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LEON TROTSKY



MURDERED BY GPU

“I am close to death by a blow from a political assassin, but please tell our friends I am sure of the victory of the Fourth International. Go Forward!”

His Work Continues

On August 22 Leon Trotsky succumbed to wounds inflicted the previous day with an alpine axe by an agent of the GPU known as Frank Jackson, but who described himself to the police as Jacques Norton Van den Dreischd. Subsequently he made a confession in which he claims to be Jacques Mornard, the son of a Belgian diplomatist.

Comrade Trotsky was attacked in the afternoon of August 21 whilst the two were having tea together in Trotsky's home in Mexico City. The assailant was an intimate of the Trotsky household, having posed as a friend and a promulgator of the victim's political theories for some time.

The hired assassins of Stalin have at last successfully accomplished their most important and most monstrous assignment. This crudest of all conceivable methods: battering in the head of a political opponent with an axe, aptly typifies the Moscow director of the crime and the cruel unbridled tyranny of the political regime which he personifies.

Trotsky was preparing an exposure before the Mexican court concerning the criminal activity of the GPU on the American continent which deeply compromised the GPU and members of the Mexican Communist Party, eight of whom are now held by the Mexican police as accomplices in the previous attempted assassination of Trotsky and in the murder of Robert Sheldon Harte. The Stalinists were making desperate attempts to block this judicial investigation. The dastardly action of the

GPU has stemmed the hand of Trotsky from penning these exposures but according to the TIMES of August 28, "friends of Trotsky announce that they will publish these exposures later." In Britain this material will be published through the columns of WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL NEWS.

The Bonapartist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, at the head of which stands Stalin, fears above all the policy of world proletarian revolution propagated by Lenin's closest collaborator of the October Revolution. In contrast to Stalin, Trotsky refused to abandon his principles in favour of the acquisition of bureaucratic power and unlimited privileges which is the present lot of the Kremlin oligarchy.

From the time of Lenin's death, and even prior to that tragic event, it became evident that the revolutionary convulsions which shook the foundations of the European capitalist edifice at the conclusion of the first world war, were subsiding, or at least becoming limited to mere economic struggles on the part of the oppressed. The defeats sustained by the revolutionary workers of Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria; the canalisation of the successive revolutionary movements throughout the European continent into social-democratic channels by the Noskes, MacDonalds and their like, presaged a long period of arduous struggle and sacrifices on the part of the Russian masses and their leaders if the social conquests of October were to be consolidated in the only possible way: the extension of the revo-

lution to the more industrially and culturally advanced countries of the West.

In January 1924, after a lingering illness, Lenin died. The lesser figures of the October Revolution were incapable of withstanding the receding tempo of the mass movement. Only Leon Trotsky was able to maintain aloft the scarlet standard, symbol of the magnificent proletarian victory of 1917.. Trotsky whose achievements during and immediately after the revolution in the restoration of order from the chaos of the years of civil war was instrumental in safeguarding the workers' state from its capitalist enemies both within and outside its borders.

It was Trotsky, of whom Lenin said, in conversation with Maxim Gorky: "Show me another man who would be able in a year to organise a model army, yes, and win the esteem of the military specialists." Despite persecution and vilification from the usurping Thermidorian caste, despite the consolidation of reaction manifest in the increasing power of the Stalinist bureaucracy, Trotsky did not deviate one inch from his life's mission. He continued to counterpose the internationalist programme of the world proletarian revolution to the counter-revolutionary nationalist, Stalinist theory of "Socialism in a single country" which was advanced by the epigones of Lenin as a screen for their actions, as a false cover for their abandonment of the principles of the revolution.

Trotsky, together with a number of other well known Bolsheviks had formed an opposition bloc against the Stalinist ruling clique. He was expelled from the Russian Communist Party in October 1927 and in 1928 he was exiled to Alma-Ata. During his sojourn in Central Asia Comrade Trotsky produced

his historical criticism of the official programme adopted at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern. This thesis, which counterposed proletarian internationalism to the nationalist programme submitted by Stalin-Bucharin became the platform around which the Left Opposition crystallised inside the Third International. Trotsky's book, **THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION** was also a product of this period. The revolutionary exile's reward for these outstanding theoretical contributions to the class struggle was.... complete banishment from the USSR, and February 1929 found him in Turkey where he remained for four and a half years during which time he established the monthly magazine, the **RUSSIAN BULLETIN OF THE OPPOSITION**.

In July 1933 Trotsky moved to France but after living under constant police surveillance for two years because of his revolutionary activities, he accepted the invitation of the newly elected government of the Norwegian Workers' Party to reside on Scandinavian soil.

But Stalin's apprehension of the old Bolshevik leader's relentless exposure of the reactionary role of the Kremlin increased with each day that passed and, as a result of pressure applied by the Soviet Government through the Norwegian Shipowners, Trotsky and his wife, Natalia Sedov were arrested by the Norwegian Social Democratic Government on August 27 1936. Erwin Wolf and Van Heijernoort, his two secretaries, were deported without any reason being given. In January 1937 Comrade Trotsky and his wife arrived in Mexico; the country which was to be his final resting place.

During this period the desperation of the Stalinist hierarchy increased in ferocity and Trotsky was compelled to

fortify his home in Mexico City against the Kremlin's murder gangs. Numerous attempts have been made by the GPU to end the life of the most feared and hated adversary of Stalin during this period of his exile.

A propaganda campaign of unparalleled vilification and slander against "Trotskyism" has accompanied the physical annihilation of the opponents of Stalinism. History has been rewritten and falsified beyond recognition by the "literary" retainers of the Kremlin for this base purpose; all literature dealing with the Russian revolution portraying Trotsky's true role has been banned, the classic example being John Reid's TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD. An instructive specimen is provided by the high priest of organised falsification, Joseph Stalin. On 6 November he wrote in PRAVDA:

"All the work of practical organisation of the insurrection (of October 1917) was conducted under the immediate leadership of the President of the Petrograd Soviet, Comrade Trotsky. It is possible to declare with certainty that the swift passing of the garrison to the side of the Soviet, and the bold execution of the work of the Military Revolutionary Committee, the party owes principally and above all to Comrade Trotsky."

The same Stalin, six years later, in his book TROTSKYISM OR LENINISM, wrote:

"Comrade Trotsky played no particular role either in the Party or the October insurrection, and could not do so, being a man comparatively new to our party in the October period."

Nor is this the extent of the Kremlin's crimes. Trotsky's entire family - two sons and two daughters - have been

brought to their deaths by the GPU which also bears responsibility for the deaths of eight of his secretaries: M.Glasman, G.Butov, Y.Blumkin, N.Sermuks, I.Poznasky, R.Klement, E. Wolf and the victim of three months ago, R.Sheldon Harte. Thousands of Trotsky's partisans in the Soviet Union have been massacred in the monstrous "purges." The odour of the infamous Moscow Trials will remain for decades an offence to the nostrils of class conscious workers the world over.

These facts provide the background to the culminating event, the most tragic of all, the murder of the last remaining Bolshevik leader - apart from the perpetrators of the crime - Stalin and Molotov. With the exception of these two arch-reactionaries the entire "Old Guard" has been wiped out. The question as to which of these two will exterminate the other, or whether they will succumb simultaneously to each other's machinations awaits an answer from history.

The brutal murder of Leon Trotsky will rouse the indignation of every class conscious toiler on our planet. This act will add yet another weapon to the armoury of the world bourgeoisie for use when influencing mass opinion on the occasion of a future assault on the first workers' state. Thus the question automatically poses itself: Why this uncontrolled terrorism and violence on Stalin's part? Why this compulsion to remove Leon Trotsky?

The politics of Stalinism for nearly two decades have manifest themselves in desperate acts. And the most desperate moves of all are the most recent. The frame-up "trials" and "purges", the unconcealed suppression by violence of the revolutionary workers in Spain, the Pact with Hitler, the

invasion of Finland and now the assassination of Leon Trotsky, the leading figure of the Fourth International

A passage from the Manifesto of the Fourth International WAR AND THE WORLD PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION reads:

"The politicians of the big bourgeoisie are far better at orienting themselves on the role of the Fourth International than our petty bourgeois pedants. On the eve of breaking off diplomatic relations, the French Ambassador Coulondre and Hitler, seeking during their final interview to frighten each other by the consequences of the war, were in joint agreement that the only real victor would be the Fourth International. Upon the launching of hostilities against Poland the major press of France, Denmark and other countries carried dispatches saying that in the workers quarters in Berlin placards appeared on walls: "Down with Stalin, long live Trotsky!" This means: "Down with the Third International, long live the Fourth International!" When a demonstration was organised by the more resolute workers and students of Prague, on the anniversary of national independence, the 'Protector' Baron Neurath issued an official declaration placing the responsibility for this demonstration upon the Czech 'Trotskyites.' The correspondence from Prague which appears in the newspaper edited by Benes, the former president of the Czecho-Slovak Republic, confirms the fact that the workers are becoming 'Trotskyites.' As yet these are only symptoms. But they indicate unmistakably the trend of development."

We can rest assured that Stalin has not failed to note this trend of development and even more revealing instances are at hand. The most important of these is the mass imprisonment

of revolutionary Communists of the recently incorporated Baltic States. These militant, class conscious workers, accepting the promises of the Kremlin propaganda apparatus, welcomed the Stalinist occupation of their countries and attempted to apply the principles of genuine Soviet democracy which they wrongly believed appertained in the Soviet Union. They found their activities outlawed..... as "Trotskyism!" It is from these important historical events that we derive the reasons for the Kremlin's terrorist acts against revolutionaries.

Commenting on the foul activities of the GPU in Spain (the murder of Andres Nin and others) Comrade Trotsky wrote:

"Stalinism has become the scourge of the Soviet Union and the leprosy of the world labour movement. In the domain of ideas Stalinism is a cipher. But by way of compensation it controls a colossal apparatus which exploits the dynamics of the greatest revolution in history and the traditions of its heroism and its conquering spirit. From the creative role of revolutionary violence in a given historical period, Stalin, with his congenital empirical narrowness, has deduced the omnipotence of violence in general. Imperceptibly for himself he has passed from the revolutionary violence of the toilers against the exploiters to the counter-revolutionary violence against the toilers. Under old names and formulas the work of liquidating the October revolution is thus being consummated."

The party of Lenin, which organised the revolution, had a rich tradition of Marxist struggle against the futile method of individual terrorism which found on Russian soil, soaked in violence and arbitrary rule, a fertile field. Stalin failed to learn that

Marxism opposes individual terrorism, not from moral but from political considerations. Acts of violence against individuals contribute precisely nothing towards the struggle against oppression inherent in a given social system or political regime. They cannot replace in any degree the action of the masses. Conversely, action of this nature against individuals who represent the policy of the masses will avail Stalinism as little in its efforts to frustrate the oppressed toilers in their progressive march towards emancipation from imperialist slavery and the establishment of a new world socialist order.

The gunmen and hatchet-wielders of the GPU may kill revolutionaries but they cannot kill the revolution. That is a task beyond even the combined efforts of imperialism and its last prop-Stalinism. And with the inevitable victory of the world proletarian revolution, not only imperialism but also the abominable Stalin regime will be swept into the sewers of history. Thus will fittingly end the reign of its personifier - Joseph Stalin - the grave digger of the revolution, the most monstrous and sinister tyrant ever to besmear the history of working class politics.

Workers Pay Tribute

The murder of Comrade Trotsky has stirred the advanced sections of the working class all over the world, and despite the cowardly silence on the part of the official British Labour movement and the excretions in the DAILY WORKER of that hireling of the GPU - J.R.Campbell - the advanced workers of this country gathered in all the important industrial centres, to pay tribute to the most outstanding leader of the working class since the death of Lenin.

In Glasgow an indoor public meeting was held. In Edinburgh 500 workers gathered on the Mound. Sixty five shillings was collected to send a telegram of solidarity and sympathy to Comrade Natalia. A meeting was held in Liverpool and other centres reports of which have not yet been received.

The meeting at Conway Hall in London was represented by the Independent

Labour Party, the Revolutionary Socialist League, the Socialist Front, and ourselves. Approximately 300 workers attended and over five pounds was collected. A telegram was sent to Comrade Natalia from this meeting.

The following telegram was sent from WORKERS INTERNATIONAL NEWS:

"Stalin's most monstrous crime has shocked us. We mourn with you the tragic loss of our great leader. The Fourth International will be victorious. We will go Forward."

Though the forces of the revolutionary movement as expressed by these meetings are small, nevertheless the unique spirit of revolutionary optimism evinced by Comrade Trotsky was manifest in the fresh revolutionary cadres in their firm conviction of the inevitable victory of the Fourth International and invigorated determination to build a British section.

G. P. U. Stalks Abroad

The article reprinted below was written in November 1937 and appeared in the inaugural issue of WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL NEWS in January 1938. An important function of our publication during the whole period of its existence has been to present the Labour movement of this country with facts concerning the activities of Stalinism throughout the entire world through the GPU. The exposure of the machinations of the GPU has had a dual object. Firstly, to protect those whose lives are threatened, insofar as advance exposure of plots can frustrate designs, and secondly, to clearly unveil the role of the Comintern as the international smokescreen of the GPU.

The tragic confirmation of the trend of events predicted in this article justifies an intensification of our exposures and our warnings. The demand for the life of Comrade Trotsky is far from being the final instruction of Stalin to his GPU. Furthermore his schemes are by no means limited to revolutionaries adhering to the Fourth International but extend to all sections of the working class who oppose the Kremlin politics. It is therefore apposite at this time to reproduce this important article as a contribution towards the expunging of the Stalinist canker from the world labour movement. -Ed.

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL WORKING CLASS ORGANISATIONS

by Leon Trotsky

The international working class movement is being consumed by a frightful disease. The carrier of the contagion is the Comintern or, to speak more exactly, the GPU, which uses the apparatus of the Comintern as its legal cover. The events of the last few months in Spain have shown what crimes the unbridled and utterly depraved bureaucracy of Moscow is capable of, supported by its servitors which it recruits from among the declassed dregs of humanity. It is a question neither of "occasional" assassinations nor of "occasional" falsifications. It is a question of a plot against the international working class movement.

It is obvious that the Moscow trials were possible only under a totalitarian regime in which the GPU dictated their conduct not only to the accused but also to the council for the prosecution and for the defence. But these judicial falsifications were from the very beginning conceived as the point of departure for a campaign of extermination directed against the opponents of the Moscow clique on the international arena. On the 3rd of March Stalin delivered a speech to the plenum of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party in which he proclaimed that "the Fourth International is composed, as regards two-

thirds of its membership, of spies and saboteurs." This impudent declaration, typical of Stalin, already clearly shows at what the Cain of the Kremlin was aiming. His schemes, however, were by no means limited to the cadres of the Fourth International. In Spain the POUM, which was waging an implacable struggle with the Fourth International, was counted among the "Trotskyites." After the POUM came the turn of the Anarcho-Syndicalists and even of the Left wing Socialists. Anyone who protests against the repression of the Anarchists is now counted as a Trotskyist. Balsifications and crimes are multiplying in a hideous progression. Doubtless one can place certain particularly scandalous details to the account of the excessive zeal of isolated agents. But the work as a whole is strictly centralised and is being carried out according to the plan elaborated in the Kremlin.

On 21st April there met at Paris an extraordinary plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern at which were present the most trustworthy representatives of the 17 most important sections. The sessions were of a strictly secret character. Only a brief statement to the effect that the attention of the plenum had been concentrated upon the international struggle against Trotskyism found its way into the world press. The instructions had been sent from Moscow, coming direct from Stalin. Neither the debates nor the decisions were published. It appears from all the information we have received and from the subsequent events that this secret plenum was in fact a congress of the most responsible international agents of the GPU whose object was to prepare the campaign of false accusations, de-lations, abductions and assassinations against the adversaries of Stalinism in the working class movement of the whole world.

At the time of the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial (August 1936) the ranks of the Comintern were still hesitating. Despite the efforts of the old servitors of the GPU, such as Jacques Duclos in France, the cadres of the Comintern, although accustomed to almost anything, hesitated to wallow in the mire besprinkled with fresh blood. But in the course of the following months, the opposition of those who hesitated was broken. The whole Comintern press which Stalin shackles with a chain of gold, was drawn into an orgy of calumny unexampled in its falseness and filth. The direction of the campaign belonged, as always, to the emissaries of Moscow, such persons as Michael Koltzov, Willi Muenzenberg, and other canailles. PRAVDA promised firmly that in Spain the purge would be conducted as pitilessly as in the USSR. Words were followed by acts: forged documents against the POUM, assassination of anarchist writers, the murder of Andres Nin, the abduction of Erwin Wolf, the kidnapping of Marc Rhein, dozens of less spectacular killings, stabs in the back in dark corners, detentions in Stalin's extraterritorial prisons in Spain, incarceration within these prisons in specially built cages, massacres, every kind of physical and moral torture - and all under the cover of incessant calumny, brutal and envenomed, utterly in the Stalinist manner.

In Spain, where the so-called Republican Government serves as a legal screen for the criminal bands of Stalinism, the GPU has found the most favourable arena for carrying out the directives of the April plenum. But it is not confined to Spain. It appears from the Press of the Comintern itself that certain secret documents on "Trotsky's interview with Rudolph Hess" have been sent to the French and British General Staff. To the Czechoslovak General Staff has been sent a

forged correspondence purporting to demonstrate the liaison of the old German revolutionary Anton Grylewicz with the Gestapo. Jacques Ducloux has tried to connect the "Trotskyists" with the mysterious terrorist acts in Paris on the subject of which the GPU might perhaps be able to inform the French police. On the 4th September Ignaz Reiss was killed at Lausanne solely because, horrified by the crimes of Stalin, he had publicly broken with Moscow. A certain number of Reiss' assassins have been arrested. They are members of the Comintern and agents of the GPU who belonged originally to the Russian White Guards. The investigations of the French and Swiss authorities gives one every reason to believe that they belong to the same band which carried out a whole series of still unpunished crimes. The White Guards serve Stalin for assassins just as they serve him for public prosecutors (Vyshinsky), for journalists (Koltzov, Zaslavsky, etc.), or for diplomats (Trojanovsky, Maisky and Co.)

Hardly had military operations begun in the Far East when Stalin began a campaign of extermination against his revolutionary adversaries in China. The method was the same as in Spain. By selling the products of Soviet industry at a high price to Chiang-Kai-Chek, just as he did to Negrin, Stalin uses the money he receives in this way to pay his falsifiers, his low journalists, his hired assassins. On 5th October the New York DAILY WORKER published a telegram from Shanghai accusing the Chinese "Trotskyists" in Kuang-Si of an alliance with the Japanese General Staff. The DAILY WORKER is the organ of the GPU which is executing the decisions of the April plenum. My sources of information from China explained that in Kuang-Si there had not been and there was not any Trotskyist organisation (SOCIALIST

APPEAL, 16th October). But this alters nothing: the Shanghai telegram implies that in China also has begun the chapter of forged documents, of abductions of "Trotskyists," of street-corner assassinations. In the prisons of Chiang-Kai-Chek there were already to be found a number of irreproachable revolutionaries: Stalin now threatens their life with an immediate danger.

The Canadian communist, Henry Beatty, who for four months took part as a volunteer in the Spanish war was then sent back to his own country as an agitator by the militiamen themselves, has recently related in the Press how the Canadian Communist Party forced him to declare at public meetings that the Trotskyites in Spain "used to kill off wounded militiamen." For some time, according to his own words, Beatty carried out this monstrous order "in submission to Party discipline," that is to say, to the decisions of that secret plenum directed by Stalin. Now that Beatty has torn himself away from the poisonous atmosphere of the Comintern and entered again into the fresh air, he is, needless to say, attacked as a spy and saboteur, and it is even possible that they have put a price on his head. Stalin is not miserly about such enterprises: the technical expenses alone incurred for the murder of Ignaz Reiss amounted to 300,000 francs!

To cover or justify these crimes, dozens of foreign bourgeois journalists, of the school of Walter Duranty and Louis Fisher, are in the pay of the GPU. For anyone who can read between the lines it is no longer a secret that the equivocal telegrams and articles sent from Moscow which are at once friendly and critical and are signed with the names of "independents" and frequently marked "not censured", are in reality written at the dicta-

tion of the GPU, and aim at conciliating world public opinion to the sinister figure of the Cain of the Kremlin. What distinguishes this type of "independent" journalist from the Mr. Duranty's is that they are more expensive. But it is not only reporters who are mobilised. Well-known and even famous writers, like Romain Roland, the late Barbusse, Malraux, Heinrich Mann or Feuchtwanger, are in fact the stipendiaries of the GPU, which makes liberal payment for the "moral" services of these friends through the State Editions of their works.

It is otherwise, but by no means better, in the case of the leaders of the Second International and the International of Trade Unions. On account of considerations of diplomacy or internal policy, Leon Blum, Leon Jouhaux, Vandervelde, and their comperes in other countries have organised a conspiracy of silence in the full sense of the word about the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy both in the USSR and on the world arena. Negrin and Prieto are the direct accomplices of the GPU. All this under the banner of the defence of "democracy"!

We are all aware: the enemy is strong; his arm is long; gold jingles in his pockets. He clothes himself in the authority of a revolution which he strangles and dishonours. But we know also something else; however powerful the enemy may be, he is not all-powerful. Despite the exchequer, the apparatus and the phalanx of "friends" of the Kremlin, the truth has begun to hew itself a way into the consciousness of the working masses of the whole world. Half drunk with irresponsibility, Stalin has clearly surpassed the limits which prudence imposes on even the most privileged criminal. Only those who wish to be deceived can be deceived thus imprud-

ently; to this category belong not a few equivocal celebrities. But the masses do not wish to be deceived. They must have the truth. They wish it and they will have it.

No longer held back by a single principle, Stalin has crossed the final limit. Precisely there lies his weakness. He can still kill. But he cannot stop the truth. More and more anguish overcomes the communist, socialist and anarchist workers. Even Stalin's allies in the Second International are beginning to look with horror toward the Kremlin. Already many literary "friends" are taking refuge in the shade of "neutrality". And this is only the beginning. Ignaz Reiss is not the last who has brought us his revelations. Reiss' assassins who were arrested in France and Switzerland will tell many things. Thousands of revolutionary volunteers returning from Spain will bring back the truth about the butchers of the revolution in all parts of the world. The proletarian who reflects will wonder: why all this? to what end this infinite series of perfidies? And in his head will ring the reply: Stalin is preparing his "coronation" on the ruins of the revolution and the corpses of the revolutionaries.

Stalin's bonapartist coronation will coincide with his political death for the working class movement. We must combine the efforts of all revolutionaries, of all sincere workers, of all true friends of the proletariat in order to purify the ranks of the movement from the hideous contagion of Stalinism. To succeed in this there is but one way: to tell the workers the truth, without exaggeration, but also without under-statement. The programme of action thus follows of itself from the situation.

We must carefully ascertain and publish the names of the national delegates to the last Plenum at Paris, for they are the individuals immediately responsible for the organisation of the falsifications, the abductions, and the assassinations in the different countries.

We must carefully ascertain and publish the names of all the foreign Stalinists who have held or hold any sort of military, police or administrative post in Spain: all these individuals, as agents of the GPU have participated in the crimes committed in Spain.

It is necessary to follow attentively the international Stalinist Press and also the "literary" activity of the open and secret friends of the GPU, because from the stupefying works which they produce it is often possible to predict what new crimes Stalin is preparing.

We must encourage in all working class organisations an attitude of serious distrust toward whoever is linked either directly or indirectly with the Stalinist apparatus. From the agents of the Comintern, mere instruments of the GPU, we can expect nothing but treachery with regard to revolutionaries.

We must open the eyes of public opinion to the fact that the insinuating and lying propaganda of numberless philosophers, moralists, aesthetes, artists, pacifists and working class "leaders" for the defence of the Kremlin under the guise of the defence of the USSR is liberally paid by Moscow

gold. We must condemn these gentlemen to the shame they merit.

Never before has the working class movement had within its own ranks an enemy so pernicious, so dangerous, so powerful and so perfidious as the Stalinist clique and its international agency. Carelessness in the struggle against this enemy is equivalent to treason. Chatterers and dilettantes, but not serious revolutionists, can confine themselves to a pathetic indignation. A plan is necessary, and organisation is necessary. We must create special committees to follow the manoeuvres, the intrigues and the crimes of the Stalinists, to warn the working class organisations of the danger and to work out the best methods of opposition and resistance to the Moscow gangsters.

We must publish the required literature and collect funds. In every country we must publish a book which will completely unmask the national section of the Comintern.

We possess neither State apparatus nor hired friends. Nevertheless, we confidently challenge the Stalinist band in the face of the whole world. We shall not fold our arms. Certain among us may still fall in the struggle. But the final outcome is already decided. Stalinism will be crushed, destroyed, and covered with shame. The way will be clear for the international working class.

LEON TROTSKY

Coyoacan, 2nd November 1937.

Britain and the East

The British retreat in Asia is taking on the semblance of a rout. On August 8 the British Viceroy of India announced a new and slightly more precise promise of dominion status for India.. after the war. On August 9, the War Office in London announced withdrawal of all British forces from Peking, Tientsin, and Shanghai. The entrenched positions of a century and more are being given up. The power of imperial Britain, so long in decline, is visibly dissolving.

The new promise to India is no less empty than all those that have gone before. But it is clearly tinged with the desperation of an imperial regime that knows its end is drawing near. Lord Linlithgow's statement was clearly an appeal to the native ruling classes of India, promising "free partnership" in the British Commonwealth in return for support against the threat of complete submersion of British power implicit in the German march of conquest. As a gage of this "partnership", the Viceroy graciously offers to accept "representative Indians" as members of his Advisory Council and to establish in addition a "War Advisory Council" which is to comprise representatives of the Indian states and "other interests" in Indian national life. Finally he promised that after the war the Indians would themselves be permitted to draw up their own constitution.

That these pitifully meagre offers should be regarded in London as substantial "concessions" on Britain's part is an indication of the wholly

dictatorial and autocratic nature of Britain's present rule over the 350,000,000 people of India. As the pressure on the British Empire increases and draws closer to India itself, we may expect still broader promises, wider concessions. Britain, after all has nothing to lose but the chains with which it has held India bound.

MEANING OF RETREAT IN CHINA

In China the retreat is necessarily more precipitate. There Japanese pressure has increased in proportion to the scope and immediacy of the German threat to Britain. The British were first compelled to close the Burma Road and now, aware of their total inability to resist further incursions, are pulling out of North and Central China altogether.

The actual forces involved are small - a few battalions. But they represent the entrenched power of more than a century, measured in investments totalling about £250,000,000. This power was asserted in the course of a series of bloody wars waged against the almost totally defenceless Chinese. The withdrawal from Shanghai ends the British reign in the Yangtze Delta established by the Opium War of 1842 and "legalised" by the Treaty of 1843, signed, symbolically enough, aboard a British warship at Nanking. The withdrawal from Peiking and Tientsin terminates a period ushered in by the bloody Anglo-French invasion of North China in 1858 and 1860, and again in 1900.

It is not the passing of British power in China that is to be mourned, but the manner of it. Thirteen years ago the Chinese people rose in their scores of millions in a movement that threatened for a time to drive the British and their imperialist rivals together into the Pacific whence they came. It was then, in 1927, that the Powers rushed troops to Shanghai to defend the wealth of the International Settlement against the threat of Chinese nationalism. That is how 1,200 United States marines happen to be there. The Communist International of Stalin allowed that great movement of the Chinese workers and peasants to be yoked to the landlords and capitalists represented by Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang. For crumbs from the imperialist table, Chiang beheaded the movement and established an imperialist puppet regime over the dead bodies of thousands of slaughtered militants.

THE NEW SLAVEMASTER

The Kuomintang regime naturally could do nothing to release China from the imperialist stranglehold. It served only to deepen the chaos in Chinese economic life and laid the country open to the depredations of the Japan-

ese imperialists which were renewed on a large scale in 1931.

Now the turns in the wheel of imperialist politics have placed Japan in a position to attempt to displace the British Empire as prime power in Asia. The British are going down, not before the overwhelming onslaught of slaves in revolt but under the blows of rival slavemasters. Britain's passing in this way from the scene is no augury for a freer China. It becomes rather an episode in a new stage of Chinese enslavement.

Hongkong, French Indo-China, Singapore, the Dutch Indies all lie now at approaching stations on the Japanese march of conquest. Up until the collapse of France it had been generally understood that United States imperialism stood ready to challenge these advances and to fight for its own "right" to succeed in the mastery of Asia. Now instead the lords of Wall Street and Washington have to look to their holdings in the Americas. The 1,200 United States marines in Shanghai must soon follow the British in retreat. There may not be much of a future in it, but the present belongs to Japan in Asia.

G. Stern.