the most ardent admirers of capitalism have come to admit that there may be some imperfections in the system. But they hasten to insist that the profit motive is indispensable, that the old system is sound at the core and that all that is necessary to insure its smooth running is to correct the more patent abuses. The evils disposed of, they assert, the good will remain.

This is the specious philosophy of reformers of every type, shade and variety. Their reasoning is based on the palpable absurdity that it is possible to isolate certain desirable features which arise from a definite set of social relationships and abolish the undesirable, while at the same time retaining the system that must necessarily by its organic constitution produce both the good and the evil. The capitalist wants low wages, which to him, as an individual exploiter, appear as a good; at the same time he wants high purchasing power in the masses so as to dispose of his own commodities. He may get one or the other but he can't have both. He groans at the colossal expense of maintaining millions of unemployed on relief, yet the hordes of workless proletarians are his most valuable aid in driving wages to the lowest possible point. He wants unimpeded initiative to exploit the world market, yet to maintain that market against competitors he must tax himself to the limit for the purchase of armaments. He clamours for the right to produce goods to the peak of his capacity and yet dreads the stagnation of over-production; or he advocates a planned state economy while resenting bureaucratic government interference in the affairs of his own business. Every good that presents itself is counter-balanced by its attendant evil, and the contradictions are insuperable. The folly of the reformer is his attempt to reconcile irreconcilables.

Nor can the wheels of economic history be reversed. The evils produced by the advance of capitalism can not be cured by returning to a previous age. Large-scale industry has brought about enormous populations largely centred in great cities, and these people are absolutely dependent on machine production, transport and communication. An attempt to return to the handicraft age would bring in its wake hardships immeasurably greater than those already existing.

But it is not the machine as such that oppresses the worker and brings anarchy and chaos in the economic field. It is the social relations that have arisen out of the way machine production is carried on. These relations are organically part of the system and will continue to generate evils so long as they remain unchanged. The good and the bad are complementary functions of one organism and can no more be separated from each other without radically changing the relations than frost can be taken from ice without melting it. We do not oppose the reformist because we object to the good he hopes to accomplish, but because we know beforehand the futility of the method. And we know further, that the major evils of capitalism can be reconciled, can be harmonized into a true synthesis only by revolutionary action — by fundamentally changing the relations. Then and only then can the good be divorced from the bad. So when we speak of preserving the usable features of capitalism for the new society it is always predicated upon the assumption that the discordant relations have first been harmonized.

W. C. CURREY

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The Book Shelf By PAUL MATTICK

STALIN'S FRAME-UP SYSTEM AND THE MOSCOW TRIALS.

By Leon Trotsky. With a Foreword by Joseph Hansen. Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1950. (144 pp., $1.00).

This booklet, published on the tenth anniversary of Trotsky's assassination, contains Trotsky's closing speech at the Hearing of the Dewey Commission of Inquiry first printed by Harper & Brothers in 1937. In his foreword, Joseph Hansen finds this reminder of the Moscow Trials particularly apt because of the series of trials of prominent Communists, such as Rajk and Kostov, since the end of the second world war. "Without knowing the truth about the Moscow trials," he asserts, "it is impossible to properly understand the character of the Stalinist regime." And he thinks, that the Dewey Commission and Trotsky's own defense revealed the truth. Together with this, Hansen attacks the current repetitions of the Moscow lies in such propaganda machinations as **The Great Conspiracy** by Sayers and Kahn.

Trotsky's analysis and refutation of the Moscow Frame-Up, despite its special importance to the Trotskyites, now illustrates merely an incident in a general political trend accompanying the change to the present phase of terroristic repression. The political Frame-Up, which is always in use, but was employed by the bolsheviks on a scale previously unknown, lost its particular "Stalinist" flavor with the coming of the fascist governments, and with the adoption of fascist methods of control by the Democracies. In principle, there is not even a difference between the Moscow Trials and those of Nurnberg; in each case "right" was with the victors in a power struggle which, in the one case, was fought within a nation, and in the other, between various nations.

The fact that the judicial Frame-Up for the liquidation of political competitors became the common policy of the majority of governments does not, of course, speak against a careful investigation of this outstanding Moscow example. And in this respect, both the Dewey Commission and Trotsky himself have fully succeeded in proving the Moscow Trials a Frame-Up. If their efforts were largely wasted, both generally and on themselves, it is because the "truth" as well as the "lie" are equally subordinated to the competitive needs, and are exchanged in accordance with the changing propaganda requirements of the prevailing power struggles. While the Moscow Trials affected none but Stalin's opponents in the bolshevik movement and the Russian state, they were nevertheless used to discredit the whole of the radical labor movement. But this was only so long as circumstances set the Stalinist regime in opposition to some of the other capitalist nations. As soon as America became Russia's ally, for instance, the Moscow Frame-Up found favorable reconsiderations, and was then celebrated as a sign of Russian vigilancy against an internal foe that might have sabotaged the common struggle against the fascist beasts. But now that Moscow and Washington are once again in deadly enmity, all Stalin's forgotten and once forgiven sins are newly utilized. This is done, however, not so much to weaken the Stalinist regime as to excuse and justify the growing terrorism at home.

And here it is particularly the bourgeois intelligentsia which loses its indignation over the oppressive American methods of control as rapidly as its indignation over the Russian terror system mounts. James Burnham finds the American atom-bomb as moral as he finds the Russian bomb criminal. Koestler wants to oppose Stalin's foreign legions with a foreign legion of his own, in defense of the liberalistic aspects of the freedom-loving capitalism. Sidney Hook distinguishes between "heresy" and "conspiracy," and defines "heresy" in terms of his own personality, which then stands revealed as truly American; whereas all else is "conspiratorial," un-American or Russian, and therefore logically a matter for the police. And Trotsky's illustrious defender against the G.P.U., John Dewey, writing in **The New York Times** of November 19, 1950, finds that Communist activity in America is "merely a matter of vigilancy on the part of citizens and particularly for continued attention on the part of the F.B.I."