

# WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL NEWS

*Incorporating "WORKERS' FIGHT".*

VOL. 3. No. 11.

NOVEMBER 1940

TWOPENCE

## Leading Mexican Stalinists Implicated In Trotsky Murder

Stalin's G.P.U. has written its own signature under the crime of the assassination of Trotsky. From the person of "Frank Jackson," the assassin, Mexican police took a document purporting to be a "confession" prepared in advance of the fatal assault on Trotsky. As always, the crude agents of Stalin's terror gang had over-reached themselves. They designed Jackson's "confession" to cover up their tracks. Instead it becomes documentary evidence which convicts Stalin of the crime beyond any possibility of doubt.

The contents, the style, the very phrasing of Jackson's "confession" follows a certain pattern easily recognised by those who possess even a slight acquaintance with the G.P.U.'s methods in the Moscow Trials.

### A POLICE MIND WROTE IT

A police mentality dictated this "confession." Possessed of consummate skill in the preparation of its numerous attempts to murder Trotsky, in the planning of the most minute details of a murder, this police mentality is hopelessly limited when it comes to ideological questions.

Hence the G.P.U. agents who wrote the confession could think of nothing except to follow slavishly the pattern already laid down by the G.P.U. in Moscow in the Moscow Trials. Where they added to that pattern (as we shall see below) they added only items already elaborated previously by the Stalinist press.



**"Frank Jackson"  
The G.P.U. Assassin**

### TEXT OF JACKSON "CONFESSION"

Gentlemen:

In writing this letter I have no other object in the event an accident comes to me than to explain to public opinion the motives which induce me to execute the act of justice which I propose.

I am of an old Belgian family. In Paris, where I made my studies of journalism, I made the acquaintance with boys of my age who



fought in different left organisations, and little by little they won me to their ideas. I was content to have found in journalism a means of livelihood since this permitted me to struggle more effectively against the present system of social injustice. It was then when I began to meet the Trotskyites who convinced me of the justice of their ideology and wholeheartedly I joined their organisation. From then on I carried into the revolutionary cause all my energy and all my faith. I was a devoted disciple of L.T. and I would have given the last drop of my blood for the needs of the cause. I began to study all that had been written on the different revolutionary movements in order to better instruct myself, and in this way be more useful to the cause.

At this time I became acquainted with a member of the bureau of the Fourth International, who, after various conversations, proposed that I make a trip to Mexico in order to meet L. Trotsky. As is natural, this trip filled me with enthusiasm, since it was a thing for which I had not even dreamed, and I accepted with all my heart. This comrade supplied me with all the means, expenses of the trip, papers, etc. It must not be forgotten that with my own papers it would have been impossible for me to go because of mobilisation.

Before going, with the many conversations which I had with this comrade, he made me understand very well that they expected from me something more than a simple militant of the party, but he did not make anything precise to me. I made the trip, first to the United States, and then to Mexico.

Recently arrived here, they told me that I must remain some distance from the house in Coyoacan in order to call no attention upon me and only some months afterwards did I begin to visit the said house more or less on the indication of Leon Trotsky who commenced to give me, little by little, some indications of what was expected of me.

For me it was a great disillusionment, since in place of finding myself face to face with a political chief who was directing the struggle for the liberation of the working-class, I found myself before a man who desired nothing more than to satisfy his needs and desires of vengeance and of hate, and who did not utilise the workers' struggle for anything more than a means of hiding his own paltriness and despicable calculations.

From that moment I remained chilled by his skill in sowing discord in our own party, setting some against others, the leaders of yesterday against those of to-day, which brought into our own ranks a tangle and confusion, so that the majority of the members of the party lost their time in discussing among themselves questions of a personal and secondary order relegating to a secondary plane all the problems of the working-class, which ended by disanimating many of the members, who, like me, had come to the movement in order to consecrate themselves entirely to the cause.

After various conversations it was at last plain to me what they expected of me. It was then that there was sown in me the most profound disillusionment, and the greatest contempt for this man in whom I had formerly believed.

It was proposed to me that I go to Russia in order to organise there a series of attempts against different persons and in the first place against Stalin. This was against all the principles of a struggle that until then I had considered open and loyal, and contrary to all my principles. Nevertheless I did nothing to prevent full clarity since I wished to know to what limits the baseness and hate of this man would go.

I began to ask, among other things, the means to employ in order to be able to enter Russia. I was answered that I did not have to be disturbed since, as any means would be good in order to arrive at a result, he expected to count not only on the support of a great nation but also on the support of a certain foreign parliamentary committee.

This, for me, was the drop of water which filled the glass too full, and from this moment no doubt existed in my mind that Trotsky had no other object in his life than to utilise his followers in order to satisfy his personal ends and paltriness. Above all, I was shocked by the wide contacts which he had with certain leaders of the capitalist countries, and I came to the conclusion that perhaps the Stalinists were not so far from the truth when they accused Trotsky with preoccupying himself with the working-class as if they were a dirty sock.

After my conversations with him I was astonished to see with what contempt he spoke of the Mexican revolution and everything that was Mexican. Naturally all his sympathies are in favour of Almazan, but aside from him and some of his followers he threw everything into the same sack, criticising the politics of Cardenas, the Mexican police, who, he said, were completely corrupted; and I will not say anything about what he said about Lombardo Toledano and Avila Comacho, who he expected would be very soon assassinated in order to leave a free field to Almazan (and in such a way that I am sure there was under way some plot in this sense, that otherwise he would not have spoken thus).

This is not astonishing when one recalls that he has the same hate towards the members of his party who are not absolutely in accord with him. It is for this that when he is speaking of the Minority of the party, he insinuates the possibility of a struggle of another order than political. When he says that the Minorities wish to attack him one of these days, this means that he is going to begin among them a bloody war.

One day, speaking of the fortress which his house had become, he said, "It is not only to defend myself against the Stalinists, but also against the Minorities," which meant that he desired the expulsion of various members of the party. Precisely in connection with this house, which he said very well had been converted



into a fortress, I asked myself very often from where had come the money for such work, since in reality the party is very poor and in many countries do not have the possibility of bringing out a daily paper, an indispensable means for the struggle. Where did the money come from? Perhaps the consul of a great foreign nation who often visited him could answer this question for us.

In order to demonstrate the slight interest which he has for everything not connected with himself, I add that I was promised to a certain young girl whom I love with all my soul, because she is good and loyal. When I told him that I could not go to Russia because I wished to get married first, and I would not go without my wife, he became very nervous and told me that I had to finish with her. I could not marry a person such as she, "who seconded the Minority rabble." It is probable that after my act she may not wish to know me any more, nevertheless it was also for her sake that I decided to sacrifice myself entirely, removing the chief of the workers' movement who caused only damage to it, and I am sure that later, not only the party but also history will know how to see me in the right light, when they will see that the bloody enemy of the working-class is gone.

In case anything unfortunate occurs to me I ask the publication of this letter.  
August 20th, 1940.

J.A.C.

### BELGIAN LEGATION DISPROVES JACKSON'S "FACTS"

Many of the assassin's statements about his Belgian background, his connections with the Trotskyist movement in Paris, etc., are undoubtedly made with the assurance that it would be impossible to refute them, thanks to the fact that Stalin's partner, Hitler, has occupied Belgium and Paris. However, after sending an official who closely questioned the assassin, the flaws in his story soon became evident.

Walter Lorigan, charge d'affaires of the Belgian Legation in Mexico, handed the following declaration to the press on September 3rd:

"In the course of the interview that I had Saturday, August 31st, with the accused, Jackson Mornard, I arrived at the conclusion that he is not of Belgian nationality, nor does he know Belgium, and that all his statements in this respect are falsehoods.

"1.—The prisoner claims to be a son of a Belgian Minister and to have been born in the (Belgian) Legation in Teheran (Persia). There has not been a Belgian diplomat named Mornard, and the one who represented my country in Persia from 1904 to 1908 was Marcet Serstevens, replaced in 1908 by Havenith.

"When I questioned Jackson about other diplomatic posts that his father might have held, he answered that he was ignorant of what they were, a lack of knowledge which is very curious on the part of a son.

"2.—The prisoner said also that he does not know what posts were previously held by his

brother who, he affirmed, was a secretary of consulate, a title which does not exist in Belgium—but Jackson believes that his brother is in Brussels awaiting disposition, and not in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"3.—The prisoner affirmed to me that he had studied in the University of Brussels, in the Faculty of Sciences. I said to him that I had studied in the same university and I asked him if he recalled the names of some professors. He didn't remember a single name.

"4.—The accused claimed to have studied and finished the courses of the military school in Dixmude, a small city of Flanders where there is no military school. In Belgium discipline is very strict in the Military School, and in spite of that, Jackson claims to have secured permission from it to hear courses at the University in Brussels. It is sufficient to remark that Brussels is 130 kilometres (8¼ miles) from Dixmude.

"5.—Jackson claims to have studied in the Jesuit college in Brussels—'Saint Ignatius of Loyola' (this college does not exist)—that was situated near the forest, on the Waterloo highway. But the Jesuit Colleges in Brussels are situated on a very different road.

"6.—The accused affirms that his mother lived for a long time at No. 1 of the street 'Chaussee de Havre' in Brussels. No such street exists in Brussels, but there is a 'Chaussee de Wavre.' No. 1 on that street is inhabited by a big store, well known to the inhabitants of Brussels. The accused began by saying that his mother did not live on a store, but seeing undoubtedly the scepticism on my face he added: 'There is a store below, but my mother lived above.'

"7.—A man who completed the courses of the Military School in Belgium and who claims to have studied in Dixmude—the Flemish part of the country—ought to at least have an elementary knowledge of the Flemish language. The accused, however, did not understand the simplest phrases that I spoke in that language, and trying his best to answer 'no' ('NEEN' in Flemish) instead answered 'NEIN' in German. Foreigners who have even lived but a short time in Belgium know that 'no' is pronounced 'NEEN' in Flemish.

"The foregoing, as well as some other erroneous answers that the prisoner made, to me as well as to my colleague, Mr. Varthaliti, in the interview that was had with him, are sufficient to demonstrate that he is not a Belgian and that he does not know Belgium.

"(Signed) WALTER LORIGAN."

Let us now go over the "confession" point by point and we shall see how stupid a fabrication it is.

1.—It will be remembered that practically all of the "defendants" and G.P.U. agents in the Moscow Trials claimed to have been originally admirers of Trotsky. All of them claimed to have become disillusioned when they found out that Trotsky was allegedly motivated only by personal hatred of Stalin. All of them were supposed to have been asked by Trotsky to go to Russia and murder Stalin. All of them sup-



osedly found out that Trotsky was in League with some government hostile to the Soviet Union.

### HITLER NO LONGER NAMED

Jackson repeats the formula. The slight variations he introduces are precisely those necessitated by the change in Stalin's foreign policy since the Moscow Trials. At that time Stalin was for "collective security" against Hitler; therefore the "confessions" then had the defendants in League with Hitler. Now, however, Hitler is Stalin's partner; hence it is no longer the Hitler government with which Trotsky is supposed to be in league, but instead "a great nation and a certain foreign parliamentary committee"—an obvious reference to the United States Government and the Dies Committee.

2.—Jackson's reference to Trotsky's alleged proposal that he go to Russia to organise the murder of Stalin is practically a word for word repetition of the statement made by almost every defendant in the Moscow Trials.

The John Dewey Commission which investigated those trials went fully into the accusation that Trotsky sent emissaries to Russia for the purpose of assassinating Stalin and other leaders of the Kremlin bureaucracy. In its findings the Commission clearly established that Trotsky was unalterably opposed to assassination and demonstrated with factual evidence the falsity of the "defendants'" accusations.

### REPEATS STALINISTS' MEXICAN SLANDERS

3.—Absolutely conclusive in identifying the Jackson "confession" as a G.P.U. fabrication are its references to the attitude of Trotsky in Mexico, its people and its government; in these Jackson repeats the identical slanders found previously in the press of Stalin's agents in Mexico and the United States.

Jackson, making the same crude effort as the other Stalin agents to prejudice the Mexican people against Trotsky, writes that Trotsky spoke with contempt of the Mexican revolution and of everything that was Mexican. The truth known to everybody is that Trotsky repeatedly expressed himself in terms of gratitude to President Cardenas and the Government of the Mexican Republic for extending hospitality and refuge to him. Trotsky defended Mexico in the press of the entire world when the world bourgeoisie denounced Cardenas' oil expropriations.

The "confession" also repeats the slander, so frequently found previously in the press of Stalin's agents that Trotsky intervened in Mexican politics and in favour of Almazan. No honest man could possibly make such an accusation because the truth is that throughout his entire stay in Mexico Trotsky abided with the utmost loyalty by his pledge he made to refrain from such intervention. President Cardenas last year personally answered these charges against Trotsky, who, he affirmed, had honourably and scrupulously observed this pledge.

The official participation of the Mexican

Government in Trotsky's funeral, President Cardenas' kind offer to have the Government bear the costs of the funeral—are in themselves sufficient refutation of the crude lies concocted in the "confession."

4.—The Trotskyists "convinced me of the justice of their ideology and wholeheartedly I joined their organisation" stated the confession. He has since admitted under questioning by Albert Goldman, Trotsky's attorney, now investigating the case in Mexico, that he was *never* a member of any section of the Fourth International. Asked by the judge what work he had ever done for the Fourth International prior to coming to Mexico, where he claims to have been sent by the Fourth International, the assassin could only admit "None." As a matter of fact it will easily be established by the testimony, not merely of Trotskyists but also of non-Trotskyists, that Jackson's game was to pose as one little versed in politics. At no time did he claim to be a member. He presented himself as one in general sympathy with the movement, but with interests and business affairs which occupied his time. The picture he paints in his statement as a "devoted disciple" devoting "all my energy" is of a piece with the rest—a crude fabrication. During the two years that he was planning the murder he had good reason to avoid the status of a member and to present himself as one extremely busy with other matters. Thereby, for example, he avoided contact with the Trotskyist organisation and the burden of daily work which would have been placed on him—avoided all conditions under which he might have let slip something which would have led to suspicion of him. His pose as the sweetheart of a girl through whom he came to have some general sympathies for Trotsky—this was the necessary pose to facilitate his horrible task.

5.—The vague generalities, lack of definiteness in designating places, names and dates, also testifies to the false character of the "confession." Who was the member of the Bureau of the Fourth International? Who told him to remain at some distance from the Coyoacan house? These questions and many others were conveniently left unanswered. However, under cross-examination, he could not state the name of the member of the Bureau but maintained that he was a Rumanian or someone from the Balkan States. Asked whether he received a letter of introduction, he said no. How then did he expect to see Trotsky without a letter? His reply was that this was not his problem but that of the people who sent him. Asked what he expected to do at Trotsky's house, he replied, to act as a translator or secretary. If that was his function did he not think that it was very peculiar that he should be sent without a letter of introduction? He answered no.

### WHY EIGHT MONTHS' WAIT?

Testimony then brought out that he arrived in Mexico in October, 1939, and did not get to see Trotsky until May 28th, 1940—eight months later! What did he do all those months? Nothing except wait for an opportunity to see



Trotsky. Why did he wait so long? Well, that was the instruction—to wait; and he further testified that during all this time he pretended to be in business, insisting that, too, was part of his instructions. Asked whether he had met some of the secretaries of Trotsky, he said yes. Did he ever ask them whether it was the custom for secretaries to wait in Mexico for eight months or so before introducing themselves to Trotsky, he replied that he had never asked them.

### THE G.P.U.'s CLOVEN HOOF!

Jackson tried to picture himself as an honest man. Why then, when he was disillusioned with Trotsky, did he not openly make public that fact? Why did he not expose Trotsky? The fact is that up to the very last he assured everybody who knew him of his great personal admiration for Trotsky. When his friend Sylvia Ageloff took a position on a political question contrary to that of Trotsky, Jackson claimed to be in agreement with Trotsky.

6.—The cloven hoof of the G.P.U. comes out with utter crudity when the "confession" states: "I came to the conclusion that perhaps the Stalinists were not far from the truth. . . ." The sycophantic servants of Stalin did the same thing in the Moscow Trials when every "defendant" and witness was made to "see the light" at the end and say that Stalin had been right. Here we see the police mind at work: murderous toward those whom they are instructed to pursue, slavish in their servility towards their masters.

This particular morsel was so crude that the editors of Stalin's United States organ, the *Daily Worker*, a little more politically-minded than the G.P.U. assassin gang, while quoting the sentence in which the bow to Stalin appeared, *cut this reference out entirely, as if it had not been in the original "confession."* (*Daily Worker*, August 26.)

7.—The reference to money which the "consul of a great foreign nation" could account for is still another repetition of the Moscow Trials pattern. Every penny of the costs of our efforts to preserve Trotsky's life was secured from the comrades and sympathisers of the party who were ready to give not only money but their lives, as did Robert Sheldon Harte, murdered by the May 24th attackers. And his was but one name on a long roll of our honoured dead, murdered by Stalin.

8.—Sylvia Ageloff's denunciation of Jackson as a "dirty G.P.U. agent" is sufficient characterisation of the assassin's concluding paragraph that it was "also for her sake" that he murdered Trotsky. Far from Trotsky's interfering in their marriage, it was Jackson's appearance on the scene as her husband which enabled the assassin to get into the house.

The question was put to the murderer by Goldman: You claim that you met someone in Paris, whose name you do not know. You also claim that he told you to go to Mexico and see Trotsky and that he gave you the expenses for

the trip. You also claim that he furnished you will all the papers and that he advised you not to be too insistent in your efforts to see Trotsky but to wait until it would appear that a visit to Trotsky was most natural and casual. You also claim that you were instructed to tell everybody you were in business. *Now I ask you, if this alleged member of the Fourth International were an agent of the G.P.U. and if you were also an agent of the G.P.U., would he not give you exactly the instructions that you claim he gave you?* When the assassin denied this, he was asked: "In other words, if you were to substitute the G.P.U. for this alleged member of the Bureau of the Fourth International and for your mother, who you claim gave you 5,000 dollars, would not your story be the exact truth?" The assassin thereupon went into a long harangue of abuse against Goldman. Throughout the session, unlike the previous ones where he sat meekly and answered all questions, he abused Albert Goldman.

The Mexican press estimated that between 60,000 and 100,000 people paid homage to Leon Trotsky. Peasants, agricultural workers, toilers, students, urban workers passed through the streets on the way to the cemetery, and from time to time the cry was echoed: "TROTSKY LIVES, DOWN WITH STALIN, DOWN WITH THE G.P.U." Wreaths were sent from a great number of workers' organisations, and according to *La Prensa*, Mexico City, "peasants, workers, women of the people, bearing credentials (of organisations) or spontaneously, gathered yesterday at the funeral agency where the casket was, in order to stand guard before the coffin." (A Mexican custom of paying tribute to the dead.)

In Mexico the facts are known. Every Mexican worker knows the murderous three-year campaign against Trotsky conducted by the Stalinists. Every Mexican worker knows the Stalinist affiliations of those awaiting trial for the May 24th attempt. The Stalinists at first denied all complicity in the May 24th assault, declaring it to have been "an organised provocation" on the part of Trotsky himself. Upon the arrest of two of its prominent members, David Serrano and Luis Mateos Martinez, they declared: "Our party considers itself outside of all suspicion since it is a revolutionary party which supports the Government of General Cardenas." But President Cardenas himself has issued a statement pointing the finger of accusation at the Stalinists, a statement which caused a profound sensation. Never in history has the chief executive of a government thus denounced a political party which supports him.

The police department of Mexico City announced on June 13th that they had solved the case. Twenty-seven members of the Communist Party were under arrest. Among them a number had made complete confessions as to their participation. On August 28th, *El Nacional*, organ of the Government, stated categorically that a high official of the Mexico City police identifies the assassin of Trotsky, Jackson, as one of the participants in the May 24th attempt



from which David Serrano, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party awaiting trial. "Jackson is the same man who led the assault on the house of Trotsky on May 24th which was carried out by Alfaro Siquieros (a painter greatly eulogised in the Stalinist press) and his associates, and he also tortured and assassinated Sheldon Harte, Trotsky's secretary," a high officer of the metropolitan stated, reports *El Nacional*. "Alfaro Siquieros took his orders from Jackson as did other individuals with whom he met in one of the apartments of the Ermita building, in Tacubya, where Sequieros and Gomez Lorenzo (another Stalinist) lived, and where Jackson asked Sylvia Ageloff to address her mail."

Thus exposed, the tone of the official Stalinist "defence" is sufficiently indicated by this paragraph from the statement of the Central Committee of the Mexican Communist Party, printed in *La Voz de Mexico*:

"If the investigators prove that one or more members or sympathisers of the Communist Party intervened in the preparation or execution of the attacks against Leon Trotsky, violating our fundamental principles, they will be expelled from the party as elements very dangerous to the working-class."

This is the first time that the murder machine of the G.P.U. has come under the light of an independent and fearless investigation. This investigation has been instigated largely as the result of the tremendous feeling of revulsion on the part of the Mexican working-class and intellectuals at the brutal assassination of Leon Trotsky. When the Swiss police established that it was the G.P.U. which was responsible for the murder of Ignace Reiss, the French capitalist-class blocked any further investigation due to the then Franco-Russian Pact. For precisely the same reasons the British and American capitalist-class withholds all the evidence which points to the responsibility of the G.P.U. and the international Stalinist political machine for the brutal assassination of Trotsky. Following in the footsteps of their masters, the anti-Stalinist war supporters in the working-class movement without exception have "censored" the information establishing the guilt of the Kremlin. At all costs Stalin must not be offended.

It therefore becomes of the utmost importance that the revolutionaries in the labour movement publicise as widely as possible every scrap of evidence exposing this canker which has long been eating at the heart of the working-class movement.

## Stalin's New Labour Laws

### By John G. Wright

*We intend to publish in these columns a series of articles by John G. Wright on the latest developments within the Soviet Union which include Stalin's new anti-labour legislation, the latest purges of Trade Union officials and Army leaders, and the crisis developing in agriculture. This is the first time that the story has been told outside the Soviet Union. This fact gives us a new insight into the extraordinary stringency of the Kremlin's censorship. Gedye, the New York Times correspondent in Moscow left there when it became obvious that it was absolutely impossible to get any news past the censors. He reports one particularly astonishing detail. When the Kremlin's ukases (this Czarist term for decrees came back into use in this last period) establishing the new labour laws were published in Pravda, Gedye filed with the censor a cable transmitting news. The censor snipped out of the cable the Provisions of the Law—such as six months' terms of imprisonment to be worked out at the factory at a 25 per cent. cut in wages, etc.—which Gedye quoted directly from the law! To our knowledge this is the first time that the censor has had the authority to keep from the outside world the texts of Kremlin legislation. What a commentary on the regime, that it must try*

*as long as possible to prevent the outside world from knowing what laws it is imposing on the people!*

*The real situation explains, of course, the reason for all these extraordinary methods of censorship, which can only be described as desperate. Another measure of Stalin's desperation was his assassination of Leon Trotsky. With all the contradictions of his regime conclusively deepening under the test of a world war, Stalin's programme, the sixteen years of his regime, are provenly bankrupt.*

*The Soviet masses are stirring and need only the leadership to save themselves from the fatal policies imposed by the Kremlin. Stalin remembers just enough Marxism to remember that such a moment is just the moment for the revolutionary leadership of a Trotsky to link itself to the masses. Hence he murdered Trotsky.*

On June 27th, 1940, simultaneously with the news that Rumania ceded Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union, Stalin tersely informed the world, through his official news agency, the Tass, that new labour laws were in effect in the U.S.S.R.

Tass confined itself to the statement that the seven-hour day had been replaced by an



eight-hour day, and that industry had shifted from a six-day week (five working days, one day off) to a seven-day week (six working days, one day off).

The seven-hour day was one of Stalin's trump cards, served up as irrefutable proof of the "victory of socialism in one country" and the "transition to communism." Stalin himself used to discourse at great length upon it.

As a matter of fact, the seven-hour day did not at all flow from the successes of industrialisation. It was originally introduced by Stalin as a *political measure*, serving as a weapon in the early days of Stalin's struggle against Trotsky and the Left Opposition.

Now comes official admission by Stalin that another of his world-publicised achievements was nothing but a fraud.

### STALIN'S LABOUR LAWS OF 1938

But the abolition of the seven-hour day and the six-day week is only one item in a new body of anti-labour legislation.

The goal Stalin pursues by his new laws is not a new one. It is identical with the goal envisioned by him in his legislation of December, 1938, turning Russian workers into a species of industrial serfs, binding them to the factories, making it impossible for them to leave their jobs, and in this way extricating his regime from the convulsions of its economic life, the inability to fulfil plans, the chronic shortage of goods, etc.

The 1938 laws were the bureaucratic solution to the economic impasse in which Stalin's regime found itself on the eve of the second world war. These laws depended for their effectiveness on the exercise of the bureaucracy's economic power, *i.e.*, firing, threat of unemployment. But the opposition of the masses frustrated the bureaucratic calculations. The acute scarcity of labour, the ease with which employment could be obtained, made it actually possible for the mass of workers to utilise Stalin's own legislation against Stalin's own aims.

His official press is now compelled to admit that the Soviet workers, prohibited by the 1938 *ukase* from leaving their jobs voluntarily, engaged in the practice of deliberately violating the 1938 laws and then insisting that the administration *enforce* these laws, *i.e.*, fire them from the jobs, thereby "freeing" them to seek employment elsewhere, not infrequently in a different department of the very same plant!

### YOUTH FIGHT AGAINST STALIN

The guarded statistical data of Stalin's press indicate beyond any doubt that the labour turnover reached its peak precisely in the months following the 1938 decrees; that productive levels have fallen off sharply; and that, most important of all, the leading part in this muted struggle against Stalin's regime is *being played by the youngest generation of workers, i.e.*, those who passed through the Stalinist school, who know nothing of the period of the Civil War and of the October days, and who have just entered

industry.

The alarm and fury of the bureaucracy is expressed in brimstone editorials against "a certain section, namely 3-4 per cent. of young workers and employees who have recently entered industry; who are seeking to profit from the absence of unemployment which has been destroyed by the Soviet power; who are abusing the patience of the Soviet Government by running from factory to factory, undermining discipline, refusing to toil honestly, disrespectfully deporting themselves towards the observation of regulations established by law and approved by the people." (Shvernik's report to the Ninth Plenum of the Central Council of the Russian Trade Unions.)

The June, 1940, laws are Stalin's solution to the economic impasse, further aggravated by the demands of war time economy, the vast losses during the Finnish campaign, not to mention the economic commitments to Hitler. The aggravated situation demands an intensification of bureaucratic pressure, the only remedy the bureaucracy knows or can apply. The need now is for new penalties. For these, Stalin has to dig deep into his *police armament*.

### SAVAGE PENALTIES IN NEW LAWS

The new laws make it a *crime against the State* for any worker to leave his job, come late to work, skip a single work day, fail to produce his daily quota or "norm."

Any attempt to leave one's place of employment, even a mere request to be allowed to seek employment elsewhere, is a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term of 2-4 months.

The penalty for arriving late to work, skipping a work-day, or otherwise "dawdling" on the job is equally unprecedented in the history of labour legislation. Anyone charged with these "crimes" is subject to a sentence of six months' penal labour *at the place of his or her employment, i.e.*, the factory, mill, mine or office. In addition, up to 25 per cent. of the criminal's regular wages are withheld. The exact period of time over which these wages are to be withheld is not specified in the *ukase*. It is to be assumed that these sums will be withheld for at least the duration of the sentence. Thus Stalin has turned every enterprise in the Soviet Union into a forced labour camp, or work-jail. The *ukase* decreeing all this was published in all the Russian papers on June 26. It went into effect on June 27. Kalinin countersigned it, issuing it in the name of the Executive Committee of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union.

It was accomplished by a supplementary *ukase* in the name of the People's Commissars and countersigned by Molotov, establishing drastic wage cuts.

As Shvernik explained: "In order to further strengthen the defensive power of their fatherland the working-class of the U.S.S.R. must go forward to necessary sacrifices."

"The lengthening of the working day is most closely bound up with the question of wages,"



continued Shvernik. "An objection may be raised that the proportionate increase of the working day must be accompanied, if you please, by a similar increase in wages. It would be absolutely incorrect to pose the question in this way. Were we to permit an increase of wages proportionate to the increase of the working day, then there could not even talk of any day, then there could not even be talk of any necessary sacrifices. But we are precisely talking about this, that the working-class and the entire intelligentsia must make those sacrifices which are indispensable for the defence of our fatherland." (*Bolshevik*, No. 11-12, June, 1940.)

The section of the *ukase* pertaining to piecework wages reads:

*"That the norms of output be raised and piecework rates be lowered in proportion to the increased working day."*

It might appear at first glance that this implies only an indirect wage cut, that is, a worker may now work longer hours and be paid less per piece but his wages remain the same as before. Not so. In reality, a direct wage cut is involved.

### A 14% WAGE CUT!

The "increased working day" includes not only the "extra" hour each day but also an "extra" eight-hour day in the week. A worker now receives the same wages for six days of work and one day off as he did for five days' work and one day off. In other words, if the meagre wage formerly had to cover six days of existence it must now be stretched over seven days. A wage cut of one-seventh.

Workers on monthly or weekly salaries are similarly situated. Let us take a period of 42 days which best illustrates the difference between the two systems. If hitherto there were in this interval seven weeks and seven pay days (on a six-day week basis), now there are only six weeks and six pay days. But on each pay day the wage received is the same as before, otherwise, according to Shvernik, there would be "no sacrifice." Therefore each worker must now sacrifice one week's wages in every seven.

Thus, in one and the same operation, the Russian workers must not only labour 48 hours in place of the previous 35 hours, but they also find their already miserable standard of living sharply lowered. And this, Stalin's "threshold to Communism"!

That Stalin's own press, under the ten-fold censorship that has prevailed since the signing of the Stalin-Hitler Pact, is forced to speak out so openly is in itself incontestable proof of the unfolding struggle of the Soviet workers against Stalin's regime.

### FIRST RESULTS OF NEW LAWS

The first consequence of the new legislation was the *cutting down* of the labour force in

every enterprise of the Soviet Union. With the "increased" productivity per worker, less workers are now required. In the reports published in the *Pravda*, 40 and 50 per cent. in the labour force are not uncommon. This is done in part, in order to overcome the acute shortage of labour from which Soviet industry is chronically suffering; at the same time, the bureaucracy no doubt hopes thereby to accumulate a labour reserve from which to draw in order to replace those workers who are jailed, and as an added pressure on the recalcitrants already employed.

As Trotsky predicted, under the blows of the war crisis, facing its first real test, the bureaucracy is compelled to strip off its veil and reveal its true self to the masses.

How are the Russian workers reacting to the new legislation? Here, too, the Stalinist press involuntarily supplies us with facts that disclose the deepening crisis.

The ritualistic peans in the press glorifying the new laws and promising miraculous results (there was even an attempt to raise the slogan "The Third Stalin Five Year Plan in Four Years"), were almost immediately followed by fulminations against "rotten liberals" who hesitate to enforce the new laws and who "patronise floaters and laggards." This attack is aimed against the public prosecutors and the directors of plants and heads of departments who have been invested with "undivided authority" and "sole responsibility." The *Pravda* for July already carries reports of severe jail sentences meted out to prosecutors and to directors of industry who "failed" to exercise their new authority. The real explanation for this "hesitancy" lies obviously in the pressure from below which is being counteracted from above by increased lashing of the apparatus.

The Komsomol (Russian Y.C.L.), an organisation now reportedly comprising ten million Russian youth, is under fire and is being held responsible for the misbehaviour of the young generation of workers. Its apparatus is being purged.

It is the dread of this development that impelled Stalin to hasten at all costs his long-planned assassination of Leon Trotsky. The Fourth International, founded and led by Leon Trotsky, alone has the political programme for the Russian workers and their brothers the world over. By assassinating Trotsky, Stalin hopes that he has now decapitated the world movement and especially the politicalisation of the opposition in Russia which has now assumed mass proportions, which is developing a young leading cadre but which is still groping for a political programme. To-day, however, the waves of rising deluge are lapping at Stalin's feet; to-morrow the tide of the resurgent workers of the Soviet Union and the whole world will engulf him.