as chairman, and three deputies. All four of these new appointees are G.P.U. functionaries—an evil omen to the personnel!

The naval commissariat has been purged. The purge in the Army continues. While there has been no confirmation of Bluecher's arrest, it is known that his entire general staff and scores of his closest collaborators have been arrested.

The refusal of collectives to deliver grain to the government is being met by the extension of the purge into the collectives. This list far from exhausts the countless thousands who are involved. In the light of these facts our estimate of those who have fallen victims to the purge at three times the figure set by Krivitsky last December is, if anything an underestimation.

# 4th International Launched

The new internationalist banner was raised by the world congress which met in Switzerland on September 3rd, 1938, and founded the Fourth International. Thirty delegates from organisations in the United States, France, Great Britain, Germany, the Soviet Union, Italy, South America, Poland, Belgium, Holland and Greece, met to proclaim the new World Party of the Socialist Revolution. The adoption of a central programmatic thesis formed the main work of the congress which also laid the basis for the international organisation of the new World Party. Before closing, the conference adopted the following letter of greeting to the leader of present-day revolutionary Marxian thought and action, Leon Trotsky:

Dear Comrade:

The Conference of the Fourth International sends you its warmest greetings.

The barbarous repression which rabidly attacks our movement in general and you in particular prevented you from being with us to bring to our debates the contributions of the former founder of the Red Army, the organizer of the October insurrection, the theoretician of the permanent revolution, and the direct successor of Lenin.

The Stalinist, the fascist, and the imperialist enemies have subjected you to severe trials. Leon Sedoff, Erwin Wolf, Rudolf Klement are dead, fallen victims to the Stalinist counter-revolution. Ta-Thu Thau lies suffering in the prisons of French imperialism. Numerous German and Greek comrades are being tortured in fascist prisons. You are the object of constant attempts at assassination. But all these persecutions, though they rain painful blows upon us, have as their final result only the definite strengthening of our conviction of the value of the Marxist programme, of which you are in our opinion, since the death of Lenin, the principal interpreter.

That is why our greeting contains more than just affection for the great present-day theoretician of revolutionary Marxism. There is also the certainty that the enemy's blows, however heavy, will not prevent the doctrine of the socialist revolution from becoming the living reality of to-morrow. The Conference of the Fourth International marks a new spring forward of our movement along the road of unification, of organizational reinforcement, and of the perfecting of its propaganda by the

adoption of the transitional programme. We express the strong hope that you will long share in its successes as you have shared in its vicissitudes.

\* \* \*

We reproduce below in part the programmatic thesis which forms the basic guide for revolutionary action in the coming period:

The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat.

The economic prerequisite for the proletarian revolution has already in general achieved the highest point of fruition that can be reached under capitalism. Mankind's productive forces stagnate. Already, new inventions and improvements fail to raise the level of material wealth. Conjunctural crisis under the weight of the social crisis affecting the whole capitalist system weigh ever heavier deprivations and sufferings upon the masses. Growing unemployment, in its turn, deepens the financial crisis of the State and undermines the unstable monetary systems. Democratic regimes, as well as fascist, stagger on from one bankruptcy to another.

The bourgeoisie itself sees no way out. In countries where it has already been forced to stake its last upon the card of fascism, it now toboggans with closed eyes toward an economic and military catastrophe. In the historically-privileged countries, *i.e.*, in those where the bourgeoisie can still for a certain period permit itself the luxury of democracy at the expense of national accumulations (Great Britain, France, United States, etc.) all of capital's traditional parties are in a state of perplexity, bordering on a paralysis of will. The "New Deal," despite its first period pretentious resoluteness, represents but a special form of political perplexity, possible only in a country where the bourgeoisie succeeded in accumulating incalculable wealth. The present crisis, far from having run its full course, has already succeeded in showing that "New Deal" politics, like Popular Front politics in France, opens no new exit from the economic blind-alley.

International relations present no better picture. Under the increasing tension of capitalist disintegration, imperialist antagonisms reach an impasse at the height of which separate clashes and bloody local disturbances (Ethiopia, Spain, the Far East, Central Europe) must inevitably coalesce into a conflagration of world dimensions. The bourgeoisie, of course, is aware of the mortal danger to its domination



represented by a new war. But that class is now immeasurably less capable of averting war than on the eve of 1914.

All talk to the effect that historical conditions have not yet "ripened" for socialism is the product of ignorance or conscious deception. The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only "ripened;" they have begun to get somewhat rotten. Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period, at that—a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind. The turn is now to the proletariat, *i.e.*, chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.

The economy, the state, the politics of the bourgeoisie and its international relations are completely blighted by a social crisis, characteristic of a pre-revolutionary state of society. The chief obstacle in the path of transforming the pre-revolutionary into a revolutionary state is the opportunist character of proletarian leadership; its petty bourgeois cowardice before the big bourgeoisie and its perfidious connection with it even in its death agony.

In all countries the proletariat is wracked by a deep disquiet. In millions, the masses again and again move onto the road of the revolutionary outbreaks. But each time they are blocked by their own conservative bureaucratic apparatus.

The Spanish proletariat has made a series of heroic attempts since April, 1931, to take power in its hands and guide the fate of society. However, its own parties (Social Democrats, Stalinists, Anarchists, POUMists)—each in its own way—acted as a brake and thus prepared Franco's triumphs.

In France, the great wave of "sit-down" strikes, particularly during June, 1936, revealed the whole-hearted readiness of the proletariat to overthrow the capitalist system. However, the leading organizations (Socialists, Stalinists, Syndicalists) under the label of the Popular Front succeeded in canalizing and damming, at least temporarily, the revolutionary stream.

The unprecedented wave of sit-down strikes and the amazing rapid growth of industrial unionism in the United States (the CIO) is most indistinct expression of the instinctive striving of the American workers to raise themselves to the level of the tasks imposed on them by history. But here, too, the leading political organizations, including the newly-created CIO, do everything possible to keep in check and paralyze the revolutionary pressure of the masses.

The definite passing over of the Comintern to the side of the bourgeois order, its cynically counter-

revolutionary role throughout the world, particularly in Spain, France, the United States and other "democratic" countries, created exceptional supplementary difficulties for the world proletariat. Under the banner of the October Revolution, the conciliatory politics practised by the "People's Front" dooms the working class to impotence and clears the road for fascism.

"People's Fronts" on the one hand—fascism on the other; these are the last political resources of imperialism in the struggle against the proletarian revolution. From the historical point of view, however, both these resources are stop-gaps. The decay of capitalism continues under the sign of the Phrygian cap in France as under the sign of the swastika in Germany. Nothing short of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie can open a road out.

The orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism, and second, by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organizations. Of these factors, the first, of course, is the decisive one: the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus. No matter how the methods of the social-betrayers differ—from the "social" legislation of Blum to the judicial frame-ups of Stalin—they will never succeed in breaking the revolutionary will of the proletariat. As time goes on, their desperate efforts to hold back the wheel of history will demonstrate more clearly to the masses that the crisis of the proletarian leadership, having become the crisis in mankind's culture, can be resolved only by the Fourth International . . .

Sceptics ask: but has the moment for the creation of the Fourth International yet arrived? It is impossible, they say, to create an International "artificially;" it can only arise out of great events, etc., etc. All of these objections merely show that the sceptics are not good for the building of a new International. They are good for scarcely anything at all.

The Fourth International has already arisen out of great events: the greatest defeats of the proletariat in history. The cause for these defeats is to be found in the degeneration and perfidy of the old leadership. The class struggle does not tolerate an interruption. The Third International, following the Second, is dead for purposes of revolution. Long live the Fourth International!

But has the time yet arrived to proclaim its creation? . . . the sceptics are not quieted down. The Fourth International, we answer, has no need of being "proclaimed." It exists and it fights. Is it weak? Yes, its ranks are not numerous because it is still young. They are as yet chiefly cadres.

But these cadres are pledges for the future. Outside of these cadres there does not exist a single revolutionary current on this planet really meriting the name. If our International be still weak in numbers, it is strong in doctrine, programme, tradition, in the incomparable tempering of its cadres. Who does not perceive this to-day, let him in the meantime stand aside. To-morrow it will become more evident.

The Fourth International, already to-day, is deservedly hated by the Stalinists, Social-democrats, bourgeois liberals and fascists. There is not and there cannot be a place for it in any of the People's Fronts. It uncompromisingly gives battle to all political groupings tied to the apron-strings of the bourgeoisie. Its task—the abolition of capitalism's domination. Its aim—socialism. Its method—the proletarian revolution.

Without inner democracy—no revolutionary education. Without discipline—no revolutionary action. The inner structure of the Fourth International is based on the principles of *democratic centralism*; full freedom in discussion, complete unity in action.

The present crisis in human culture is the crisis in the proletarian leadership. The advanced workers, united in the Fourth International, show their class the way of exit out of the crisis. They offer a programme based on international experience in the struggle of the proletariat and of all the oppressed of the world for liberation. They offer a spotless banner.

Workers—men and women—of all countries, place yourselves under the banner of the Fourth International. It is the banner of your approaching victory!

## Greek Trotskyists in Fascist Jails

Thirteen leading members of the Revolutionary Socialist Organization, Greek section of the Fourth International, have been arrested by police of the Metaxas dictatorship, according to press advices here.

Front-page stories in the controlled press of Greece have gleefully announced the crushing blow dealt to "the infernal Trotskyist gang."

### QUARTERS RAIDED

Headquarters of the organization were raided, these reports said, and large quantities of literature, including copies of the "Proletarios," and "Class Solidarity," illegal organs, were seized.

All the prisoners have been subjected to unspeakable tortures in the dungeons of the Metaxas regime.

The list of the arrested was given as follows:

P. Pouliopoulos, secretary of the organization.

Voursoukis, 35, lawyer.

J. Vrehopoulos, 36.

G. Krokos, teacher, who escaped from an Aegean island prison camp a year ago.

E. Gianakos, teacher.

D. Nakos, lawyer.

Catherin Morphy, 36, well-known propagandist.

G. Aiginitis, tobacconist.

D. Pantajis, 20, shoemaker.

A. Kastoras, 21, painter.

The last two named were charged with distributing revolutionary literature to soldiers.

These comrades are being tortured by police who are seeking to wrest the names of their fellow-workers from them. Every conceivable method of barbarous maltreatment is being used for this purpose.

### 3,000 IMPRISONED

The Metaxas regime has already sent at least 3,000 militants to concentration camps on Aegean islands and to the jail at Acronauphlia, a medieval castle where our comrade Scalaios died. Among these exiles are at least ten of our comrades.

The notorious police tortures include castor oil, hanging by the feet, the beating of the soles of feet until they bleed, insertion of sharp sticks under fingernails, unnameable tortures of girls. Many are thrown out of windows, as was our young comrade, Telegades.

# German Imperialism Burns its Bridges

Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, in its doctored English version, has become during the past weeks a best-seller in the British book market. The outcome of the Czechoslovakia crisis has focussed the attention of the middle-class book reader on the personality of Adolf Hitler as revealed in his autobiography—a smug petty bourgeois philistine, incredibly ignorant and miraculously lucky. The Nazi programme has been seized upon by a horde of imitators in every country in the world ranging from a Mosley in Britain to the obscure Fuehrer in the tiniest South American republic.

Hitler's programme was arrived at by a process of trial and error. Slogan after slogan was advanced, the successful ones retained and the rest rejected. The middle classes in Germany, driven to frenzy by the blows of the depression, were permitted to write their own programme by the simple process of keeping to the policies they approved of and quietly dropping the policies which failed to get their support. Hitler was able to promise all things, since he intended to carry out nothing.

In this way was bred the illusion that the Nazi party was the party of the middle class, and Hitler found his mass basis among the little men who were the first to be crushed in the decay of German capitalism. To-day this basis is being rapidly destroyed.

Dr. Ley, head of the Labour Front, declared at the mining experts' conference at the end of last month that craftsmen and small traders, clerks and petty officials would be removed from their present employment and put to work of national importance, such, for example, as coal-mining. It is precisely from these classes that the Nazis received the support that carried them to victory. To-day the Nazis burn the bridges over which they passed to power, and the ex-clerks and ex-shopkeepers will reorganise their political ideas in the coalmines.

The Nazi "revolution" brought into being a horde of bureaucrats who descended on the national wealth of Germany like a swarm of locusts. The Nazi regime, in spite of the groans of the bourgeoisie, was compelled to lean on this new officialdom. But

to-day Dr. Ley complains of the excessive red tape, and thousands of lesser officials are earmarked for the coalmines.

In exchanging the pen for the pick and shovel, these supporters of Nazidom will acquire the corresponding pick-and-shovel ideology; they are being proletarianised, swiftly and violently. If the German ruling class thus deprives itself of masses of its pensioners and supporters, it is under the pressure of the approaching world war. Deliberately and consciously the bourgeoisie stakes everything in a supreme effort to marshal all forces for the war.

The entire population has been conscripted for labour in factories, roads and fortifications, and the Nazis boast that in the whole of Germany there are only 16,000 fully able to work and unemployed. Women have been drawn into industry to replace workers drafted to the forts, and the 60-year olds are being drilled to replace the police force. Emigrant Germans have been traced and government arrangements made for repatriation to the fatherland with the avowed object of swelling the number of workers. The latest move of withdrawing workers from "useless tasks" in offices, bureaus and artisans' workshops is one more step in the direction of concentrating the entire labour-power of the nation in a supreme effort to save German Imperialism.

World economy is sliding relentlessly into another universal depression, and the German capitalist class clutches desperately at the dwindling markets. The German press announced last July that a programme was under way for building nearly 1,000,000 tons of shipping in the next two years so as to increase the German mercantile marine by 25%. The increased shipping together with the canals and roads under construction to link central Europe to the Baltic states and domination in the world market.

In the five years that have elapsed since Hitler destroyed the German trade unions and lowered the standard of living of the German working class, the fullest advantage has been taken by German capitalism of its power to produce cheaper goods than its rivals. But where in 1937 German foreign trade showed a surplus, early this year a considerable

deficit was shown. The least capable of all the Powers of standing up under economic depression, German capitalism has been forced into a series of desperate adventures.

Austria was seized and plundered, the National Bank absorbed and its gold seized, industrial contracts diverted, the Habsburg treasure appropriated, the "traitors" fined and all available food reserves carried off. But Germany's financial and trade position became worse.

The seizure of the Sudetenland and the incorporation of the rest of Czechoslovakia in a customs union was a further step in the developing trade war. If Austria was the key to Danubian commerce, Czechoslovakia opens up a path to the Baltic states, and the construction of the Rhine-Main-Danube canal, the Rhine-Baltic canal, the Berlin-Bosphorus road, the trade tour of Dr. Funk in the Balkans, the negotiations for German credits and barter agreements in South-eastern Europe—all these are incidents in Germany's life-and-death struggle to survive in a world of economic decline.

The bloodless triumphs of German Imperialism have placed it in an advantageous strategical and commercial position, and Germany bargains between the East and the West.

On the one hand the demand for the return of the former German colonies has grown louder as the Western fortifications grow more impregnable. On the other hand Germany objects to the inclusion of the Soviet Union in any scheme for "general pacification" and welcomes the gestures of Daladier towards a Franco-German understanding.

The eyes of German Imperialism are fixed on the Ukraine, the richest part of the Soviet Union, with a population of thirty millions, with grain and cotton to feed and clothe the hungry ragged German millions, producing 85% of Soviet sugar, four-fifths of

its coal, two-thirds of its iron and iron ore, half its steel, more than two-thirds of its agricultural machinery, 95% of its manganese. The industrial cities, the great tractor plant, the Dnieper hydro-electric works are the rich prizes that stand just outside Hitler's present reach. The clamour about the former German colonies is merely part of Germany's bargaining to gain British-French assent in the plan to plunder the Ukraine.

The same relentless pressure that thrust German Imperialism into Austria and then into Czechoslovakia still operates to force Hitler onto the path of new adventures. The South American markets for German goods are being recaptured by the United States; the trade drive into the Balkans is being bitterly contested by Britain and France with all the resources at their disposal. The German financial structure is dancing on the edge of the precipice, while the middle classes are being driven into the mines and the fortifications to join the workers in opposing the Nazi regime of slavery and starvation.

Hitler took power in 1933, in his own words, "without a window-pane being broken." He has marched into the Rhineland, into Austria, into the Sudeten territory, in a remarkable series of bloodless victories. The cowardice and treachery of the "Communist" and "Socialist" traitors who led the German working class permitted him to take power in the first place. The antagonisms and contradictions among his imperialist rivals has allowed him to add triumph after triumph to his initial victory. If he now hopes to carve out a thick slice of territory for himself out of the side of the Soviet Union, there is only one force that can oppose his designs and that is the international working class united for the defence of the Soviet Union and for world socialism under the banner of the Fourth International.

By LEON TROTSKY.

## THE LESSON OF SPAIN

The Last Warning.

2d Post Free

Order from:

WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL PRESS

14a Chichester Road, London, W.2.

Printed and Published by J. R. Strachan, 14a, Chichester Road, London, W.2.