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**Basic biographical data**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>John G. Wright</b>
<b>Other names (byname, pseud. etc.):</b>	<b>The mad Russian * Usick * Joseph Vanzler * Usick Vanzler * J.G.W. * J.G. Wright</b>
<b>Date and place of birth:</b>	<b>??, 1902 [?], Samarkand (Russian Empire)</b>
<b>Date and place of death:</b>	<b>June 21, 1956, New York, NY (USA)</b>
<b>Nationality:</b>	<b>Russian, USA</b>
<b>Occupations, careers, etc.:</b>	<b>Chemist, translator, journalist, editor</b>
<b>Time of activity in Trotskyist movement:</b>	<b>1933 - 1956</b>

**Biographical sketch**

*The following biographical sketch is chiefly based upon obituaries and other biographical items mentioned in the next to the last paragraph of the bibliographical listing below.*

John G. Wright (i.e. Joseph Vanzler) was an outstanding intellectual leader of the American *Socialist Workers Party (SWP)* and became particularly known as a translator of many works of Leon Trotsky into English.

**Joseph Vanzler**, better known under either his pen name **John G. Wright** or by his nickname **Usick**, was probably born in 1902 in Samarkand (Uzbekistan, Central Asia, then a part of the Czarist Russian Empire) as a son of an old rabbi and a girl of only 14 years of age. As one of only a handful Jewish children \* in his hometown, the young Vanzler was permitted to attend a Russian school where the aspiring pupil among other things excellently learned vernacular and Court Russian, Latin, Greek and French. After the outbreak of World War I, his mother together with Joseph emigrated to the United States and settled in Boston,

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\* Jewish children were imposed a rigid *numerus clausus* by the Czarist regime.

Mass., where she married Max Cohen who later got a rich man as owner of a company. From 1919 to 1923 and again from 1925-1926, Vanzler attended the renowned *Harvard College* where he studied chemistry. Although leaving the college without receiving a degree, Vanzler was able to start a career in colloidal chemistry and eventually established a small business by his own, manufacturing a contraceptive jelly. Well learned in mathematics and natural sciences, Vanzler already during his years at *Harvard* developed some special interest in the humanities and literature, too, particularly in classical philosophy and dialectics. While living in New York, the well educated and a bit eccentric businessman \* associated himself with a bohemian circle of painters, novelists, etc. and became a sponsor of a little magazine launched by his friend Alexander King, a noted humorist and illustrator.

In the late 1920s, Vanzler had married Edith Konikow, the daughter of Trotskyist pioneer Antoinette Konikow \*\*. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, in the wake of his philosophical studies, leading him from Hegel to Marx and Engels, and under the influence of his wife, who already was actively engaged in the Trotskyist movement, Vanzler successively approached to revolutionary Marxist positions, and in 1933 he followed his wife and his mother-in-law into the Trotskyist movement joining the ranks of the New York branch of the *Communist League of America (CLA)*, the American section of the international Trotskyist movement which at that time was known as the *International Communist League (ICL)*. Vanzler soon began to use the pen name John G. Wright while most of his friends, relatives and comrades affectionately called him Usick.

After having actively taken part in the 1934 New York hotel strike, in which the Trotskyists successfully intervened, and after a short phase of associating with B.J. Field (i.e. Max Gould), the leader of a faction inside the *CLA* regarded by the party leadership as ultraleftists \*\*\*, Wright soon began to transform himself from a bohemian and eccentric individualist into a faithful and widely respected party worker participating in the political and ideological work of the organization and eventually becoming one of the leading and shaping figures of American Trotskyism.

From 1940 to his death, Wright served on the *National Committee (NC)*, the leading body of the *Socialist Workers Party (SWP)* which was founded in 1938 as the mainstream U.S. Trotskyist party succeeding the *CLA* and the *Workes Party*, respectively. Many resolutions and other relevant party documents in this time were drafted or co-authored by Wright.

The special meaning of John G. Wright to American and international Trotskyism can be summarized as follows:

– Being a polyglot who knew no less than eight languages and who was fluent in Russian since this was his native tongue, John G. Wright from the 1930s to his death was the most eminent and distinguished translator of major writings as well as of innumerable articles by Leon Trotsky into English \*\*\*\*. Undoubtedly, Wright's translation and editorial work is given credit for the fact that Trotsky's works have been

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\* According to George Novack, he never felt at ease in the business world (see Novack, George: Role of a leading Marxist scholar : John G. Wright, in: *The Militant*, 40.1976 (29=July 23), p. 18).

\*\* Antoinette Konikow (1869-1946) was a medical doctor and became renowned as a pioneer of birth control in the U.S. In 1919 she was a co-founder of the communist movement in the U.S. and in 1928 founder of the *Independent Communist League*, a small Trotskyist group in Boston which soon joined the ranks of the *Communist League of America (CLA)* led by J.P. Cannon, M. Shachtman and M. Abern. In the 1940s she was a leading member of the *Civil Rights Committee*.

\*\*\* B.J. Field and his followers were excluded from the *CLA* for violating discipline during a strike in 1934. The Fieldites, as they were called, launched the *League for a Revolutionary Workers Party (LRWP)*, which became notorious for a certain brand of 'ultraleft' anti-Trotskyism.

\*\*\*\* Other prominent Trotskyist translators of Trotsky's writings from Russian into English include e.g. Max Shachtman, Brian Pearce and Marilyn Vogt-Downey.

relatively well represented and easily readable in the English-speaking world and thus revolutionary Marxist heritage could be preserved through the long period of Stalinist reaction and decline. It must be added that Wright not only translated but also edited and often annotated Trotsky's texts and that his rendering the Russian texts into English was highly praised by Trotsky himself with whom Wright had a lively correspondence and whom he never was able to meet in person. It must also be added, that Wright not only translated writings by Trotsky but by other non-English writing Marxist theorists and leaders, too, such as for example Plekhanov, Lenin, Zinovev\*.

– During the second half of the 1930s, Wright became an invaluable collaborator to Trotsky, particularly in the latter's fight against the monstrous Stalinist Moscow show trials. Wright placed his outstanding ability and experience as a researcher at Trotsky's disposal and was busy in doing in-depth investigations in American libraries and so on, tracking down references in the testimony and thus gave Trotsky a considerable help in the preparation of some of his major works; he particularly aided Trotsky and the *Dewey Commission*\*\* to expose the Moscow trials as frame-ups and slander.

– Besides by his outstanding work as a translator and editor of Trotsky's writings, Wright also became well known in the Trotskyist movement as an author. From the mid-1930s until his death, he contributed several hundred articles to the American and international Trotskyist press, chiefly to *SWP's* weekly paper *The Militant*\*\*\* and to its theoretical paper, *The New International*, which in 1940 was renamed *Fourth International*, and which was also co-edited by Wright; no less than 40 longer articles and reviews from his pen appeared in *Fourth International* between 1940 to 1955, and the last major article\*\*\*\* which he could finish before he died, was posthumously published in *International Socialist Review*\*\*\*\*\*. The topics dealt with in Wright's articles were ranging from international affairs to the capitalist economy of the welfare state and to atomic energy. However, at the very core of his interest were the contradictory and sometimes amazing developments inside the USSR and the crisis of Stalinism which he followed with close attention and by intensively and carefully reading Soviet newspapers and other original primary sources from within, "uncovering from the merest hints and obscure references many of the most momentous events. Time and again he was the first to reveal important Soviet economic trends and shifts of line of the Kremlin bureaucracy. He was the first to uncover and make public Stalin's last purge, the frame-up of the Soviet Jewish doctors. Months after Stalin's death, his Kremlin successors admitted to the truth of the fact that had been first revealed to the world by John G. Wright"\*\*\*\*\*.

– Another field of Wright's special interest was dialectical materialism; according to George Novack, "John G. Wright was most at home in the domain of ideas. Philosophy, logic, and problems of the method of

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\* Please note that our list below of works translated by Wright only considers independently published books while the bulk of articles and other dependently published items which were translated by him remain unconsidered.

\*\* The *International Commission of Inquiry Into the Charges Made Against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials* perhaps was better known as the *Dewey Commission*, named after its chairman John Dewey (1859-1952), a distinguished American educator and Professor Emeritus of philosophy from *Columbia University* who was well-known and respected across the political spectrum. In 1937 the *Dewey Commission* and its sub-commissions exhaustively investigated the Moscow show trials and conducted hearings in Coyoacán (Mexico) as well as in Europe. The commission's final report (1938) comprising some 400 pages came to the conclusion that Leon Trotsky was not guilty and that the Moscow show trials were frame-ups.

\*\*\* Wright was a staff writer and functioned as a member of *The Militant's* editorial board.

\*\*\*\* Feuerbach – philosopher of materialism, in: *International Socialist Review*, 17.1956 (4=137), pp. 123-126 and 136-137.

\*\*\*\*\* In Summer 1956, *Fourth International* was renamed *International Socialist Review*, continuing the numbering of its predecessor.

\*\*\*\*\* Preis, Art: John G. Wright – defender of Marxism, in: *The Militant*, 20.1956 (27=July 2), p. 1.

thought were his major preoccupation. He was familiar with the highways and byways of Western thought. His favored fields were Greek and the classical German schools of philosophy<sup>\*</sup>, with special focus on Hegel.

– In the *SWP*, Wright – who was renowned for his thorough-going knowledge of the works of Hegel, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky as well as of international and Soviet affairs – for many years functioned as a teacher giving innumerable educational lectures and classes in Marxist philosophy, history of Bolshevism, etc., always stimulating his audience and trying to win his students to the classic Marxist writings.

– Last not least, Wright was also constantly involved into the daily life of the *SWP* and actively participated in almost all programmatic, political and theoretical controversies which took place inside the party, e.g. in the long debates and factional struggles preceding the so-called Cochran split<sup>\*\*</sup> of 1953. He frequently contributed to the party's internal discussion bulletins.

After his marriage with Edith Konikow – from whom he had a son, Tyl – had broken up in the 1940s, Wright in the early 1950s remarried with Doris<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, from whom he got a son in 1952. Only a few years later, Wright suffered a heart attack and got severely ill with pneumonia. Not yet totally convalesced, he collapsed of a second heart attack and died at his home in New York City on June 21, 1956.

The *SWP* organized two memorial services at the end of June, the one held in Los Angeles, the other held in New York City<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>. Prominent party leaders such as James P. Cannon, Joseph Hansen, Morris Stein (Lewit), and Farrell Dobbs payed tribute to John G. Wright's life and work and gave recollections and reminiscences. Some obituaries appeared in the Trotskyist press and elsewhere<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup>.

### *Selective bibliography* \*\*\*\*\*

#### • *Selective bibliography: Books/pamphlets (co-)authored by Wright*

How the Fourth International was conceived / Jean van Heijenoort. Trotsky's struggle for the Fourth International / John G. Wright. The Fourth International / Michel Pablo. Issued by the National Education Dept., Socialist Workers Party. - New York, NY, 1973. - 39 pp. - (Towards a history of the Fourth International ; 2) (Education for socialists)

\* Novack, George: Role of a leading Marxist scholar : John G. Wright, in: *The Militant*, 40.1976 (29=July 23), p. 18.

\*\* In 1952/53 a sharp factional struggle took place inside the *SWP* between the majority led by James P. Cannon, Joseph Hansen, George Novack et al. and the minority led by Bert Cochran, George Clarke, Harry Braverman, Milton Zaslow et al. The faction fight eventually ended by a severe split when the 'Cochranites' were excluded from the party and a great deal of the working-class militants followed them and left the party.

\*\*\* The maiden name of Wright's second wife is unknown to us.

\*\*\*\* See the reports titled *N.Y. memorial meeting held for John G. Wright* (by Harry Ring) and *Tribute to John G. Wright* (anonymous), in: *The Militant*, 20.1956 (28=July 9), pp. 1 and 4.

\*\*\*\*\* For a listing see the next to the last paragraph of the bibliographical listing below.

\*\*\*\*\* TSB item numbers (e.g. <TSB 0716>) refer to Lubitz' *Trotskyist Serials Bibliography*, München [etc.] : Saur, 1993, which is out of print but available as PDF file within the framework of *TrotskyanaNet*. In TSB you can find detailed descriptions concerning the respective Trotskyist journals, newsletters, bulletins and the like.

The truth about Kronstadt. - New York, NY : National Education Dept., Socialist Workers Party, 1938. - 17 pp. - (Marxist handbooks ; 2)

• ***Selective bibliography: Books/pamphlets and journals (co-)edited by Wright***

Cannon, James P.: The struggle for a proletarian party / ed. by John G. Wright and with a new introd. by George Novack. - 2. ed. - New York, NY : Pathfinder Pr., 1972. - XVIII, 302 pp.

Outline history of Russian Bolshevism : the gestation period of the Russian proletariat / comp. by John G. Wright, introd. by Joe Hansen. - New York, NY : Educational Dept., Socialist Workers Party, 1940. - VIII, 18 pp. [Designated as "book 1", only this vol. was publ.]

Trotsky, Leon: The first 5 years of the Communist International / Leon Trotsky. Transl. and ed. by John G. Wright. - 1-2. - New York, NY : Pioneer Publ., 1945-53 [ & later ed., publ. by Monad Pr., New York (with introd. by David Salner) and by New Park Publications, London (with additional material transl. by R. Chappell)]

*Note:* Some of the books by Leon Trotsky listed in the paragraph which follows (*Books/pamphlets translated by Wright*) were not only translated but also annotated and/or edited or co-edited by John G. Wright.

• ***Selective bibliography: Books/pamphlets translated by Wright***

Reisner, Larisa: Svyazhsk : an epic of the Russian civil war / Larissa Reissner. [Transl. by John G. Wright and Amy Jensen]. - Colombo : Bolshevik-Leninist Publication, 1948. - 18 pp. - (Trotsky memorial publication)

Trotsky, Leon: Europe and America / transl. from the Russ. by John G. Wright. - Colombo : Lanka Sama Samaja, 1951. - 71 pp. - (A Lanka Sama Samaja publication) [ & other ed.]

Trotsky, Leon: Europe & America : two speeches on imperialism / transl. from the Russ. by John G. Wright. - New York, NY : Pathfinder Pr., 1998. - 86 pp.

Trotsky, Leon: The first 5 years of the Communist International / transl. from the Russ. and ed. by John G. Wright. - 1-2. - New York, NY : Pioneer Publ., 1945-53 [ & later ed., publ. by Monad Pr., New York (with introd. by David Salner) and by New Park Publications, London (with additional material transl. by R. Chappell)]

Trotsky, Leon: The Kirov assassination / transl. by J.G. Wright. - New York, NY : Pioneer Publ., 1935. - 32 pp.

Trotsky, Leon: Lenin / transl. from the Russ. by John G. Wright. - Colombo, 1951. - 19 pp. - (A Lanka Sama Samaja publication)

Trotsky, Leon: Leon Trotsky on Engels and Kautsky / [transl. by John G. Wright]. - New York, NY : Merit Publ., 1969. - 30 pp.

Trotsky, Leon: Leon Trotsky on the Kirov assassination / [transl. by John G. Wright]. - New York, NY : Pioneer Publ., 1956. - 31 pp. - (Pioneer pocket book ; 3)

Trotsky, Leon: Lessons of October / transl. from the Russ. by John G. Wright. With an introd. and explanatory notes by Maurice Spector. - New York, NY : Pioneer Publ., 1937. - 125 pp. - (The Marxist pocket library) [ & later ed., publ. by New Park Publications (London)]

Trotsky, Leon: The lessons of Spain : the last warning / transl. by John G. Wright. Introd. and notes by V. Karalasingham. - Indore : Modern Publ. for Spark Syndicate, 1948. - VII, 37 pp.

Trotsky, Leon: The permanent revolution and Results and prospects. - London : New Park Publications, 1962. - XV, 254 pp. [ & later ed.; "Results and prospects" transl. by Brian Pearce ; "The permanent revolution" transl. by John G. Wright and rev. by Brian Pearce]

Trotsky, Leon: The permanent revolution and Results and prospects / [introd.: Peter Camejo]. - 2. ed. - New York, NY : Merit Publ., 1965. - 281 pp. [ & later ed.; "Results and prospects" transl. by Brian Pearce ; "The permanent revolution" transl. by John G. Wright (1931) and rev. by Brian Pearce]

Trotsky, Leon: Perspectives of world development / transl. by John G. Wright. - Colombo : Bolshevik Samasamaja, 1950. - 35 pp.

Trotsky, Leon: The Soviet Union and the Fourth International : the class nature of the Soviet state / transl. by Usick

- Vanzler [John G. Wright]. - New York, NY : Communist League of America, 1934. 31 pp.
- Trotsky, Leon: The Stalin school of falsification / introd. and explanatory notes by Max Shachtman. Transl. by John G. Wright. - New York, NY : Pioneer Publ., 1937. - XLII, 326 pp. - (Selected works of Leon Trotsky ; 2) [& later ed.]
- Trotsky, Leon: The Stalin school of falsification / with an introd. by George Saunders. Transl. by John G. Wright. Ann. by Max Shachtman. - 3. ed. - New York, NY : Pathfinder Pr., 1972. - XXXVI, 338 pp.
- Trotsky, Leon: Stalinism and Bolshevism : concerning the historical & theoretical roots of the Fourth International / [transl. by John G. Wright]. - New York, NY : Pathfinder Pr., 1960. - 29 pp. - (A Merit pamphlet)
- Trotsky, Leon: The Third International after Lenin / transl. by John G. Wright. With an introd. and explanatory notes by Max Shachtman. - New York, NY : Pioneer Publ., 1936. - LI, 357 pp. - (Selected works of Leon Trotsky ; 1) [& later ed.]
- Trotsky, Leon: The Third International after Lenin / transl. by John G. Wright. [Introd.: Gus Horowitz]. - 3. ed. - New York, NY : Pathfinder Pr., 1970. - XXXVIII, 346 pp. [& later ed.]
- Trotsky, Leon: What is a peace programme? / transl. by John G. Wright. - [Colombo] : Lanka Samasamaja Publication, 1956. - 38 pp.
- Trotsky, Leon: What next? : vital questions for the German proletariat / transl. from the Russ. by Joseph Vanzler [John G. Wright]. - New York, NY : Pioneer Publ., 1932. - 192 pp
- Trotsky, Leon: Whither Europe? : (a speech delivered on Febr. 15, 1926) / transl. by John G. Wright. - Colombo : Lanka Samasamaja, 1950. - 35 pp.
- Trotsky, Leon: Whither France? / transl. by John G. Wright and Harold R. Isaacs. - New York, NY : Pioneer Publ., 1936. - 160 pp. [& later ed., publ. by various publishing houses]
- Zinov'ev, Grigorii Evseevich: Lenin : speech to the Petrograd Soviet / Gregory Zinoviev. Transl. rev. by John G. Wright. - London : Socialist Labour League, 1966. - 48 pp. [Repr. from *Fourth International*]

• ***Selective bibliography: Books, collections, journals, bulletins to which Wright contributed***

- America's revolutionary heritage : Marxist essays ed. with an introd. by George Novack. - New York, NY : Pathfinder Pr., 1976. - 414 pp. [& later ed.]
- Discussion Bulletin / Socialist Workers Party (New York, NY) <TSB 1547>
- Documents sur la question balkanique / Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Mouvements Trotskyste et Révolutionnaires Internationaux. - 2. - Paris, 1995. - 56 pp. - (Les cahiers du C.E.R.M.T.R.I. ; 78)
- Fourth International (New York, NY, 1940-56) <TSB 0532>
- Internal Bulletin / Socialist Workers Party (New York, NY) <TSB 1548>
- International Socialist Review (New York, NY) <TSB 0715>
- The Kronstadt rebellion in the Soviet Union 1921. - New York, NY : Nat. Education Dept., Socialist Workers Party, 1973. - 24 pp. - (Education for socialists)
- Leon Trotsky - the man and his work : reminiscences and appraisals / Joseph Hansen [et al.] - New York, NY : Merit Publ., 1969. - 128 pp.
- Marxist essays in American history / ed. by Robert Himmel. - New York, NY : Merit Publ., 1966. - 128 pp. [& later ed.]
- The Militant (New York, NY) [ISSN 0026-3885] <TSB 1026>
- The New International (New York, NY, 1934-36 and 1938-58) <TSB 1089>
- Quatrième Internationale (Paris etc., 1936- ) [ISSN 0771-0569 - ISSN 0765-1740] <TSB 1282>
- Vida e morte de Trotsky / Pierre Frank [et al.] Trad. de J. Ferdinando Antunes. - Lisboa : Ed. Delfos, [1974]. - 240 pp. - (Compasso do tempo ; 19)
- Workers' International News (London) <TSB 1840>

- **Selective bibliography: Books and articles about Wright**

- [Anon.]: John G. Wright, in: *International Socialist Review* <TSB 0715>, 17.1956 (3=136), p. 77. [Obituary, perhaps written by Joseph Hansen (?)]
- Cannon, James P.: Joseph Vanzler, in: *Cannon, James P.: Speeches for socialism*, New York, NY, 1971, pp. 309-312. [Obituary speech, originally delivered at a memorial meeting, Los Angeles, Cal., June 25, 1956. Repr. from *The Militant*, 20.1956 (28=July 9); also publ. in Cannon, James P.: *Notebook of an agitator*, New York, NY, 1958, pp. 360-362.]
- Cannon, James P.: A wake for Usick, in: *Cannon, James P.: Speeches for socialism*, New York, NY, 1971, pp. 313-314. [Previously unpubl. letter to Doris Vanzler, dated June 29, 1956]
- Novack, George: Role of a leading Marxist scholar : John G. Wright, in: *The Militant* <ISSN 0026-3885> <TSB 1026>, 40.1976 (29=July 23), p. 18. [Obituary; edited version of a tribute originally given at a memorial meeting, Los Angeles, Cal., June 25, 1956]
- Preis, Art: John G. Wright - defender of Marxism, in: *The Militant* [ISSN 0026-3885] <TSB 1026>, 20.1956 (27=July 2), p. 1. [Obituary].
- Ring, Harry: N.Y. memorial meeting held for John G. Wright, in: *The Militant* [ISSN 0026-3885] <TSB 1026>, 20.1956 (28=July 9), p. 1, 4.
- Wald, Alan: A tribute to John G. Wright, in: *Bulletin In Defense of Marxism* <TSB 0219>, 1987 (41), pp. 28 - 29. [Obituary; on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the death of J.G. Wright]

*Note:* More informations about John G. Wright are likely to be found in some of the books, pamphlets, university works and articles listed in the relevant chapter(s) of our *Trotsky Bibliography*, 3. ed., München [etc.], 1999, e.g. chapter 7.5.18.

- **Selective bibliography: Books dedicated to Wright**

- Trotsky, Leon: *Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1939 - 40* / ed. by George Breitman and Evelyn Reed. - New York, NY : Merit Publ., 1969. - 128 pp. [& 2. ed., ed. by Naomi Allen and George Breitman. New York, NY : Pathfinder Pr., 1973, 465 pp.]

### *Sidelines, notes on archives*

— ***Some short quotations from obituaries and biographical sketches:***

"John G. Wright, or 'Usick' as he was called by his intimates, stood out in this land of standardized personalities, and even in our own movement, as a highly distinctive individual, an "original" in the best sense. Steady in purpose, untiring in work, and spontaneously generous, he had a volatile and inflammable temperament. The strong feelings which were anchored in such firm dedication to the socialist cause and in personal friendship would sometimes flare up in unexpected and even bizarre ways. This disciplined reasoner could not always contain his powerful emotions. His eccentricities of expression vexed impatient and intolerant people, but they were endearing than annoying to those who cherished his true worth. [...] He had the most serious attitude towards ideas and could not tolerate any trifling with principles. Where the precise meaning of a term in translation or of the content of a key idea were involved, he was most scrupulous in preserving the theoretical heritage of scientific socialism. [...] In a single conversation he would

touch upon the most varied topics - the delights of the Elizabethan poets (Ben Jonson was one of this favorites); the enigma of Totemism (he was especially interested in the origin of society and primitive customs); modern painting (he considered himself a connoisseur of contemporary art); problems of calculus; or one of the latest developments in natural science. All this learning was organized around a central axis and mobilized to serve the cause of the liberation of humanity from the evils of class rule which he so vividly detested. [...] John G. Wright functioned on such an advanced level of generalization and so elevated a point of historical observation that he was unaware of the vast gap separating his own thinking from that of most comrades. It was sometimes necessary to step in and build a bridge between his line of thought and that of his listeners." \*

"As a collaborator and teacher in the struggle for socialism you could not ask for a better friend and teammate than Usick. He did not hesitate to express a difference if he saw it that way, but always gently, for he was a gentle and kind man. And what he saw generally had a point to it. On the other hand, he did not hesitate to change when he became convinced that he might have been wrong. He tried to be objective. He knew how to fit into a team, too, subordinating himself without difficulty when that was required." \*\*

"Although he had an odd and volatile personality, he differed markedly from many radical intellectuals of the time in that he was not interested in eliciting personal recognition or being in the spotlight. Most of his efforts were devoted to improving the work of others, although he produced quite a few meticulous articles [...] While utterly devoted to socialist revolution, he nonetheless abhorred violence and was motivated by a desire for an ordered world." \*\*\*

"He was our most learned man. Indeed, in the many broad fields which were the subject of his thought and study – the whole range of Marxism, history, philosophy and world literature – it is doubtful that the workers' movement anywhere in the world possessed a comrade so roundly learned as Usick was. He was an intellectual. If there is such a thing as a pure intellectual, one concerned with theoretical ideas as a primary interest, Usick was one. He was also a pure idealist, in that his whole life was devoted to the socialist ideal, but he knew and taught that the ideal must rest on material foundations and can be realized only in the struggle of classes. Usick's learning and his idealism were his strength – and also his weakness. At home in the broad ocean of theoretical concepts, Usick floundered helplessly in the narrow creeks of practical affairs in the workaday world; and that included the political and party struggle, which, unfortunately, is not always free from malignant influences of the class society it strives to change." \*\*\*\*

— *Notes on archives:*

Archival material by and about John G. Wright can be found in almost all archives in which the heritage of those persons is being preserved with whom he corresponded as well as in those archives which preserve rich holdings of *SWP* and *Fourth International* material. However, the main repository for the Wright

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\* Novack, George: Role of a leading Marxist scholar : John G. Wright, in: *The Militant*, 40.1976 (29=July 23), p. 18.

\*\* [Anonymous (Joseph Hansen?)]: John G. Wright, in: *International Socialist Review*, 17.1956 (3=136), p. 77.

\*\*\* Wald, Alan: A tribute to John G. Wright, in: *Bulletin In Defense of Marxism*, 1987 (41), pp. 28 - 29.

\*\*\*\* Cannon, James P.: Joseph Vanzler, in: *Cannon, James P.: Speeches for socialism*, Nw York, NY, 1971, p. 311.

papers is *Hoover Institution Archives (HIA)* at Stanford, Cal. \* *The John G. Wright Papers, 1933-1977* housed at *HIA* (call no.: XX 4090479.1) were acquired from the *SWP* in 1992; they had been previously housed at the *Library of Social History*, New York, NY, an affiliate of the *SWP*. The collection, which is open for research, comprises 9 ms boxes (consisting of some 220 folders) which are containing speeches and writings, correspondence, notes, translations and other material by Wright, chiefly covering the years 1933-1956, e.g. his correspondence with Leon Trotsky, George Breitman, R.S. Baghavan, James P. Cannon, George Clarke, Charles Cornell, Charles Curtiss, Farrell Dobbs, Bert Cochran, Raya Dunayevskaya, Jan Frankel, C. Frank Glass, Albert Goldman, Sam Gordon, Antoinette Konikow, Charles Malamuth, Ernest Mandel, George Novack, Vaughn O'Brien, Louis Sinclair, Morris Stein (Lewit), Arne Swabeck, Jean Van Heijenoort, Sara Weber, Murry Weiss. Other parts of the collection are formed by typescripts of – partly untitled – speeches and resolutions, notes, drafts and working materials of courses, lecture series and publications. The collection includes also letters and writings by third parties, thus e.g. by James P. Cannon, Oskar Fischer, Felix Morrow, Grandizo Munis, Peng Shu-tse, Bruno Rizzi, Leon Trotsky, Jean Van Heijenoort. Last not least, the collection includes a biographical file (box 1, folder 1-3) consisting of obituaries, tributes, lists and material for a projected (but never published) memorial volume. A *Register of the John G. Wright Papers* (folder level description) was prepared by Dale Reed; an online version is available in the WWW under the URL: <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt3p30133s>

Some 200 pieces of the Trotsky-Wright correspondence are to be found in *The Exile Papers of Lev Trotskii* (call no.: bMS Russ 13.1) as part of the famous *Trotsky Archives* in the *Houghton Library*, Cambridge, Mass.\*\*

*Note: The photograph on p. 1 was taken from Cannon, James P.: Speeches for socialism, New York, NY, Pathfinder Pr., 1971, p. 309. The photograph originally appeared in The Militant, 20.1956 (29), p. 18 with the note "Militant/Joseph Hansen".*

W. Lubitz, Aug. 2005

This miscellany is part of

The Lubitz TrotskyanaNet

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\* See also the sub-chapter on *Public Archives : America* within the framework of our *Lubitz TrotskyanaNet* website.

\*\* See also the sub-chapter on *Public Archives : America* within the framework of our *Lubitz TrotskyanaNet* website.