WHY I BROKE WITH THE FRENCH C.P.

By CHARLES RAPPAPORT

(Below are sections of the declaration of Charles Rappaport, world-famous revolutionary veteran and communist writer, on the occasion of his resignation from the Communist Party of France recently. —The Editor.)

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IN answer to the question, why I have left the Communist Party, I would like to say that, speaking frankly, there are two inaccuracies to this question. The question would be accurate only on two conditions: first, if in France there had really existed a communist party; and, second, if I had taken an active part in it.

Instead of an independent communist party, there exists in France—at 120 Rue Lafayette— a buro which registers orders from Stalin and his henchman, Dimitrov. As for my own activity in the party, it has been negligible. Just like 99% of all party members, I was merely a "sheep" without any right to think, obliged to carry out orders from above.

This is the party I "left" and this is how far my moral responsibility goes for the decisions of the party leadership. . . .

I Knew The Accused

Many of the accused who figured in the last Moscow trials I have known for a long period of time. With my friend, Christian Rakovsky, I have been connected for forty consecutive years. With Kamenev and Zinoviev, Lenin's outstanding co-workers, I became acquainted at the beginning of the century. The same is true of Karl Radek and of Sokolnikov, former ambassador and former member of my socialist group in Paris. Bukharin, Piatakov and Krestinsky I knew since 1922.

Regardless of the fact that the methods of these revolutionaries did not always meet with my approval, I always regarded them with the greatest respect. My conscience demands that I state that I consider them absolutely incapable of committing the crimes ascribed to them.

In the first place, their pretended confessions stand opposed to a series of well-established facts; they are full of invented trips, nonexistent hotels, imaginary conversations, and so forth.

Such confessions are made only under the stress of moral torture to which the accused were subjected: fear for their own loved ones, hope of saving themselves and the possibility of continuing revolutionary activity.

No serious-minded person, capable of cool and normal reasoning, can possibly believe in the sincerity of these confessions. In any case, one is confronted with a mystery, that still defies solution.

To all the explanations that have been offered regarding the behavior of the accused, there must be added the peculiar psychology of the old Russian revolutionists. The Russian revolutionist was brave and uncompromising when his opponent was Czarism or capitalism. But, when he is confronted face to face by former comrades, behind whom appear to be the masses, then his attitude immediately changes. He is then ready to abandon everything, even his honor. At any rate, he loses his uncompromising and daring spirit. He feels weak and demoralized.

When the 15th Congress of the C.P.S.U. (1927) expelled Trotsky, Kamenev and Rakovsky, I personally advised my friend Kamenev to go thru the necessary formalities and ritual of "penance." In this way, I told him, he would obtain the possibility of living and carrying on revolutionary work. Now I regret immensely that I gave Kamenev advice that is as immoral as it is impractical.

A Fightful Situation

The latest Moscow murders point to a frightful situation. Secret agents and informers have become the masters of life. People are afraid of their closest friends. It is hard, almost impossible, to breathe freely in Soviet Russia. Subservience and the lowest type of fawning are in full flower. Independent writers attempt not to write at all while under the whip, or they do not make public what they do write. The state press—the only press existing in the U.S.S.R.—is dreadfully tiresome and banal. The lack of freedom—regarded by Stalin as "rotten liberalism"—destroys at the root every possibility of spiritual development, every attempt at artistic creation.

Articles 125 and 130 of the widely heralded "Stalinist Constitution" guarantee freedom of speech, assembly and so forth. But Bukharin, the real author of the Constitution, is shot. Officials occupying high posts are in constant fear of their lives. It not seldom happens that they attempt to get themselves transferred to less important posts in order to avoid responsibility. Not many outstanding Soviet citizens go to sleep without fearing that the next morning will find them in jail.

Yes, Stalin may well be proud. He has shown by the example of one sixth of the earth, that socialism without freedom leads to the most revolting slavery—complete slavery which permeates all fields, political, economic, and moral. This slavery can be explained only by the fact that the state has become the absolute master of all phases of life. Socialists have always maintained that freedom without bread is a hollow mockery. Stalin has now added a new truism: bread (and that in pretty small portions) without freedom is bitter indeed!

Under the old Czarist regime, the country was poor and ignorant. The revolution, born of the debacle of the war, bears the traces of the war, which cannot be erased so easily. Stalin's rule is a military regime, a police regime. At the price of dreadful sacrifice, the Soviet regime has somehow succeeded in transforming the old peasant Russia into an industrial state. But such methods cannot create new intellectual and moral conditions in a land with 175,000,000 people speaking 100 different languages and dialects. Stalin's terroristic policy is deliberately continued to paralyze the political and spiritual development of Soviet Russia. Democracy—that for Stalin is a commodity only for export.

These truths are clear enough and are understood by many communists and sympathizers. Yet they are silent. Why? For the very reason that Noah's sons covered the nakedness of their father. But

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sense is there in giving the President greater and more arbitrary power in foreign affairs when he has used such power as he already has in this manner?

No, the cause of the Spanish people is not served by agitating for the dangerous O'Connell bill or by vociferously calling for the support of the Administration's foreign policy, as the Stalinites do upon every possible occasion. Such a course is the veriest betrayal of the hopes of peace, democracy and anti-fascist Spain!

Let us act and act promptly! Let us demand of the Administration and Congress to lift the embargo against Loyalist Spain without a moment's delay! The President has sufficient power to take action—let him do so—then we will see exactly how much his fireside talks on peace and democracy are worth in fact!

Why I Left the C.P. of France

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the Noah's mantle of the Stalinists is shot thru with holes.

The "friends" of the Soviet Union do not want to bring grist to the mill of the enemies of socialism and the Soviets. They do not see that it is Stalin himself who is bringing grist to the mill of the enemies of the Soviet Union —Stalin who destroys human beings by the thousands and who has instituted the most gruesome terror in the land. Gigantic Russia, with its numberless peoples, suffers indescribably under the man who rules it with absolute power.

Against this we must raise our voices in protest, in loud protest, wherever it is still possible to speak with freedom and independence.