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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 G.P.U., 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 G.P.U. dictated their conduct not only to the accused but also to the counsel 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 P.O.U.M., which was waging an im-

placable struggle with the Fourth International, was counted among the "Trotskyites." After the P.O.U.M. 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. Falsifications 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 G.P.U. whose object was to prepare the campaign of false accusations, delations, 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 G.P.U., 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 U.S.S.R. Words were followed by acts: forged documents against the P.O.U.M., 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 G.P.U. 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 Rudolf 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 Duclos has tried to connect the "Trotskyists" with the mysterious terrorist acts in Paris on the subject of which the G.P.U. 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 G.P.U. 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, and 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 G.P.U. 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 Beattie, who for four months took part as a volunteer in the Spanish war and 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 Trotskyists in Spain "used to kill off wounded militiamen." For some time, according to his own words, Beattie 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 Beattie 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 G.P.U. 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 dictation of the G.P.U., 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 G.P.U., which makes liberal payment for the "moral" services of these

