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# EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

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**Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part 3**

**Struggle in the Fourth International**

# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS 1951-1954

**Volume 1 of 4 volumes**

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS,  
1951-1954

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## SECTION I: BEFORE THE THIRD WORLD CONGRESS

["A Contribution to the Discussion on International Perspectives" was written in June 1951 by a subcommittee of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party for submission to the Third World Congress. Although the Socialist Workers Party was barred by reactionary legislation from membership in the Fourth International, the party leadership supported the general line of the resolutions passed by the Congress. A majority of the leaders, however, in light of some ambiguous formulations in the main resolution, thought it was politically important to restate the Trotskyist stand on the counterrevolutionary character of Stalinism. They felt it was especially important to reject the implications in Michel Pablo's "Where are We Going?" (reprinted in Part 4 of *Towards a History of the Fourth International*, Education for Socialists bulletin, which contains documents of the International Secretariat faction) that centuries of deformed workers states were a probable perspective. Pablo was the secretary of the Fourth International, and was living in Paris at the time.

[The reply by George Clarke (writing under the name G. Campbell) to this statement was an indication that some forces in the SWP were opposed to any restatement of Trotskyist fundamentals on Stalinism. Clarke, who attended the World Congress as a fraternal observer from the SWP, did not submit the "Contribution" as he had been asked to do. Instead, he burned it, because he was "ashamed" to present it, as he later explained. The exchange provides a preliminary hint of the differences that soon led to an open factional struggle in the SWP.

[The most thoroughgoing criticism of Pablo's position was made by Bleibtreu, a central leader of the Parti Communiste Internationaliste, French section of the Fourth International. It was his view that the line expressed by Pablo in "Where are We Going?" was being smuggled into the Fourth International through ambiguous and wrong formulations in the main resolutions. Bleibtreu's "Where is Comrade Pablo Going?" was submitted for the pre-congress discussion in June but was never distributed by the International Secretariat to the sections and sympathizing organizations. It was first published in a June 1951 supplement to *La Verite*, the publication of the French section. The introduction to this item is reprinted from the January 8, 1953 issue of *La Verite*, which printed an edited version of this document. The translation of both "Where is Comrade Pablo Going?" and the introduction were prepared for this collection by Michael Baumann.

[At the World Congress, numerous amendments added to the main resolution appeared to reaffirm orthodox Trotskyist positions on the prospects for Stalinism, its counterrevolutionary role, and the necessity for a political revolution to overturn the ruling bureaucratic castes in the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states. (This resolution is included in Part 4 of this series.) These amendments satisfied the SWP leaders that the leadership of the world Trotskyist movement had not changed its evaluation of Stalinism. The majority of the leaders of the French section, however, continued to insist that Pablo was on a revisionist course.]

### 1. "Contribution to the Discussion on International Perspectives"

The main propositions in the "Theses on International Perspectives" are as follows:

1. Since the Korean conflict, imperialism has plunged into accelerated military and political preparations for a new world war.

2. These preparations will inevitably encounter resistance from the masses suffering from the effects of militarization (lowered living and working standards, attacks on their rights, etc.).

3. The imperialist drive toward global war is taking place in an international situation which is unfavorable to capitalism and threatens to become still worse.

4. The growing strength of the anti-capitalist forces and the undermining of imperialism can just as readily hasten the outbreak of war as delay it. In either event, the final decision rests with U.S. imperialism. The American imperialists may plunge into a general war precisely in order to keep the disadvantageous relationship of class forces from getting worse.

5. A Third World War unleashed under such conditions would from the start acquire the character of an inter-

national civil war, especially in Europe and Asia. It would be a war waged by the imperialist bloc against the USSR, the People's Democracies, China, the colonial revolutions and the revolutionary labor movement in the capitalist countries. It will be a war of capitalist counter-revolution for the restoration of private property, colonialism, and other forms of servitude against the international revolutionary movement in all its diverse forms.

6. Such a war would differ from the previous two world wars in important respects. First, it will not be a struggle for world domination between rival imperialist blocs but primarily a class war. Second, it would not come about as the culmination of a series of defeats of the proletariat and its political prostration. It would come rather as a result of serious setbacks to imperialism—not at a time when the workers and colonial peoples are crushed and weakest but when imperialism itself is being dealt hard blows. Consequently, the immediate effect of another world war will be not the blunting and suppression of the class struggle but its extreme sharpening to the point of social paroxysms.

7. This analysis of the world situation makes necessary the following orientation and holds out the following perspectives for the revolutionary movement:

a. The preparations and even the outbreak of world war are no occasion for despair or defeatism in the ranks of the vanguard. On the contrary, it must be viewed as opening up considerable revolutionary possibilities on the international arena, provided the vanguard pursues a correct line and takes full advantage of its opportunities.

b. Marxists cannot take a "neutralist" or abstentionist attitude toward the contending forces in the impending war. They must be intransigently opposed to the imperialists and their agents and unambiguously align themselves with the antagonists of imperialism which have a different social nature, tendencies and aims. This *class* position which clearly differentiates between the contending camps should be made manifest in all political activity and the press.

c. In the movements, countries and forces headed by Moscow and the Stalinists or by the reformists, Marxists must clearly distinguish between social regimes, forces and movements of an anti-capitalist kind and their bureaucratic and opportunist leaderships.

d. Wherever the masses are acting against the capitalist regimes, the Marxists must participate, with their own program by the side of the workers, peasants and colonial peoples in their struggles with the aim of deepening and widening the movements along revolutionary lines. Under certain conditions this may require entry into the Stalinist-controlled movements and even critical support to regimes under their auspices, as in China.

e. This necessarily involves at the same time a struggle against the Soviet bureaucracy and the exploitation of the world crisis of Stalinism for the building of a new revolutionary leadership. It requires systematic efforts to get closer to the working masses in Europe and Asia now under the influence or domination of Stalinism.

f. In countries where Stalinism is weak and the reformists are the dominant force as in England and India today, it means work among the masses and within the parties now following the reformist leaders. In countries where both Stalinism and Social Democracy are weak, as in the United States, it means contending directly with the union bureaucracy and capitalist representatives for leadership of the workers.

With the above propositions we are wholly in agreement.

At the same time, in our opinion it is necessary to expand and strengthen the theses along the following lines:

8. The necessity to oppose the imperialist bloc and to defend the conquests of October against imperialism does not mean support to the diplomatic moves or military strategy of the Kremlin, as the Theses themselves indicate. The unfoldment of the class struggle and the lines of class interest in the course of war would not in all instances and all places necessarily coincide with the official governmental or military line-ups. The case of Yugoslavia illustrates such a condition today. Similar cases may arise in course of the war itself. In the period ahead Marxists confront a twofold problem: On the one side, that of defending the conquests of October against imperialism

and on the other, of defending the revolutionary struggles and their conquests (as in Yugoslavia today) against the Kremlin.

9. The direct counter-revolutionary role which Moscow has played and continues to play will not fade into the background in the event of war. On the contrary, it will come to the fore whenever and wherever independent mass movements threaten to pass beyond the control of the Kremlin or the parties it dominates. Regardless of the effects upon the defense of the Soviet Union, the Stalinist bureaucracy will not countenance independent mass movements, and, least of all, oppositional ones. If the Kremlin feels that such independent movements jeopardize its interests it will not hesitate to repress them.

Unfolding revolutionary movements may in certain circumstances sweep the agents of the Kremlin along and they will seek to head them in order to control them. It is necessary to warn that the more such movements tend to sweep over their heads, the more openly will the Stalinist bureaucracy tend to collide with them and seek to crush them.

10. While the greatly aggravated and steadily worsening international situation considerably reduces the chances for a deal between the Kremlin and the imperialists, the possibility of such a deal still remains. The conservative Stalinist bureaucracy has far from rejected its perspective of living peacefully with imperialism, if only it is permitted to do so. To this end it is prepared, as it always has been, to sacrifice the interests of the workers everywhere. Such moves as Togliatti's bid to the Italian bourgeoisie demonstrate that the Kremlin has far from lost hope for a deal. While any such deal, if concluded, can only prove temporary and partial, it would nevertheless modify the international situation and our own perspectives in the period immediately ahead and therefore should not be completely left out of our analysis.

11. Instead of attempting to provide a general redefinition of Stalinist parties, it would be more advisable to recommend following their concrete evolution in each given case, in their specific relations with the Kremlin on the one side and with the mass movement in their own country, on the other. At the same time, it is imperative to reaffirm our previous characterization of Stalinism as a counter-revolutionary force. Stalinism remains what it has been—before, during and following the last war. It is a national reformist bureaucracy and an agency of imperialism in the world labor movement. What is new in the situation are not any changes in the nature and role of Stalinism but the new conditions in which these parties, including the Kremlin, now find themselves and as a result of which they have been plunged into crises.

The possibility and the probability that the mass movements in some countries may sweep over the heads of the Stalinist parties opens up two variants of development. If such parties go along with the masses and begin to follow a revolutionary road this will inescapably lead to their break with the Kremlin and to their independent evolution. Such parties can then no longer be considered as Stalinist, but will rather tend to be centrist in character, as has been the case with the Yugoslav CP. Those parties, however, which in conditions of mass upsurge remain totally tied to the Kremlin will unfold their counter-revolu-

tionary role to the full.

The characterization of Stalinist parties as "not exactly reformist" parties is both vague and misleading and should be eliminated.

12. The analysis of how the Stalinist parties may conduct themselves during wartime in capitalist countries, tends to be one-sided in the theses. It is stated that in certain circumstances such parties may be compelled to outline a revolutionary orientation. This is not excluded. But the contrary is likewise not excluded. In certain circumstances the Stalinists could and would even in the midst of war work to strangle revolutions. This variant ought to be emphasized no less than the other. In addition it ought to be stressed that with the outbreak of war all these Stalinist parties will not escape from the conditions of crisis now convulsing them but rather will find this crisis intensified many fold.

13. In harmony with what has been said it is further necessary to emphasize that the tactical orientation does not imply any conciliation with Stalinism. On the contrary, these tactics are designed to enable us to merge with the living movement of the masses and to combat Stalinism all the more effectively.

14. While the immense revolutionary upheavals which the outbreak of global war would provoke in the imperialist sectors is correctly emphasized, it should be pointed out that such a war would likewise aggravate the latent conflicts and arouse independent mass movements against the Kremlin's dictatorship in the areas it dominates. This will very likely come about in the East European countries where the CP's have already had to be purged of their native leaderships and among the Soviet nationalities which have directly experienced the evils of Stalinist oppression. The task of the Marxists will be to link themselves with these anti-Stalinist movements of the people, give them a clear and consistent anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist expression, and guide them in a revolutionary socialist direction.

15. The perspective of "deformed workers' states" as the line of historical development for an indefinite period

ahead should not be recognized in the theses implicitly or explicitly. Backward countries, whether in Eastern Europe or in Asia, constitute only one of the main channels of revolutionary development. The extension of the proletarian revolution to one or more advanced countries would radically alter the entire world picture. This aspect ought to be put forward in the theses. The retardation of the socialist revolution and its resulting confinement to a backward European country was a historical condition that largely determined the course of world history since 1924. But today we are on the threshold of an entirely new situation. The unparalleled sweep of the colonial revolutions may seem to reinforce this previous trend. Its end result, however, will be to reverse it. For these colonial revolutions, now beginning to engulf the Near East as well, are shaking asunder the entire imperialist world structure and thereby providing a tremendous spur to the socialist revolution in all the advanced countries, including the United States.

The outbreak of general war will not alter this trend but, on the contrary, greatly reinforce revolutionary developments in both the backward and the advanced countries. The sweep of the colonial revolutions should be directly connected in this sense with the perspectives in the advanced countries. At the same time, it should be noted that this interaction between the evolution of backward and advanced countries will aggravate in the extreme the unfolding crisis not only of imperialism but of Stalinism as well.

16. The central political feature of the world situation today is the crisis of the proletarian leadership. It is imperative to reaffirm this proposition of our Foundation Theses. Everything hinges on the resolution of this historic task. The objective conditions for its fulfillment are now ripe but the task will not be resolved automatically or mechanically or independently of our intervention and policies. The proposed tactical moves derive their fullest meaning and importance in connection with the solution of this problem.

June 5, 1951

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## 2. Some Comments on the "Contribution to the Discussion," by George Clarke

The basic motivation of the "Theses" is to rearm the world movement for the decisive struggles impending on the national and on the international arena. The need of this reorientation arises from many reasons but for the purposes at hand it can be reduced to the existence of two essentially new factors: 1. Imperialism is forced to launch its war without first being able to defeat and demoralize the revolutionary proletariat of the capitalist countries and the colonial peoples. 2. Stalinist parties are now at the helm of important mass movements, and it is unlikely that in these countries a genuine revolutionary leadership will successfully challenge and supplant them in the workers' movement before the outbreak of the war.

The question involved is *not* what is to be done in

the event that the crisis of Stalinism takes the form of a split within an important CP or the rupture of an important CP from Moscow. Our movement has been prepared by its whole past for such a development. And whatever weaknesses it had in this sphere were largely corrected during the Yugoslav experience.

The question is what to do if the crisis of Stalinism remains and deepens in its present form: i.e. a growing dissatisfaction of the revolutionary workers in the ranks of the CP with the conservative and treacherous policy of their leadership, but a desire to remain within the party and to transform it by pressure and action into a vehicle for the realization of their revolutionary aspirations. After the dismal failure of the Cucci-Magnani affair and the fiasco which a similar attempt has met in France, there

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can be no doubt that this is the *real* situation, and one which will tend to become more fixed in the next period precisely because of the imminence of the war. Hence flows the need for a sharp *reorientation* in these countries, where the question of understanding the contradictions of Stalinism and of finding the approach to the workers under their influence is a matter of life and death for Trotskyism. The tragic experience in China is the first great warning. But this orientation must obviously clash with the past of our movement, with its different perspectives and with the accumulated conservatism which has resulted from that past.

The turn is an audacious one, but for that reason it must be made with the greatest boldness and with the most complete confidence in the basic soundness and loyalty of our movement to its fundamental principles. If the turn is hedged by exaggerated concern for deviations, by overemphasized warnings about dangers, by insistence on alternate and opposite variants, then the whole effect of the reorientation can be lost, and the conservative elements will find shelter for their opposition in reservations, refinements and amendments. In any case, if our movement is not sufficiently mature for such a bold turn, then not all the admonitions in the world will safeguard it from the dangers involved.

It is from this point of view, because I believe that while you begin in agreement with the general line, many of your suggestions will have the effect of weakening and not strengthening the position of the "Theses." Hence the following comments and proposals. In the instances involved your corrections appear to me to be based in some points on a bad reading of the "Theses," in others from drawing unwarranted inferences from the text; in other cases I cannot find myself in agreement because of ambiguity, incompleteness of thought, unnecessary emphasis on points that should not be especially stressed. For the sake of convenience I'll follow the numerical order of your suggestions.

8. "The unfoldment of the class struggle and the lines of class interests in the course of the war would not in all instances and all places necessarily coincide with the official governmental or military lineups. The case of Yugoslavia illustrates such a condition today." Unless further amplified and explained this statement can lead to serious confusion and even error. Does it mean for instance that the slogan of defense for Yugoslavia against the Kremlin would still be applicable if it were lined up with imperialism and served as a base of military operations for it in the war against the SU? That may not be your meaning, but it can easily be deduced from the above statement, and in fact it happens to be one of the unspoken considerations which the Yugoslavs use as a justification for their line of adaptation and capitulation to imperialism. The statement must either be corrected and amplified or eliminated. (Although for my part I cannot see the advisability or the need of trying to foresee the multitude of complicated forms that the war will assume or to proscribe at this date the tactics that should be pursued.) Otherwise I should like to point out that your point No. 8 is merely a restatement (i.e. without the above) of the point in the "Theses" at the bottom of page 8 that the "tactical applications" of the line of *the defense of the USSR "remain subordinate to the free de-*

*velopment of the movement of the masses against all attempts of the Soviet bureaucracy, the Russian army and the Stalinist leaders to strangle and to smash it."*

9. While the intent of this section, emphasizing the counter-revolutionary role of the Soviet bureaucracy is correct, it is entirely too one-sided. It is based primarily on the subjective desires and needs of the Kremlin and not enough on the objective situation which will develop. It is not only a question of what the Kremlin *wants* to do but of what it is *capable* under the given conditions of doing. The Kremlin didn't want the Warsaw insurrection; it permitted it to be smashed by the Nazis. The Kremlin didn't want the Yugoslav revolution and later the Chinese revolution. But it proved totally incapable of preventing or smashing them. It is good to alert revolutionists to the counter-revolutionary character of the Kremlin, but it is also important to indicate the *limitations* of the counter-revolutionary power of the Kremlin based on a real analysis of the class war which will ensue.

10. This point should be eliminated. The "Theses" says: "*Despite the now reinforced orientation of imperialism toward war, the perspective of temporary compromises between the USSR and the USA continues to remain open.*" (p. 1) And then on page 2, discussing the question from the standpoint of the Kremlin it says: ". . . *the Soviet bureaucracy also anxious for its own reasons to avert the outbreak of a general war, will lend itself to the conclusion of limited or even more general partial compromises . . .*" In view of this very clear statement, what is the need for further emphasis on this point? Allowance for temporary zig-zags and for tactics that derive from such turns belong in a political resolution on the immediate situation and not in the Thesis which provides a basic long-term prognoses and which expressly rejects the possibility of a new overall deal such as that of Yalta-Potsdam.

11. Here objection is taken to the description in the Theses of the Communist Parties as "not exactly reformist parties." To be sure this is not a rigorously scientific definition. Nor was it so intended. But it is far more correct, far more descriptive of the reality than that which you offer in its stead: "it is a national reformist bureaucracy and an agency of imperialism in the world labor movement." This is untenable theoretically. Unlike all other reformist parties in history, the Communist Parties do not rest on a bureaucracy and a labor aristocracy deriving its privileges from the super profits of imperialism and from its function as the labor agency of the capitalist state. The supreme test here is in the sphere of foreign policy and war where with rare exceptions the reformist parties slavishly follow the policy of their ruling class. In this sense it must be admitted that events proved the Old Man in error when he predicted that as a result of the lush development of the Peoples' Front period there would grow up sizable "national-communist" wings in the CPs possibly encompassing the major portion of their leaderships. No such thing has occurred, despite many defections but not of a decisive character, either during the Hitler-Stalin pact or more recently since the beginning of the "cold war" when CPs like those of France and Italy had far more to lose in privileges by going into opposition on foreign policy. One must ask why despite obvious self-interest the Stalinist leaderships have not taken that course. It is ridiculous to say

that the GPU holds them in line. Fundamentally it is because they know that they cannot take their mass following with them in a policy of opposition to the Soviet Union. For these masses, whatever their distrust, the Soviet Union remains the revolution, and it is because of the revolution that they follow the CP and not the social-democracy. Stalinism is *counter-revolutionary* to be sure, but it is impossible after analyzing the relationship of their leaderships to the Soviet bureaucracy, their base and their relationship with the working class to deny the patent truth that they are "not exactly reformist parties."

The importance of this definition resides in the fact that it permits us to better grasp the contradictory character of Stalinism and thus to be able to participate with our own line in the revolutionary struggles they can head under "certain favorable conditions." Now the same cannot be said for the classical reformist, i.e. social-democratic parties. They cannot "outline a revolutionary orientation" without a major split, if not in the party itself then at least in the apparatus. And finally, is it not strange that you should conclude your remarks on this point, which grow out of a fear that the formulation in question may open the door to some change in our fundamental characterization of Stalinism, by what appears to me to be an unconscious paraphrase of what is said in the "Theses"? Let me quote: ". . . it is not excluded that certain Communist Parties with the bulk of their forces can be pushed out of the strict orbit of the Soviet bureaucracy and can outline a revolutionary orientation. *From that moment on, they would cease to be strictly Stalinist parties, mere instruments of the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy, and will lend themselves to a differentiation and to a politically autonomous course.*"

I do not deny that improvements can be made in the formulation in question, although the lengthy explanations involved would probably be more fitting in an article than in a resolution. But those which you offer as substitutes fall far short of the goal and are, moreover, incorrect.

12. This is one of those "on-the-one-hand-and-on-the-other-hand" points which nullifies the whole idea on this question contained in the "Theses." In the first place, the "Theses" does not lay down an iron law. It speaks of "certain Communist parties" and "certain conditions." It uses the word "may" not "will." It says that the CPs "cannot allow themselves to be, *in all conditions*, reduced to mere agencies for the transmission and execution of the orders of the Soviet bureaucracy. But it is false to emphasize "no less than the other" the point that the "Stalinists could and would even in the midst of war work to strangle revolutions." That is not our problem. Can it be honestly said in face of the whole history and tradition and training of our movement that it would fail to recognize a counter-revolutionary and class collaborationist course on the part of the Stalinists and to then not find a policy befitting such a situation? As a matter of fact, our movement knew this so well in China that it couldn't tell the difference between a party that was collaborating with the Kuomintang and one that was fighting it to the death. But even in the variant you mention, the point is by no means as simple as you put it. The Greek experience shows that had the Trotskyists there understood the possibility of a CP to "outline a revolutionary orientation" they would have been

deeply involved in the resistance movement and thus in a far better position to cope with the betrayal when it actually came. The only effect of your amendment here will be to give conservative elements a cover to hide behind because they actually exclude the first variant. It will deflect and hinder the real education and reorientation of the movement.

13. I am entirely in agreement with this point. The Theses should be strengthened as much as possible in this sense. Though I should point out that in XVI, XVII and XVIII a considerable contribution is made precisely on this question in the Theses itself.

14. In view of what is written on this question in the first two paragraphs of page 9 of the Theses, I cannot exactly follow this point. Much rests of course on exactly what is meant by "anti-Stalinist movements of the people." The ideas of the Theses are further elaborated in the resolution on the Eastern European countries.

15. This is the most baffling point of all. You insist that the Theses should not recognize "implicitly or explicitly" the "perspective of 'deformed workers states' as the line of development for an indefinite period ahead." Why the insistence when there is no such perspective outlined in the Theses and when there is no demand from anyone, not even the author of the phrase in question, that it should be included in any way in the Theses. You want the Theses to stress the aspect that "the extension of the proletarian revolution to one or more advanced country would radically alter the world picture." It would be an entirely legitimate request provided the Theses did not itself make the same point, viz: "*On the other hand the proletariat . . . will completely avoid the bureaucratic deformation of its institutions and especially of its power, only to the degree that the revolutionary camp is broadened in the world and the revolution conquers more and more of the important domains of world economy. 'Socialism in one country' is not only a petty bourgeois utopia: it also implies an eventual bureaucratic and inevitable opportunist degeneration of the proletarian power.*"

There is the essence of the question and that is all the Theses need concern itself with from the point of view of perspectives. It is ridiculous and to my mind somewhat childish to demand a guarantee in the Theses against the development of other "deformed workers' states" through the projection of the most optimistic line of development. Of course, we all hope that history will take that line. But we already have a certain experience in this matter. At one time, we were all convinced that after Russia there would be no further phenomena of degeneration. While a few in our ranks have proved more perspicacious — and correct — the majority among us is only now recognizing that such deformations of the workers' power have also occurred throughout Eastern Europe. Tomorrow, we shall have to recognize the existence of the same phenomena in China, that is my opinion. It seems to me a flight of unwarranted audacity at this point to predict the precise course of the war and of the convulsions it will carry with it. Will it last five years, or ten years or thirty years? And what colossal destruction will it bring in its wake? Korea may very well be considered a prelude and a prototype for what is ahead. I notice that Walter Lippman consigns Europe to the fate of Korea. And who can speak of the revolution in the USA in the same terms as October 1917

that the GPU holds them in line. Fundamentally it is because they know that they cannot take their mass following with them in a policy of opposition to the Soviet Union. For these masses, whatever their distrust, the Soviet Union remains the revolution, and it is because of the revolution that they follow the CP and not the social-democracy. Stalinism is *counter-revolutionary* to be sure, but it is impossible after analyzing the relationship of their leaderships to the Soviet bureaucracy, their base and their relationship with the working class to deny the patent truth that they are "not exactly reformist parties."

The importance of this definition resides in the fact that it permits us to better grasp the contradictory character of Stalinism and thus to be able to participate with our own line in the revolutionary struggles they can head under "certain favorable conditions." Now the same cannot be said for the classical reformist, i.e. social-democratic parties. They cannot "outline a revolutionary orientation" without a major split, if not in the party itself then at least in the apparatus. And finally, is it not strange that you should conclude your remarks on this point, which grow out of a fear that the formulation in question may open the door to some change in our fundamental characterization of Stalinism, by what appears to me to be an unconscious paraphrase of what is said in the "Theses"? Let me quote: ". . . it is not excluded that certain Communist Parties with the bulk of their forces can be pushed out of the strict orbit of the Soviet bureaucracy and can outline a revolutionary orientation. *From that moment on, they would cease to be strictly Stalinist parties, mere instruments of the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy, and will lend themselves to a differentiation and to a politically autonomous course.*"

I do not deny that improvements can be made in the formulation in question, although the lengthy explanations involved would probably be more fitting in an article than in a resolution. But those which you offer as substitutes fall far short of the goal and are, moreover, incorrect.

12. This is one of those "on-the-one-hand-and-on-the-other-hand" points which nullifies the whole idea on this question contained in the "Theses." In the first place, the "Theses" does not lay down an iron law. It speaks of "*certain Communist parties*" and "*certain conditions.*" It uses the word "*may*" not "*will.*" It says that the CPs "cannot allow themselves to be, *in all conditions*, reduced to mere agencies for the transmission and execution of the orders of the Soviet bureaucracy. But it is false to emphasize "no less than the other" the point that the "Stalinists could and would even in the midst of war work to strangle revolutions." That is not our problem. Can it be honestly said in face of the whole history and tradition and training of our movement that it would fail to recognize a counter-revolutionary and class collaborationist course on the part of the Stalinists and to then not find a policy befitting such a situation? As a matter of fact, our movement knew this so well in China that it couldn't tell the difference between a party that was collaborating with the Kuomintang and one that was fighting it to the death. But even in the variant you mention, the point is by no means as simple as you put it. The Greek experience shows that had the Trotskyists there understood the possibility of a CP to "outline a revolutionary orientation" they would have been

deeply involved in the resistance movement and thus in a far better position to cope with the betrayal when it actually came. The only effect of your amendment here will be to give conservative elements a cover to hide behind because they actually exclude the first variant. It will deflect and hinder the real education and reorientation of the movement.

13. I am entirely in agreement with this point. The Theses should be strengthened as much as possible in this sense. Though I should point out that in XVI, XVII and XVIII a considerable contribution is made precisely on this question in the Theses itself.

14. In view of what is written on this question in the first two paragraphs of page 9 of the Theses, I cannot exactly follow this point. Much rests of course on exactly what is meant by "anti-Stalinist movements of the people." The ideas of the Theses are further elaborated in the resolution on the Eastern European countries.

15. This is the most baffling point of all. You insist that the Theses should not recognize "implicitly or explicitly" the "perspective of 'deformed workers states' as the line of development for an indefinite period ahead." Why the insistence when there is no such perspective outlined in the Theses and when there is no demand from anyone, not even the author of the phrase in question, that it should be included in any way in the Theses. You want the Theses to stress the aspect that "the extension of the proletarian revolution to one or more advanced country would radically alter the world picture." It would be an entirely legitimate request provided the Theses did not itself make the same point, viz: "*On the other hand the proletariat . . . will completely avoid the bureaucratic deformation of its institutions and especially of its power, only to the degree that the revolutionary camp is broadened in the world and the revolution conquers more and more of the important domains of world economy. 'Socialism in one country' is not only a petty bourgeois utopia: it also implies an eventual bureaucratic and inevitable opportunist degeneration of the proletarian power.*"

There is the essence of the question and that is all the Theses need concern itself with from the point of view of perspectives. It is ridiculous and to my mind somewhat childish to demand a guarantee in the Theses against the development of other "deformed workers' states" through the projection of the most optimistic line of development. Of course, we all hope that history will take that line. But we already have a certain experience in this matter. At one time, we were all convinced that after Russia there would be no further phenomena of degeneration. While a few in our ranks have proved more perspicacious—and correct—the majority among us is only now recognizing that such deformations of the workers' power have also occurred throughout Eastern Europe. Tomorrow, we shall have to recognize the existence of the same phenomena in China, that is my opinion. It seems to me a flight of unwarranted audacity at this point to predict the precise course of the war and of the convulsions it will carry with it. Will it last five years, or ten years or thirty years? And what colossal destruction will it bring in its wake? Korea may very well be considered a prelude and a prototype for what is ahead. I notice that Walter Lippman consigns Europe to the fate of Korea. And who can speak of the revolution in the USA in the same terms as October 1917

in Petrograd? It will be one of the bloodiest and most violent events in history. Suffice it to say that the war for the bourgeoisie will be the war for survival, and that means a sanguinary conflict unprecedented in form and in scale. Is it possible to say that in such a period, or in its early aftermath that such a flowering of the productive forces will occur as to prevent the "deformation of workers' states?" I do not pretend to exhaust the question. Obviously

a discussion on this question will prove interesting and educational for our movement. But it is not the problem at hand to resolve this question, and it would be utterly false for the Theses to commit the movement to one position or the other.

16. The point is obvious. No comment is necessary.

July 9, 1951

### 3. "Where is Comrade Pablo Going?" by Bleibtreu-Favre

#### Introduction by La Verite

The document we are serializing appeared at the beginning of June 1951 under the title "Where is Comrade Pablo Going?" Its publication has been postponed for several months at the request of a member of the International Secretariat—Comrade Germain, the author of "Ten Theses" (see issues 300-304 of *La Verite*)—who warned the leadership of the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI) against "the trap Pablo has laid for destroying the French section."

When the author of the "Ten Theses" opposed their adoption by the PCI Central Committee, he left no room for doubt that he had renounced defending his ideas. He had capitulated, like Zinoviev and others had done before him, like Calas did recently before the French CP's Central Committee. Trotsky had learned from experience that the rarest and most necessary quality for a revolutionary leader is "that little thing called character!"

The Trotskyist critique of the revisionist notions expressed by Pablo in "Where Are We Going?" began with "Where Is Comrade Pablo Going?" The reader can refer to the former document, which appeared in the February 1951 issue of the magazine *Quatrieme Internationale*. It is interesting to note that neither "Where is Pablo Going?" nor any other political documents of the PCI were published in the international bulletins preparing for the World Congress.

"Where Are We Going?" was the ideological proclamation of Pabloism. To date, the split in France has been the main practical result. May it be the last!

#### WHERE IS COMRADE PABLO GOING?

##### Preface

Clarity in a discussion arises from the presentation of opposing theses on the one hand and from polemics on the other; the two methods do not contradict each other but are instead complementary, in the strictest sense of the word.

To refrain from stating your theses, to stage a sort of guerrilla warfare of partial amendments when principles are at stake or, even worse, to restrict yourself to polemicizing against the weak points of the contested thesis is the distinguishing characteristic of tendencies that have neither principles nor any consciousness of their duty to our World Party of the Revolution.

As for us, we think that the method that guided the international discussion on the problems posed by the people's democracies is the correct method; each thesis was fully presented by various comrades (we are speaking of the comrades of the majority who at the Second World Congress came out against the revisionist tendencies, which dissolved after having fought us with a series of indirect attacks [Haston is the prototype in this regard—F.-B.]).

In particular, we believe that Germain's "Ten Theses: What Should Be Modified and What Should Be Maintained in the Theses of the Second World Congress of the Fourth International on the Question of Stalinism?"—we emphasize that we mean the "Ten Theses" and not their bizarre foreword—is a positive and extremely timely document in the discussion preparing for the World Congress. Its clarity fully exempts it from the obligation to engage in a polemic against the points of view expressed on several occasions by Pablo. This is the way a healthy discussion should start. But to remain healthy, it can't stop there. The points on which there is disagreement must be brought before the full light of day, which is something that only a polemic can accomplish.

The goal of this document, which is addressed to our entire International, especially to all our leading comrades in the International, is to tell them fraternally and frankly of the danger that a whole series of new positions represents for the program, the activities, and the very existence of our International. We say: Be careful; the scratch may become infected, and then gangrene can set in.

We don't pretend to be infallible, we don't think our theses are exempt from a number of insufficiencies, we don't feel we have the right to give lessons to any of our comrades; but we say to them—"Look out, our ship has lost its course; it's urgent that we take our bearings and change our course."

In his document "Where Are We Going?" Comrade Pablo brings into full daylight the revisionist tendencies that were included in the International Secretariat's draft thesis but were disguised in the Ninth Plenum's [November 1950?] compromise resolution.

Beginning with its opening lines, the violent tone of this document is surprising, all the more so since we don't know which members of the International Executive Committee and the International Secretariat were being taken to task . . . in January 1951. We will undoubtedly never know the names of the people in question, those "people who despair of the fate of humanity," nor those who have written that "the thinking of the International seems out of

joint," nor those who "cry bitter tears" (which Pablo wants to believe are genuine), nor those who "tailor history to their own measure," nor of those Trotskyist careerists who "desire that the entire process of the transformation of capitalist society into socialism would be accomplished within the span of their brief lives so that they can be rewarded for their efforts on behalf of the Revolution." [Emphasis added.]

### I. The Theory of 'Blocs' and 'Camps' Makes Its Appearance in the International

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," one reads in that dustbin known as the *Communist Manifesto*.

But it's necessary to keep abreast of the times and to admit without hesitation along with Pablo that:

"For our movement objective social reality consists essentially of the capitalist regime and the Stalinist world." [International Information Bulletin, March 1951, "Where Are We Going?" p. 2. Emphasis added.]

Dry your tears and listen: the very essence of social reality is composed of the capitalist regime (!) and the Stalinist (!) world (?).

We thought that social reality consisted in the contradiction between the fundamental classes: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Clearly an error, for from now on the capitalist regime, which encompasses precisely these two classes, becomes a totality that is counterposed . . . to the Stalinist world.

The term "world" is quite obscure, you will say; but it offers some significant conveniences and permits classifying states and social groups according to the supreme criterion: their Stalinist or non-Stalinist "nature."

Thus the state that arose from the Third Chinese Revolution (whose economy, let us recall, has retained a capitalist structure up to the present) is classified by Pablo as being in the Stalinist world. We will return to this question.

On the other hand, the Yugoslav workers state (where the economy is almost fully nationalized and planned) is expelled from the Stalinist world. And since it cannot remain outside the realm of objective social reality, it drifts objectively, though imperceptibly, into the enemy camp (along with its arms, bags and baggage, and dictatorship of the proletariat!).

In order to dispel any uncertainty as to his conception of contemporary history, Pablo continues:

"Furthermore, whether we like it or not, these two elements (the capitalist regime and the Stalinist world) essentially constitute objective social reality, for the overwhelming majority of the forces opposing capitalism are right now to be found under the leadership or influence of the Soviet bureaucracy." ["Where Are We Going?," p. 2. Emphasis added.]

Thus the sum total of Pablo's "social" criterion seems to be the political nature (Stalinist or non-Stalinist) of states and human groupings.

He gives us no details about the tiny remaining minority that is neither under the leadership nor influence of the bureaucracy. Let's admit that it's the exception that proves the rule. What then is this tiny minority of forces that are anticapitalist but non-Stalinist?

We don't think it's intended to include the millions of workers in the USA, England, Canada, Germany, etc., who are neither influenced nor led by Stalinism. We must then conclude that the proletariat in the most advanced countries of the world do not constitute "forces opposed to capitalism." They have been labeled and pigeonholed under the category "capitalist regime."

It's more difficult to pin this label on the massive liberation movements in North Africa, Black Africa, Madagascar, India, Ceylon, and Indonesia, a movement that cannot possibly be considered as either a tiny minority or belonging to the Stalinist world.

Thus, like it or not, classes, states, and nations must rush pell-mell into one camp or the other (capitalist regime or Stalinist world). Moreover, Pablo adds, the international relationship of social forces is, "to express it in a schematic way, the relationship of forces between the two blocs."<sup>1</sup> (p. 5.)

What Pablo calls "expressing it in a schematic way" in reality constitutes mixing and jumbling everything together, ending up with an incredible confusion. When analyzing situations it is impossible to abandon class lines even for an instant without ending up with such "schematic concepts" and fruitless endeavors.

What? The international relationship of forces is the relationship of forces between the two blocs! Some progress.

Since contemporary social reality consists of the two blocs, the relationship of social forces is naturally . . . the relationship of forces between the two blocs! This logic is irrefragable, because it is a tautology.

We will be told that we have misinterpreted what Pablo is saying; he meant the international relationship of forces between the classes which, schematically, is the relationship between the blocs. But where is there any room here for the old-fashioned notion of classes? Where in Pablo's document is there any serious analysis of the situation of the international proletariat? If he had tried to give any, he certainly wouldn't have ended up with this astonishing notion of "blocs," nor would he have designated the international proletarian forces as the forces of this extraordinary "Stalinist world."

Furthermore, he explains what he means quite clearly when he talks about the respective roles of Stalin and the revolutionary proletariat within the very "Stalinist world."

According to him, "the revolutionary spirit of the masses directed against imperialism acts as an ADDITIONAL FORCE, supplementing the material and technical forces raised against imperialism." (p. 5. Emphasis added.)

In effect, he is making it quite clear that the revolutionary forces are the forces of the Stalinist world. But within this Stalinist world there are major forces: these are the material and technical forces—Soviet industry, the divisions of the Red Army; and there are supplementary forces, a sort of National Guard that is tacked on to these technical forces. The revolutionary spirit of 400 million Chinese workers, the Vietnamese, the Koreans, and all the working people in the "Stalinist world" are the auxiliary forces of the socialist bastion led by Stalin.

Here you have the conclusion that necessarily emerges when the petty-bourgeois concept of a "bloc" between states is substituted for a class analysis of world reality (an analysis of the contradiction between the international

proletariat and the *international* imperialist bourgeoisie), that is, for the basic reality of the world we live in. Like it or not, on the basis of this concept the most one can do is provide more ammunition for Zhadanov, whose thesis rests on the following supreme postulate: the acid test for revolutionaries is their loyalty to the Soviet Union and to its leader Stalin. The petty-bourgeois concept of blocs necessarily leads to a choice between Stalin (with or without reservations) and Truman (with or without reservations).

The direction in which the choice is made depends solely on where the dominant pressure is coming from. In Central and Western Europe, the petty bourgeoisie tends to lean in a "neutralist" direction, that is, to adapt to the Stalinist bureaucracy, which they see as having the prestige of power and of numerous "victories" in Asia, in the buffer zone, etc.—and whose "material and technical forces" are impressive by virtue of the fact that they are quite close at hand.

Marxists have been accustomed to starting out with the criterion of class. It was this *class* criterion that enabled Leon Trotsky and the Fourth International to take on the revisionists on the question of the USSR and to classify the degenerated workers state *in the camp of the international proletariat*. Today we are supposed to turn Marxism upside down, stand it on its Hegelian head, its legs waving toward the sky "of life," of "objective social reality, in its essence" (the worst of abstractions under the circumstances). And from this inconvenient position we are supposed to classify such-and-such section of a class, and such-and-such state, and such-and-such technical force in one or the other "bloc," capitalist regime or Stalinist world.

## II. The Beginning of a Revision on the Nature of the Bureaucracy

In Pablo's article we discover the notion of a Soviet bureaucracy that will survive after the world revolution and then wither away by virtue of the development of productive forces. We read, in fact, that the Soviet bureaucracy will disappear in "two (contradictory) ways":

—"by the counterblows of the anti-capitalist victories in the world and even in the USSR, stimulating resistance of the masses to the bureaucracy";

—"by elimination *in the long run* of the objective causes for the bureaucracy, for all bureaucracy, in direct proportion as the capitalist regime suffers setbacks and an ever increasing and economically more important sector escapes from capitalism and organizes itself on the basis of a state-ized and planned economy, thereby stimulating the growth of the productive forces." (p. 5. Emphasis added.)

The second thesis, the idea that the bureaucracy will disappear through the development of the productive forces, contains as many errors as words:

(1) It establishes an amalgam between the Soviet bureaucracy and *bureaucratism* as it appeared in the USSR during Lenin's lifetime.

(2) It begins with the notion of a slow and gradual decline ("in direct proportion") and of a slow accumulation of sectors in which a planned economy is installed. This is in flagrant contradiction with the perspective of a war that will be the final struggle between the classes, of a

war that will determine the fate of world capitalism and that excludes capitalism's being nibbled away *over a lengthy period*.

(3) Does Pablo—who believes, by the way, that a third world war is imminent—mean that in the very course of the war the development of the productive forces (which would be turned entirely toward the war effort at the expense of consumer goods for the masses) is capable of forcing a retreat in bourgeois norms of distribution? Or doesn't he take seriously the notion that the third world war will be a final struggle, that is, does his perspective admit the possibility that the outcome of this war might be a new situation of equilibrium between the fundamental classes, with fewer bourgeois states coexisting with more numerous workers states?

Actually, the principal fault with the second thesis is the fact that it even *exists*, because it is equivalent to conceding that the *Soviet bureaucracy* can survive after the victory of the world revolution over imperialism. It is in direct contradiction with the first thesis (the traditional Trotskyist thesis), which is juxtaposed in an eclectic manner to the second thesis (Pablo's thesis).

In the *draft* theses that Pablo presented to the Ninth Plenum of the IEC, whose relationship to his personal positions we have noted, the sole explanation given for the Soviet bureaucracy's hostility to world revolution was the following vulgar economist explanation:

"It (the bureaucracy) cannot capitulate to imperialism without undermining its existence as such in the USSR; *on the other hand, it cannot base itself on the proletariat and the extension of the world revolution, which would remove, by organizing and developing the productive forces in the world, the objective reasons for its existence and above all (?) for the omnipotence of any bureaucracy!*"

The notion here is perfectly clear and is substituted for the Trotskyist notion of the bureaucracy's incompatibility, not with planning and the development of productive forces, but with the revolutionary action of the masses, whose "first revolutionary victory in Europe,"<sup>2</sup> Trotsky said, "will have the effect of an electric shock on the Soviet masses, awakening them, reviving the traditions of 1905 and 1917, weakening the position of the bureaucracy; it will have no less importance for the Fourth International than the victory of the October Revolution had for the Third International."

The bureaucracy is not afraid of the development of productive forces. It is not holding back development in the USSR of its own will but rather through its incapacity. To the extent that its very character permits, it will try to increase development. Its slender results in relation to the great possibilities of planning both inside and outside the USSR don't stem from a fear of disappearing following a growth in income sufficient to eradicate social inequality.<sup>3</sup> What the bureaucracy fears is not the growth of productive forces. What they fear is the awakening of the consciousness of the Soviet masses in contact with a revolution in another country.

The main danger in the explanation given by Pablo (even when juxtaposed with the discussion of another, correct explanation, the above one) is that it has the effect of masking the organically counterrevolutionary nature of the workers bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. This bureaucracy cannot be equated with the *bureaucratism*

inherent in any society in which a scarcity in consumer goods exists. *This bureaucracy* is the result of nearly thirty years of the degeneration of a workers state. Politically, it has totally expropriated the Soviet proletariat. Contrary to what Pablo states, wherever it has been able to act bureaucratically or to maintain its bureaucratic control over the masses, the Soviet bureaucracy had tried to develop the productive forces (in the USSR and in the annexed or satellite territories) in order to strengthen the base of its own privileges and increase their extent. On the other hand, its liquidationist attitude toward the revolution that began in France in 1936; the way it brutally crushed the conscious cadres of the Spanish revolution; its complicity with Hitler in order to allow him to crush the Warsaw uprising; its Yalta policy against the interests of the revolution in Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, and France; its blockade and military pressure against the Yugoslav workers state in the hope of delivering it bound hand and foot to imperialism (contrary to the interests of defending the USSR itself) unequivocally express the *incompatibility between the Soviet bureaucracy and the development of the proletarian revolution. Such a revolution would represent an immediate and direct threat to the bureaucracy's existence, and it would do so even more sharply if it were to take place in an economically less backward country.*

\* \* \*

Leaving the door open, however timidly, to the hypothesis that the Thermidorian bureaucracy of the USSR could survive a third world war is to revise the Trotskyist analysis of the bureaucracy. First, as we have seen, it calls into question the bureaucracy's nature as a *parasitic* growth of the workers movement that lives off the advantage of the equilibrium between the fundamental classes. At the same time, this concept leaves the door open to the negation of its working-class nature.<sup>4</sup>

— Second, it overestimates the capacity of the USSR's technical means when confronted with those of imperialism.

— Third, it underestimates the breadth of the revolutionary movement in Asia and around the world.

— Fourth, it accepts the notion that the Soviet bureaucracy can exist peacefully alongside a victorious revolution in the advanced countries.

— Above all, and here is where what Pablo really thinks comes in, it accepts the notion that the Soviet bureaucracy will not oppose the extension of the revolution but will even stimulate it.

In giving priority to "technical and material forces" as opposed to the revolutionary struggle of the masses, however, Pablo does not go as far as the thesis of our comrades in Lyon.<sup>5</sup> This apparent superiority expresses a total incomprehension of the predominant role of mass revolutionary struggle in the development and the outcome of a third world war.

The marked inferiority of the *technical means* at the disposal of the proletariat in the present world situation, a situation of "blocs," as Pablo puts it, becomes transformed into the proletariat's superiority *in direct proportion with its revolutionary mobilization, with an increase in its level of class consciousness and socialist*

*consciousness, and with its revolutionary victories over imperialism.* The military relationship of forces is *politically* determined. The Thermidorian bureaucracy in the USSR will play an even more emphatic counterrevolutionary role when it sees an upsurge in the revolution take shape, and when it sees mass socialist consciousness threatening its own domination in the USSR.

In its enormous struggle to smash the coalition of the imperialist bourgeoisie and its vast material means, the revolution will liquidate the Thermidorian bureaucracy in the USSR along the way. Otherwise the Thermidorian bureaucracy will impede, sabotage, and use military force against the revolutionary movement of the masses, paving the way for the victory of imperialist barbarism and for its own disappearance *as a parasitic caste* in the degenerated workers state.

All the experiences since 1933 have shown the role of the Soviet bureaucracy with increasing clarity and simply express *its dual character—working-class and counter-revolutionary—its fundamentally contradictory nature, and its impasse.* This bureaucracy will not survive a third world war, a war between the classes, a war whose outcome can only be world revolution or, failing that, a victory for imperialism that would liquidate all the conquests of the working class in both the USSR and the rest of the world.

### III. From 'Stalinist Ideology' to the New 'Bureaucratic Class'

Several times in the past the tendency to revise the Trotskyist concept of the Soviet bureaucracy has been expressed through the notion that Stalinism has its own ideology. Pablo seems to share this belief today when he speaks of the *"co-leadership of the international Stalinist movement"* (our emphasis) by China and the Kremlin.

"... China," he writes, "could not play the role of a mere satellite of the Kremlin but rather of a *partner* which henceforth imposes upon the Soviet bureaucracy a certain co-leadership of the *international Stalinist movement.* This co-leadership is, however, a disruptive element within Stalinism. . . ." ("Where Are We Going?" p. 9. Emphasis added.)

What does this Russian-Chinese "co-leadership" of the international Stalinist movement mean? Is there then a *Chinese Stalinism* alongside *Russian Stalinism*? What is the social base of this Chinese Stalinism? What then is its ideology? Is there really a Stalinist ideology?

We reply in the negative to all these questions.

The bureaucracy in the USSR has never even been capable of trying to define a new ideology, contrary to the way in which any historically necessary social formation, any class, operates. When you speak of the *Stalinism* of a Communist Party, you are not speaking of a theory, of an overall program, of definite and lasting concepts, *but only* of its leadership's subordination to orders from the Kremlin bureaucracy. This is the Trotskyist conception. The "Stalinism" of the international Stalinist movement is defined by this movement's subordination to the bureaucracy of the USSR.

"The Stalinist bureaucracy, however, not only has nothing in common with Marxism but is in general foreign to any doctrine or system whatsoever. Its 'ideology' is

thoroughly permeated with police subjectivism, its practice is the empiricism of crude violence. In keeping with its essential interests the caste of usurpers is hostile to any theory: it can give an account of its social role neither to itself nor to anyone else. Stalin revises Marx and Lenin not with the theoretician's pen but with the heel of the G.P.U." (Leon Trotsky: *Stalinism and Bolshevism*, p. 24, Pathfinder Press edition, 1972.)

Would it be possible to have a *Stalinist co-leadership*, a *dual subordination*, one part of which would be . . . the Chinese revolution in full ascendancy? Is a modified version of Stalinist ideology supposed to have survived the victory of the revolutionary masses in China or is it supposed to have arisen in the course of the revolution?

But, Pablo adds, this co-leadership is a disruptive element for Stalinism. This clarification introduces a new confusion.

We are compelled on the contrary to state that the disruptive element in the "international Stalinist movement" as such is the Chinese *revolution* and that this celebrated *co-leadership*, far from being a disruptive element, *expresses an inherently temporary compromise between the counterrevolutionary bureaucracy of the USSR and its NEGATION, the Chinese revolution*. This compromise reflects the lag between consciousness and reality, and more particularly the slowness with which China has begun to accomplish the tasks of the permanent revolution. We will return to this question.

The notion of co-leadership betrays a vast incomprehension of the irreducible character of the contradiction between the Soviet bureaucracy and a revolution in motion. Pablo has spoken several times of the "victories" or "pseudo-victories" of Stalinism when designating the development of the revolution in China, Asia, or elsewhere.

For Comrade Pablo, the most important lesson of the Yugoslav and Chinese revolutions is that it is important not to confuse them with "pure and simple victories (?) of the Soviet bureaucracy"!

For us, the lesson is that the development of the revolution is a *defeat* and a death threat for the bureaucracy, which does not evaluate the "revolution in all its forms" from the same perspective as Comrade Pablo.

When this comrade adds that "the evolution of China can prove different from that of the Soviet bureaucracy," we have reached the height of confusion. (p. 12. Emphasis added.)

If someone can explain to us at what juncture, in what century, and on what planet *the evolution of China could have even proved comparable to that of the Soviet bureaucracy*—we'd like to hear about it.

This notion is only admissible if we accept beforehand Burnham's thesis of the rapid formation (if not the pre-existence) of a *bureaucracy of the Soviet type* within the very course of a revolution.

In that case, this bureaucracy would not only have an ideology of international value, but we would have to accord it a *historically progressive* role. On the contrary, however, everything leads us to believe that the outcome of a revolution—even one that is isolated—will necessarily prove different and distinct from that of the USSR, even if this revolution must degenerate because of its isolation and weakness. Trotsky has clearly demonstrated, in opposition to the revisionists, that the degeneration of the USSR has a specific historical character.

### *The Centuries of Transition*

Are we compelled to revise Trotsky's opinion on this point as well?

Are the norms of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the withering away of the state, outmoded and consigned to the rubbish bin by "life" and by experience? Is the Soviet workers state really a *degenerated* workers state (a counterrevolutionary workers state, Trotsky said)<sup>6</sup> or, on the contrary, is it the prototype of what the transition between capitalism and socialism will be like after the victory of the world revolution?

Although he doesn't pronounce himself clearly in favor of one position over the other, and although his statements on this point are quite contradictory, Comrade Pablo does seem to lean toward the second response.

To those people-who-despair-of-the-fate-of-humanity, he replies that the transitional society between capitalism and socialism will last for several centuries (in oral discussion he has been more precise and has spoken of two or three centuries).<sup>7</sup> ". . . this transformation will probably take an *entire historical period of several centuries* and will in the meantime be filled with forms and regimes transitional between capitalism and socialism and necessarily deviating from 'pure' forms and norms." ("Where Are We Going?" p. 13. Emphasis added.)

We are quite ready to engage in any struggle against purist utopians who subordinate reality to norms in order to reject reality. But we don't see any sense in such a struggle at present, since we are unaware of any expression of this "purism" within the international majority that emerged from the Second World Congress.

What we do see, on the other hand, is that the degenerated bureaucracy of the USSR has become the new norm, that Pablo is constructing a new utopia based on it, that the transitional society (several centuries . . .) takes on a character of the sort that the Soviet-type bureaucracy (which is confused with all manifestations of bureaucratism that are inherent wherever you have a low level of the development of productive forces and a low level of culture) becomes a historically necessary evil, that is, a class.

What we see is that the bureaucratic caste of the USSR, which we consider to be the specific product of twenty-five years of degeneration of the first workers state, is supposed to be only the prefiguration of the "caste" called on to lead the world for two or three centuries. So the notion of a "caste" has been sent packing, and what's really involved here is a *class* that was not foreseen by Marx, Engels, Lenin, or Trotsky.

As realists, we will have to revise Trotsky and his writings since the *New Course* because they are full of errors and misunderstandings on the historically progressive role of the bureaucracy. His explanation for the formation of the bureaucracy in the USSR is tainted from the start by its old-fashioned, utopian, and outmoded norms that have been contradicted by reality.

His attachment to these norms led him to consider the evolution of the USSR as a particular, exceptional, and specific violation of the norm.

"In the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state it is not the general laws of modern society from capitalism to socialism which finds expression but a special, exceptional, and temporary refraction of these laws under

the conditions of a backward revolutionary country in a capitalist environment." (Leon Trotsky: "The USSR in War," in *In Defense of Marxism*, p. 7, Pathfinder Press edition, New York, 1970.)

What Trotsky calls degeneration is thus in reality the process that must begin after the victory of the world revolution and will last two or three centuries. And Trotsky put himself on the wrong side of the barricades when he wrote:

"The most honest or open-eyed of the 'friends' of the USSR . . . console themselves with the thought that 'a certain' bureaucratic degeneration in the given conditions was historically inevitable. Even so! The resistance to this degeneration also has not fallen from the sky. A necessity has two ends: the reactionary and the progressive. History teaches us that persons and parties which drag at the opposite ends of a necessity turn out in the long run on opposite sides of the barricade." (Leon Trotsky: "'Socialism in One Country,'" in *The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 307-08, Pathfinder Press edition, New York, 1970.)

He didn't foresee that in the third world war the Soviet bureaucracy would be called on to carry out the function of gravedigger for world imperialism, to make an "international" anticapitalist revolution, or at least to cooperate with it. Neither Trotsky nor the Fourth International—a tragic historical misunderstanding—were aware of that up to this day.

#### *Some Clarifications on an Incorrect Formulation*

When we read in the Ninth Plenum resolution the following declaration on the defense of the Soviet Union:

"*The defense of the USSR constitutes the strategic line of the Fourth International, and its tactical application remains, as in the past, subordinated to unimpeded development of the mass movement in opposition to any attempt on the part of the Soviet bureaucracy, the Russian army, and the Stalinist leaderships to throttle and crush it.*"

When we read this we are tempted to see no more than an incorrect formulation.

But we would be blind if we were to maintain this position after having studied the document in which the secretary of the International sets forth his perspective more fully, deriving it from the *division of the world into the capitalist regime and the Stalinist world*, a division considered as the essence of social reality in our epoch.

If we adopted this revisionist perspective it would seem to be necessary to go much further, to follow its logic to the end and to subordinate *tactical application* to the *strategic line*. It is precisely this principled attitude, this constant subordination of tactics to strategy, that distinguishes Marxism from opportunism of every stripe.

Pablo cannot remain there, straddling a fence. He must bring tactics into accord with not only strategy but also with a social analysis (his analysis) of the "present" world.

If on the contrary we retain Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky's analysis of society and their methodology, if we refuse to abandon the solid ground on which the foundations of our International rest, if we refuse to abandon this in favor of the quicksand of revisionism, our Third World Congress will of necessity return to the Trotskyist defi-

nition of the defense of the Soviet Union.

For Trotsky, the defense of the USSR did not constitute a "strategic line." The strategic line of the Fourth International is the world revolution.

Defense of the USSR against imperialism, like the defense of any workers state, is one of the tasks of this strategy, *tasks that are entirely subordinated to the perspective of world revolution*, to the strategy of the revolutionary mobilization of the masses.

Defense of the USSR cannot take the place of the strategic line of the World Party of Revolution—any more than the defense of the Yugoslav workers state or any other workers state could.

Therein lies the difference between Trotskyism and the Titoist and Stalinist varieties of centrism.

No unclarity can be allowed to remain in this discussion. Incorrect formulations on such questions are genuine errors of doctrine. No document of the International can today allow itself the slightest imprecision in defining the defense of the USSR and the place of this defense in our strategy. *The defense of the USSR and of all the workers states constitutes a task of the Fourth International, a task that as such and in all its tactical applications must be entirely subordinated to the strategy of the struggle for the world revolution, to the unimpeded development of the masses, etc.*<sup>8</sup>

#### *Pablo Yields Ground to Martinet*

This notion that the defense of the USSR (or of the "Stalinist world") must be a *strategic line* has perhaps been most thoroughly developed by Gilles Martinet. Martinet is, in fact, the spokesman for the entire Stalinist intelligentsia in France. The Second World Congress correctly characterized his position as the Stalinist counterpart to Burnham's revisionism.

The pro-Stalinist manifestation (a product of the Stalinist pressure in France) of this revisionism has been given its fullest form by Bettelheim, Martinet, & Co. in *Revue Internationale*. When they themselves apply the concepts mentioned above to the present world situation, they arrive at the following conclusions:

"a) Owing to its lack of homogeneity and technical education, the working class will be obliged to pass through a stage of social differentiation and inequality after its conquest of power. Historic progress is assured by the privileged strata of the proletariat (the bureaucracy). It is the task of the state to defend these privileges.

"b) During the epoch of decaying imperialism, the proletariat ceases to grow numerically and ideologically and instead retreats, witnessing the decline of its strength and the decay of its social structure. The failure of the 'classic' proletarian revolutions of 1918-23 is final. The Leninist strategy of the proletarian revolution is a thing of the past. In view of this incapacity of the proletariat to fulfill its historic mission, humanity has no other road to progress except to try to 'participate' in the statification of the means of production by the Soviet bureaucracy on an ever larger scale, and to draw up a new minimum program in order to attenuate the violent character of this process. . . .

"There is no room for [these revisionist tendencies] in the revolutionary movement. But some of their features appear at the bottom of mistaken conceptions on the

Russian question which have found expression in our own ranks. What is important is first of all to lay bare the inner logic of this incipient revisionism and make its proponents aware of its dangerous consequences to the whole of Marxism." ["The USSR and Stalinism: Theses Adopted by the Second World Congress of the Fourth International, April 1948," in *Fourth International*, June 1948, p. 125.]

In "Where Are We Going?" Pablo throws this analysis overboard, declaring:

"Our *fundamental* (!) difference with certain neo-apologists for Stalinism, of the Gilles Martinet stripe in France, does not involve the fact that there are objective causes at work imposing transitional forms of the society and of the power succeeding capitalism, which are quite far from the 'norms' outlined by the classics of Marxism prior to the Russian Revolution. Our difference is over the fact that these neo-Stalinists present Stalinist policy as the expression of a consistent, realistic Marxism which, consciously and in full awareness of the goal, is marching toward socialism while taking into account the requirements of the situation." (p. 8.)

Note first of all that contrary to the notion Pablo elaborated above, Martinet does not repudiate the Soviet bureaucracy; instead he considers it a necessary evil on which falls *de facto* the task of destroying imperialism, and which will be overturned historically by the development of productive forces. It is his servility when faced with an accomplished fact, his tendency to generalize on the basis of the degeneration of the first workers state in order to transform a specific historical fact into a general historical necessity, more than his evaluations of Stalin's "Marxism" that make Martinet the most agile theoretician of the Thermidorian counterrevolution. The definition Trotsky gave in "After Munich" applies to him without qualification:

"Only the overthrow of the Bonapartist Kremlin clique can make possible the regeneration of the military strength of the U. S. S. R. Only the liquidation of the ex-Comintern will clear the way for revolutionary internationalism. The struggle against war, imperialism, and fascism demands a ruthless struggle against Stalinism splashed with crimes. Whoever defends Stalinism directly or indirectly, whoever keeps silent about its betrayals or exaggerates its military strength is the worst enemy of the revolution, of socialism, and of the oppressed peoples. The sooner the Kremlin gang is overthrown by the armed offensive of the workers, the greater will be the chances for a socialist regeneration of the U. S. S. R., the closer and broader will be the perspectives of the international revolution." (*Writings of Leon Trotsky: 1938-9*, p. 16.)

Such is the language we expected from the secretary of the International in regard to the wing of the petty bourgeoisie that has capitulated before Stalinism and its supposed "victories." In place of that we are supposed to accept an ambiguous definition (actually the absence of a definition) based on a stupid quarrel over Stalin's merits as a theoretician.

#### *The Chinese Comrades' Error Corrected With Another Error*

It would be useless to deny that the Chinese comrades' error weighs very heavily on the present discussion. Not

only does it explain in part the orientation presented by Pablo, but Comrade Pablo also uses it openly as an argument in defense of his thesis and in the hope of overwhelming his adversaries.

We are not overwhelmed and for a whole series of reasons, among them the following:

(1) In April 1950 one of us, Comrade Bleibtreu, spoke before a public meeting of the "Lenin Circle" on the problems of the Chinese revolution. Vietnamese, Chinese, French, and Sinhalese comrades attended the meeting. It concluded with an analysis of the Chinese revolution and the Chinese Communist Party, and with the necessity for Trotskyists to enter the Chinese Communist Party and form its consistent Marxist wing, a wing capable of resolving in both theory and practice the tasks of the permanent revolution.

This led, among other things, to his being vigorously contradicted by a member of the International Secretariat.

(2) The Central Committee of the PCI [Parti Communiste Internationaliste — Internationalist Communist Party] met December 2, 1950, and passed a resolution asking the International Secretariat to take a position on the Chinese events and on the errors of the Chinese comrades. To date we have had no response from the International Secretariat or the International Executive Committee. We hope that this document will see the light of day before the World Congress, because it would represent an essential element of clarification.

In the face of this persistent silence, we are compelled to take the initiative in a discussion that the international leadership should have begun.

#### *What Was the Error in China?*

According to Comrade Pablo, this error began "following the victory of Mao Tse-tung." ("Where Are We Going?" p. 17.) In our opinion, it predates this victory by quite a bit.

A revolution had been developing in China *since 1946*, a revolution in which the Trotskyists should have been an integral part. Abandoned by Stalin, whose advice aimed at forming a National Front government with Chiang Kai-shek they had rejected, and encircled by virtue of the fact that the Red Army had given up Manchuria to Chiang, the Chinese leaders had to confront the most powerful offensive the white troops ever launched against the Seventh Army. The only possibility that remained open to them (like the situation confronting the leaders of the Yugoslav Communist Party in 1942-43) was the revolutionary mobilization of the masses. Rejecting their Stalinist course of the previous years, they adopted a limited program of agrarian reform, which the masses greeted with immense enthusiasm. Mass peasant committees and resistance groups sprang up everywhere and organized themselves to defend and extend the agrarian reform and to crush Chiang, the representative of the landlords. The advances Mao's army made were above all the product of the massive levy of the revolutionary peasantry, and of the parallel collapse of Chiang's peasant army, which was contaminated by the revolution and the thirst for land. The Chinese CP itself underwent a change in its social composition. The literate sons of well-to-do peasants, who constituted the backbone of its cadres up to that time (and certain among whom tended

to oppose the explosion of elementary violence set off by the turn their party had made), were submerged by an influx of new militants hardened on the forge of the revolution itself.

Thus:

(1) The birth of the Chinese revolution was the beginning of the end of the Chinese CP's "Stalinism."<sup>9</sup>

(2) The Chinese CP stopped subordinating itself to directives from the Kremlin and became dependent on the masses and on their actions.

(3) Its social composition was actually modified.

(4) The Chinese CP stopped being a Stalinist party and became a centrist party advancing along with the revolution. This doesn't mean that the Chinese CP became a revolutionary party *ipso facto*. It retained from its past a series of incorrect and bureaucratic concepts that came to be reflected in its actions:

—by the timid character of its agrarian reform;

—by its limiting itself to North China;

—by the Chinese CP's conscious effort to keep the urban proletariat isolated from the revolution.<sup>10</sup>

The dialectic of social reality has already partially withdrawn certain barriers, and there are reasons to hope that this course will continue.

In any event, it is absurd to speak of a Stalinist party in China, and still more absurd to foster belief in even the resemblance of a "victory of Stalinism in China."

The Korean war temporarily presented Stalin with both the means to slow down the Chinese revolution's progress toward the solution of the tasks of the permanent revolution and to reestablish partial control over the Chinese CP. This explains Stalin's policy of "nonintervention" at the time when the victorious march of the Korean armies could, with a minimum of support, have driven the imperialists into the sea. This also explains the scantiness of his present aid and his fear of a solution, especially of a solution in favor of the Korean revolution.

But when all is said and done, the reality of class struggle will prove more powerful than the Kremlin apparatus and its maneuvers.

The error of the two Chinese groups is precisely to have failed to grasp the social reality. They have identified the revolution with Stalinism, which means identifying Stalinism with its *negation*.

The Chinese comrades turned their backs on the revolutionary movement of the masses, fell back when confronted with its march forward, and finally ended up in Hong Kong.<sup>11</sup>

Their greatest error was not their failure to understand Stalinism; it was a different and much more serious lack of comprehension.

They didn't recognize the very face of the revolution. They saw the advance of Mao's revolutionary armies as a step forward for Stalinism. They failed to understand that it is the action of classes that is fundamental, that it is social classes and not the apparatuses that make history, and that once it gets going, the action of masses is more powerful than the strongest apparatus.

In many respects Comrade Pablo revives the analytical errors of the Chinese comrades, even if he draws conclusions that are contrary, though just as disastrous.

He makes the same error on the nature of the Chinese revolution, which he considers as a victory—not a "pure and simple victory"—but nevertheless a victory of Stalin-

ism.

This error flows from the erroneous notion of the Stalinist world and is expressed in the notion of Russian-Chinese co-leadership of the international Stalinist movement.

He shares the same erroneous criteria concerning the "Stalinist" nature of a Communist Party. The Stalinist nature of a CP is constituted by its direct and total dependence in respect to the interests and policy of the Kremlin. A refusal on the part of the Chinese CP to accept the legal existence of a Trotskyist tendency—either inside or outside its ranks—and even the repression against this tendency would in no way constitute a criterion that "demonstrates its bureaucratic and Stalinist character" (Pablo), but solely its lack of understanding of the permanent revolution, a lack of understanding that is not specifically Stalinist. We have often been served up such absurdities to "prove" the "Stalinist" character of the Yugoslav CP, which petty-bourgeois idealists don't hesitate to define as *Stalinism without Stalin!*

He shares the same lack of understanding of the relationships between the masses, the CP, and the Kremlin bureaucracy: Pablo places an equals-sign between the dual nature of the CPs and the dual nature of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Generally, we would not deny that  $2=2$ . But combining two errors (for example, Comrade Pablo's error and the Chinese comrades' error) is not the equivalent of combining two correct statements (for example, the thesis of our Central Committee and Comrade Germain's "Ten Theses"). Thus it's not always true that  $2=2$ .

The dual nature of the Soviet bureaucracy is both the reflection and the product of contradictions in Soviet society. It is expressed through the Bonapartism of Stalinism when it is confronted with social forces inside the Soviet Union and on a world scale. The policy of the bureaucracy is not dual but rather forms an *integral whole* throughout all its variations; it's a policy of balancing between the basic classes.

The dual nature of the CP means something quite different and expresses a different contradiction because of the fact that a parasitic bureaucracy of the Soviet type doesn't exist internationally. The duality, the contradiction of a CP stems from the fact that it is *a workers party by virtue of its social base* (a necessary base for the Kremlin's balancing act) and *a Stalinist party by virtue of its politics and its leadership* (a leadership chosen from above on the basis of its total submission to the Kremlin's orders).

The thing that defines *a workers party* as Stalinist—as opposed to a revolutionary party or a social-democratic party (linked to the bourgeoisie) or any sort of a centrist party—is neither a Stalinist ideology (which doesn't exist), nor bureaucratic methods (which exist in all kinds of parties), but rather its total and mechanical subordination to the Kremlin.

When for one reason or another this subordination ceases to exist, that party ceases to be Stalinist and expresses interests that are different from those of the bureaucratic caste in the USSR. This is what happened (because of the revolutionary action on the part of the masses) in Yugoslavia well before the break in relations; the break only made it official. This is what has already happened in China, and it will inevitably be reflected by a break in relations no matter what course the Chinese

revolution takes.

A break in relations or a gradual differentiation within the Chinese CP, an eventuality that flows first from the correct evaluation of the nature of the CPs (an evaluation we gave in some detail at the Fourth Congress of our party in 1947) that was developed by the Second World Congress, and then from the lessons of the Yugoslav experience, would have the effect of greatly stimulating the revolutionary struggle in Asia, Europe, and Africa. It would also facilitate revolutionary victories in a series of countries, diminish considerably imperialism's capacity for resistance and counterattack, and increase the level of consciousness and the combativity of workers in the advanced industrial countries. At the same time, it would modify in a favorable way the relationship of forces within the workers movement, making it more receptive to the revolutionary program and thus infinitely more effective in the class struggle. The Chinese CP's declaration of its independence in regard to the Kremlin and its steps toward accomplishing the tasks of the permanent revolution both in China and internationally are events that will probably take place before imperialism can start a world war.

It is under this perspective—with the Chinese masses, with the Chinese CP, against Stalin—that the actions of our Chinese comrades must be corrected. In every country where a Stalinist party has an extensive working-class base, the International must work under this broader perspective of the independence of the workers movement and its communist vanguard with respect to the Kremlin's policy.

#### *Concerning our Tasks*

Never before has the Fourth International had such possibilities for implanting itself as the leadership in a mass revolutionary struggle. Nor has it ever (and this is a corollary of the revolutionary upsurge around the world) had such possibilities for gaining the ear of Communist workers organized in the Stalinist parties. Never in the past (and this is a function of the very development of the worldwide revolutionary upsurge) have we witnessed so profound a worldwide crisis of Stalinism.

Despite the fact that they consider these things as Stalin's "victories," as proof of "his revolutionary effectiveness," the most conscious Communist workers will not accept the notion advanced by their leaders that socialism will be installed by the Red Army. They are seeking the road of class action, of the emancipation of workers by the workers themselves. This concern of theirs actually touches upon a fundamental aspect of the proletarian revolution, an aspect that dominates the works of Marx and Lenin: that is, that the essence of a proletarian revolution is not this or that economic measure but rather the proletariat's gaining of consciousness, its molecular mobilization, the formation of its consciousness as an active and dominant class. This notion of Marx and Lenin has been strikingly confirmed by the example of the buffer zone on the one hand and, inversely, by the Russian revolution<sup>12</sup> and partially by the revolution in Yugoslavia on the other. We are not talking about *a priori* norms but rather about the very essence of the proletarian revolution: the working class gaining a consciousness of itself and setting itself up as the ruling class, not only by taking power but also

and *above all* by exercising the dictatorship of the proletariat and building socialism. And this latter task is not a mechanical phenomenon (the opposite of capitalist development) but requires the intervention of the proletariat as a conscious class.<sup>13</sup> This is the ABC's. The experience of the USSR confirms it 100 percent (relative stagnation domestically and a counterrevolutionary policy abroad), as does the Yugoslav experience, the Chinese experience and, in a negative way, the experience in the buffer zone.

No serious Communist worker criticizes Stalin for being afraid of world war, for refusing to declare the war-revolution or the revolution-war. On the contrary, what the best of them criticize him for is for subordinating the class struggle in other countries to the *diplomatic and military needs of the USSR*, subordinating the *strategic line of the proletarian revolution* to one of its tasks, the defense of one of the workers states.

In France the crisis of Stalinism, which has just manifested itself in the split among the mine workers, is fueled continually by the ample proof that the French CP is an inadequate instrument for making a revolution:

—the ineffectiveness of its policy of supporting national fronts, of building "New Democracy" (the politics of Yalta);

—the ineffectiveness of its policy of [parliamentary] opposition, of its leadership in the important class struggles since 1947 (the Zhdanov line);

—the incapacity of Stalinism to contribute toward uniting the proletarian forces.

All the strikes up to the present have reinforced the impression held by Communist workers that the French CP is not leading the proletariat toward revolution, but toward neutralization of the French bourgeoisie and a period of waiting for the war and the Red Army's entry into it.

The Communist workers witnessed their struggle against the war in Vietnam—an undertaking the French CP had entered with a violence tainted with adventurism—subordinated to the campaign around the Stockholm appeal.

They witnessed their struggle against the *eighteen months* halted in mid-course and used as a springboard for the Sheffield-Warsaw appeal.

A great uneasiness spread among members of the French CP (and certainly among members of other CP's) in the fall of 1950, when the imperialist armies in Korea were within an inch of pulling out and a minimum of material support would have been sufficient to assure a success of immense scope for the entire Asian revolution. They saw that Stalin—*applying the same policy of nonintervention he had used against the ascendant phase of the Spanish revolution*—then allowed the imperialist armies to regain the offensive. This uneasiness was expressed so widely that the leadership of the French CP had to respond publicly—using Jeanette Vermersch as a mouthpiece—in the following way: Those who demand that the USSR *intervene* in Korea don't understand what a world war would be like. This response disarmed the burgeoning opposition, because no Communist worker wanted a world war. What they were demanding wasn't intervention but an end to the *de facto* embargo on arms that was strangling the Korean revolution.

It comes as no surprise that the Stalinist leaders are still inventive enough to pull the wool over the eyes of Communist workers. But what is surprising and inadmissible is that *La Verite*, through Comrade Pablo's<sup>14</sup>

articles, did nothing to take advantage of this crisis, although:

—it explained that it was difficult to make pronouncements about Stalin's intentions;

—it remained silent about the meaning of his nonintervention;

—it did not wage *a systematic and sustained campaign* to publicize the demand the Communist workers were making on their leadership: *Airplanes and artillery for Korea*;

—worse yet, it adopted J. Vermersch's evaluation of the situation as its own (aiding Korea means a world war), simply adding that if Stalin were a real revolutionary he wouldn't be afraid of entering a world war (war-revolution, revolution-war).

Here we have a convincing application of the orientation Comrade Pablo refers to as "Closer to the Communist workers." It reminds us of the politics of the right-wing tendency that left our party. This tendency also fought for the slogan "Closer to the Communist workers," which meant *closer to Stalinist politics*.

In the present case, *La Verite* was closer to Stalinist politics (it played the role of the MacArthur of the "Stalinist world") but quite far removed from the concerns of the Communist workers; it didn't help them find the correct response to their uneasiness.

By virtue of its methodology, perspectives, and application, this brand of politics is related to the most negative aspects of the history of our International. Through its impressionism and empiricism, its passive submission before accomplished facts and apparent "power," and through its abandonment of a class strategy, it revives all the errors of the right wing in the French party, of Haston,<sup>15</sup> and of many other tendencies that followed a liquidationist course.

### *The Alarm Signal*

We think that Comrade Pablo's orientation is neither clear nor definitively set. We are convinced that he will correct his errors without too great a difficulty. But this isn't the question. Comrade Pablo is also a leader of the International. This means that the positions he takes do not involve just him. His line has already been partially expressed in the Plenum resolution, which is a confused and contradictory document, the result of an unprincipled bloc between two lines, and the very model of an eclectic document.

But above all, a whole series of alarming signs have emerged as direct consequences of this theoretical hodgepodge.

*On the one hand, a Stalinist tendency is rapidly developing* in the International. Certainly Comrade Pablo can say, like the sorcerer's apprentice, that this isn't what he wanted. He can even apply a vigorous "self-criticism" across the shoulders of politically weak comrades who tried to be more consistent than those who inspired them. But the remedy only disguises the disease and doesn't heal it.

Similar destructive tendencies in the International have appeared on the editorial staff of our English comrades.

In France they cropped up among our comrades in Lyon, whose resolution we have cited.

They have appeared in our Central Committee, where

Comrade Mestre stated her support for the Stalinist slogan of a struggle against German rearmament, manifestly subordinating the problem of the German and French proletariat's gaining consciousness and taking up revolutionary struggle to the military defense of the USSR, seen in Stalinist terms as the number-one priority, the strategic line.

*On the other hand, tendencies toward rejecting the defense of the USSR* have already appeared and will inevitably develop. Some comrades who are troubled by the present tendency toward revisionism on the nature of the bureaucracy and on the Trotskyist concept of the defense of the USSR will inevitably break away from both Trotskyism and the defense of the USSR. We must seriously consider the defection of Natalia Trotsky, whose radically false concepts on the question of the USSR didn't prevent the Second World Congress from placing her on its honorary presidium.

The orientation that has been outlined threatens to lead to the splintering of our International into a Stalinist tendency and a tendency that is defeatist toward the USSR.

We must react without delay and return to the Marxist method of analyzing society, return to the Leninist concept of the function of the working class, return to the Trotskyist analysis of the degeneration of the USSR and of the character of the bureaucracy, return to Trotsky's fundamental statement that the crisis of humanity is and remains the crisis of revolutionary leadership, return to the revolutionary working-class line, that of the construction and the victory of the Fourth International, the World Party of the Socialist Revolution.

Favre-Bleibtreu  
June 1951

### Footnotes to "Where is Comrade Pablo Going?"

1. "Thus two camps have been formed in the world: on the one hand there is the imperialist and antidemocratic camp, whose basic goal is to establish American imperialism's domination over the world and to crush democracy; on the other hand there is the anti-imperialist and democratic camp, whose basic goal consists in undermining imperialism, strengthening democracy, and liquidating the remnants of fascism.

"The struggle between these two camps, between the imperialist and anti-imperialist camp, unfolds under conditions of a continued deepening of the overall crisis of capitalism, of a weakening of the forces of capitalism, and of the strengthening of the forces of socialism and democracy." (Zhdanov Theses, 1947, given to the first meeting of the Cominform in 1947)

2. So far as Europe is concerned, consider the bureaucracy's policy in France (1936), Spain (1936-39), Poland (Warsaw uprising), Greece (1944-45), its efforts to prevent and overturn the Yugoslav revolution, its policy in France and Italy in the face of the revolutionary upsurge following the second world war.

3. ". . . economic growth, while slowly bettering the situation of the toilers, promotes a swift formation of privileged strata," Trotsky said in the fundamental document defining the USSR (*Revolution Betrayed*, point D in the definition of the USSR [p. 255, Pathfinder Press

edition, New York, 1970])

4. The draft theses presented by Pablo to the Ninth Plenum of the International Secretariat (point 21, paragraph 3) spoke of the "*conditions of economic exploitation*" of the Soviet proletariat by the bureaucracy. The idea of class exploitation no longer appears in the text adopted by the International Executive Committee, but the notion of historically necessary social layer (a class!) turns up again in Pablo's document.

5. "Once the war breaks out . . . the bureaucracy will no longer have any reason to oppose the development of mass revolutionary struggles in the imperialist camp. Quite the contrary . . . the bureaucracy will have every interest in developing anything that will help undermine the military strength of the imperialist camp, including revolutionary movements of great scope. . . ." (Thesis of the Lyon cell.)

The thesis as a whole comes down to this: up to the present the bureaucracy has been opposed to the revolution out of fear of military intervention by the imperialists. In the third world war the bureaucracy will no longer have this preoccupation and will become the leadership of the world revolution. This is much more consistent than Pablo's thesis. The author of this resolution nevertheless was weak enough to renounce it in favor of Pablo's position.

6. "Some voices cry out: 'If we continue to recognize the USSR as a workers' state, we will have to establish a new category: the counter-revolutionary workers' state.' This argument attempts to shock our imagination by opposing a good programmatic norm to a miserable, mean, even repugnant reality. But haven't we observed from day to day since 1923 how the Soviet state has played a more and more counter-revolutionary role on the international arena? Have we forgotten the experience of the Chinese Revolution, of the 1926 general strike in England and finally the very fresh experience of the Spanish Revolution? There are two completely counter-revolutionary workers' internationals. These critics have apparently forgotten this 'category.' The trade unions of France, Great Britain, the United States and other countries support completely the counter-revolutionary politics of the bourgeoisie. This does not prevent us from labeling them trade unions, from supporting their progressive steps and from defending them against the bourgeoisie. Why is it impossible to employ the same method with the counter-revolutionary workers' state? In the last analysis a workers' state is a trade union which has conquered power. The difference in attitude in these two cases is explainable by the simple fact that trade unions have a long history and we have been accustomed to consider them as realities and not simply as 'categories' in our program. But, as regards the workers' state there is being evinced an inability to learn to approach it as a real historical fact which has not subordinated itself to our program." (Leon Trotsky: "Again and Once More Again on the Nature of the USSR," in *In Defense of Marxism*, pp. 25-26, Pathfinder Press edition, New York, 1970.)

7. In 1651, three centuries ago, the bourgeoisie began to emerge in England.

In 1751, two centuries ago, it began to appear in France.

The two or three century transition period in which Pablo accords a necessary role to the bureaucracy would

be longer than the period of bourgeois domination in the countries that developed the earliest, and three to six times longer than the worldwide domination of the capitalist bourgeoisie. It would therefore be difficult to find fault with applying the term class to the Soviet bureaucracy.

8. In the Second World Congress theses there was already an unfortunate formulation, though it was appreciably different: "'Defend what remains of the conquests of October' is a ('a,' and not 'the') strategic line for the revolutionary party, and not alone a 'slogan.'" ["The USSR and Stalinism," *Fourth International*, June 1948, p. 114] It would have been more correct to say: "a strategic task" or "a strategic orientation," formulations that are clearly opposed to the notion that the defense of the USSR is just a 'slogan.'

"The defense of the USSR coincides for us with the preparation of world revolution. Only those methods are permissible which do not conflict with the interests of the revolution. The defense of the USSR is related to the world socialist revolution as a tactical task is related to a strategic one. A tactic is subordinated to a strategic goal and in no case can be in contradiction to the latter." (Leon Trotsky: "The USSR in War," in *In Defense of Marxism*, pp. 17-18.)

9. A "Stalinism" that was never very deeply entrenched at any given moment in the history of this party. Apart from the documents published by the *Fourth International*, a reading of the works of Mao Tsetung (each page of which contains a more or less veiled attack on Stalin) is quite helpful in this regard.

10. It is quite clear that the reasons for this stem from the difference between the proletariat's aspirations and forms of action, and those of the peasantry. The peasantry desires bourgeois-democratic reforms and mobilizes spontaneously in the form of partisan armies. The proletariat has socialist aspirations and its revolutionary mobilization creates proletarian organs of power, both of which lead to a direct contradiction with the Stalinist bureaucracy right from the start.

11. We request that the International Secretariat present its file of correspondence with the Chinese comrades to the World Congress, and in this way inform the congress of the directives that it had the right and the duty to give to the Chinese section.

12. The Russian revolution unfolded in a way that was far removed from the "pure norms"; Lenin thought it was even further removed than any future revolution in an advanced country would be.

13. "The primary political criterion for us is not the transformation of property relations in this or another area, however important these may be in themselves, but rather the change in the consciousness and organization of the world proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accomplishing new ones. From this one, and the only decisive standpoint, the politics of Moscow, taken as a whole, completely retains its reactionary character and remains the chief obstacle on the road to world revolution." (Leon Trotsky: "The USSR in War," in *In Defense of Marxism*, p. 19.)

14. *The Militant*, the newspaper of the American Trotskyists, waged an excellent campaign around the revelations on this question. In France, where the basic cadres

of the working class are organized in the CP, an extensive campaign should have been mounted around the theme: "Airplanes for Korea."

15. A reading of Haston's amendment to the World Congress is instructive: it is a timid outline of "Where Are We Going?"

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## SECTION II: THE SPLIT IN THE FRENCH SECTION

[A majority of the Parti Communiste Internationaliste, the French section of the Fourth International, opposed the adaptations to Stalinism which they felt they had detected in the Third World Congress resolutions. This led to sharp conflict between the French leaders and Pablo.

[The International Secretariat, at Pablo's urging, ordered the French section to carry out a policy of "entryism sui generis," into the French Communist Party. (This was turned into a general policy for the European sections by the Tenth Plenum of the International Executive Committee. Pablo's report to this plenum is reprinted in Part 4 of this series.) The leadership of the section resisted, proposing a much more limited entry tactic. Pablo undertook the organizational measures aimed at compelling the section to follow instructions or face expulsion from

the International.

[Despite the doubts that existed about the supercentralist implications of Pablo's actions, a majority of the world Trotskyist movement supported him against the French majority. Since they were not convinced that Pablo was adapting to Stalinism, they saw the French opposition to his apparently "tactical" proposals as somewhat sectarian.

[The following exchange between Daniel Renard, secretary of the PCI, and James P. Cannon, is reprinted from *SWP International Information Bulletin*, November 1952. "The Struggle of the French Trotskyists Against Pabloite Liquidationism" is reprinted from *SWP Discussion Bulletin* A-17, 1954. It appeared earlier in *International Committee Bulletin* No. 1, December 28, 1953.]

### 1. Letter from Daniel Renard to James P. Cannon

Paris  
February 16, 1952

Dear Comrade Cannon,

I am taking the liberty of writing you today because I think that you are one of the most qualified comrades in the Trotskyist movement for evaluating the situation in our section and the dispute which currently places the French party in opposition to the International Secretariat.

I have read *In Defense of Marxism* and *The Struggle for the Proletarian Party*; the exertions, struggles and experiences through which the American Trotskyists, and you especially, have passed, give you the necessary background for telling me what you think of what we are doing here.

All the leaderships of the Trotskyist sections are now in possession of a document from the International Secretariat dated January 21, 1952, concerning the French section.

However, this document in its five pages of text does not give an exact version of what is taking place. It does not present a political view of the situation but strictly an administrative version of the dispute. From a reading of this document it could be concluded that the leading comrades of the French section are acting stubbornly and sulking at the decisions of the IS merely from whim.

The facts are really altogether different. Nobody in the International is unaware of the differences which have opposed the French majority to the IS up to the World Congress. These differences have been expressed in votes and in documents. The French majority has tried to clarify

the nature of these differences, especially in the period of preparation of the Seventh Congress of the French Party.

But the differences which set the French Party in opposition to the IS were settled, if not solved, by the Third World Congress. And this found its expression in a resolution of the French Commission of the World Congress, a resolution which the Central Committee of our section *unanimously* approved, insofar as it is the line for applying the policies adopted by the Third World Congress. To say, as the IS does, that the French majority has "continued" in practice to wish to apply the line of the Seventh Congress of the PCI is inaccurate and refuted by the entire attitude and policy as applied by the French leadership from the World Congress up to now.

Let me begin by stressing that Pablo, in opposing any vote at the World Congress on the documents which our delegates presented there (especially the 10 Theses drawn up by Comrade Germain and adopted by our Seventh Congress), and this upon the contention that the International had not discussed them, was by this token unable to have our positions condemned by the Congress.

The truth is that whatever the spheres of activity of our party, nothing has given rise to the slightest criticism by any of the leading bodies of the International regarding remissness in applying the line laid down by the last World Congress.

In "youth" work a draft resolution was presented by the Political Bureau. It gave rise to a certain amount of criticism, especially on the part of minority comrades. A parity commission of PB members was elected. This

commission submitted a new, revised youth document, which was finally adopted. It is some four months since this resolution has been applied. Its application has called forth no important criticism, neither in the ranks of the minority nor from the IS.

If we take trade union work, up to and including the last meeting of the National Contact Commission of "Unite," this work has gone ahead on the basis of complete agreement between the majority of the French Party and the IS. A document on directives was submitted unanimously by a commission of which Comrade Frank was a member. It was subsequently called into question anew by a totally different document with which I will deal presently.

Finally, the last sphere but not the least: our central organ, *La Verite*, has never been questioned in any fundamental way, by anyone whatever, for not having applied the line of the Third World Congress. What is more, Comrade Pablo stated to a meeting of the Paris Region that *La Verite* was showing "the obvious progress made by the French leadership in applying the political line laid down by the Third World Congress." But if, as the IS letter declares, the French leadership "continues to wish to apply the line of the 7th PCI Congress," where would this be more evident than in *La Verite*? Our paper, *the principal external expression of our party*, is best capable of reflecting in the light of events, the political positions of the leadership which publishes it.

Thus, since the Third World Congress, the French leadership has effectively endeavored to apply the policies of our International "with understanding and discipline." Further, it has maintained complete silence inside the party on the ever new demands imposed upon it by the IS. Inadequacies may have shown up here and there. They were inevitable. But this was in no sense willful. If it were so, if the leadership had really desired to carry out a different line, this would have revealed itself not accidentally in episodic and piecemeal cases, but in the entire activity of the party, in all spheres, daily, and at every step. Examples of such an undisciplined attitude would be so numerous that there would be no difficulty in presenting a great many of them.

But the letter of the IS nowhere makes any precise, clearly formulated accusations.

In point of fact, there are two clearly distinct phases in the struggle between the IS and the French leadership. The first phase takes place after the Third World Congress, a period during which the party was orienting itself in its work on the basis of the French resolution. This application takes place with some necessary adjustments. Then there is a second phase whose date can be established precisely: it is December 6, 1951, when the IS issues a document entitled, "For the reorientation of our trade union work in France."

This document, of which it was not known whether it was a mandatory resolution effective upon its appearance, or a contribution to the discussion of the trade union problem in France, called into question anew the decisions and documents of the Third World Congress. The stupefaction and indignation which such a document raised in the leadership of the French party were well founded. It was no longer a question of interpretation, of doing a job of exegesis on one sentence or another: this text was in fundamental and formal opposition with the text of the French commission of the World Congress.

For instance, in the French resolution, the following statement is made: "The necessary turn in the activity of the French party which results from the world turn in the situation does not in any case mean the abandonment of activities engaged in and of results achieved in such activities. On the contrary . . . , etc."

The text of the IS explains: "In order to realize these objectives which are *possible* right now, it is necessary not to attempt to set ourselves up as a *distinct tendency* (within the CGT), which is not objectively justified at the present stage—but to *integrate ourselves there by promptly becoming the best workers for the unification of the trade union movement, by taking everywhere a clear unequivocal position for the unity proposals of the CGT, and by skillfully maneuvering as regards the Stalinist leaders so as to allay their suspicions about us and so as to let them consider us as useful instruments for the unity policy.*" (Emphasis in the original.)

About all this, the letter of the IS dated January 21 does not say a word; in this way it makes the dispute between the French party and the IS incomprehensible. The opposition which manifests itself on administrative and organizational questions can only find their explanation in the light of the political positions of each of the opponents. Every other way of trying to clarify the discussion can in fact only muddy it up.

This is all the more true when one considers the January 14 letter of the IS to the members of the Central Committee. There too, and anew, the CC found itself confronting totally new positions contrary to the letter and spirit of the Third World Congress. The question was that of entry into the CP but of a very special kind of entry, "sui generis" as the IS itself described it. Independent work was to be subordinated to this entry. ("Independent work must be understood as having for its main aim the aiding of 'entrist' work and is itself to be directed primarily at the Stalinist workers."—"Entrist work will develop in scope as we come closer to war." Letter of the IS to the members of the CC).

But the World Congress stated precisely: "In the countries where the majority of the working class still follows the CP, our organizations, of necessity independent, must direct themselves toward more systematic work aimed at the ranks of these parties and of the masses which they influence." (*Theses on International Perspectives and the Orientation of the Fourth International.*)

This is so true that the Italian comrades, whose political situation is analagous to ours in many ways, have elaborated a resolution for work directed at the workers of the CP. The question of entry is envisaged and resolved in the following way: "This 'entrist' tactic does not exclude but presupposes independent work. . . ."

"Taking these requirements into account, we reach the conclusion that independent work must not be liquidated, but that, on the contrary, it will be necessary to assign additional forces to this work." The Italian comrades, in writing this, believe they are applying the line of the Third World Congress. But to say, as does the IS, that this Italian resolution "advocates a tactic identical to that proposed by the letter of the IS of January 14 to the CC of the French party," constitutes a refusal to understand the obvious. The position of the IS in France makes independent work a supplement to entrism work; the Italian comrades are doing just the reverse. It is necessary to have a certain

amount of political myopia to identify these two positions.

In my opinion the IS is seeking to mask the real reasons for the discussion by accusing the French majority of not wanting to apply the line of the Third World Congress and of wishing to substitute the line of the Seventh Congress of our party. Truthfully, the French leadership is not in opposition to the IS but to what we in France have labeled "Pablism." That is what is involved. And today, under the cover of our international leadership, Comrade Pablo is trying to have his own positions carried out. When the French majority says that the trade union resolution, as well as the letter of the IS to the members of the Central Committee of January 19 and 20, is not the honest expression of the World Congress, it is only expressing in another form that Pablism did not win out at the Third World Congress. To convince oneself all one has to do is to return to the article "Where Are We Going?" and to the theses of the Third World Congress.

The struggle in which the French party has found itself engaged and in which I am taking part, has had for its setting the punitive action of the IS in suspending the majority of the Central Committee, a measure directed against all the living forces of the party, against everything which directly or indirectly touches working class and trade union work. This punitive measure is unjust and unjustifiable. It is a suppression of all genuine leadership in all spheres of work. And how does the IS explain this measure? By charging "political and organizational decomposition." And upon what does it base this charge? Upon hearsay and gossip. But where the leadership of a party is decomposing politically and organizationally that ought to be confirmed by other means than by the charges of minority comrades. Decomposition, if it is political, must show itself in documents, and especially in the documents submitted precisely to the CC Plenum, where the majority was suspended. Political decomposition should also show itself in our central organ, *La Verite*, of which ten issues have appeared since the World Congress. This aspect of the question of political decomposition of our leadership is all the more important because allusion is made in this letter, to Shachtman, and to the POUM, to the Yugoslavs. Those of our comrades who participated in the Second World Congress took a stand against the proposal to recognize the WP as a "sympathetic section." Since that time we have neither said nor written a word which could justify an amalgam with Shachtman. No basis for comparison exists between our position and that of the POUM, to which *Verite* has replied in connection with its attacks against our Third World Congress. No position of ours is the same as the Yugoslavs against whom we have been conducting an offensive for over 18 months in all spheres where they have shown themselves (brigades, trade unions, youth). In what, directly or indirectly, does the argumentation employed by the French leadership resemble the positions taken by Shachtman, the POUM, the "Yugoslavs"? In NOTHING. And there you have an unprincipled amalgam which can only condemn those who make use of it.

As for the decomposition of the leadership of our party from an organizational standpoint, what are the symptoms which reveal this? Have members resigned? Has the paper failed to appear? Have directives not been issued in order to initiate this or that action at this or that moment? If the leadership is decomposing as the motor force of the

party, what better test than the last strike movements of February 12 as a verification of this? But there again, as in the past, our leadership, conscious of its experience, of the situation in the party caused by the violent coup of the IS, proved itself equal to the greatness of its task.

All this tends to demonstrate that a bad cause has the need for bad methods in order to defend itself. And this likewise explains why for us the struggle against Pablism is not a struggle of secondary importance. The French majority has acquired the conviction in the course of many months in which it has been opposed to Pablism, that the latter means the destruction of Trotskyism, at least in Western Europe. The sharpness of the struggle, on both sides, can be explained or justified solely in this perspective.

If we return to the question of trade union work, we see in the French resolution of the World Congress, a resolution which our CC has adopted, the following perspective described in these words: "The agreements which have served as basis for 'Unite' (essential element of the trade union work of the French section) are taking place under the hallmark of free expression for the various currents gathered together around this paper. The general activity of the party in 'Unite' continues without any changes." This is clear and without the slightest ambiguity. Four months after these lines were written, we can read the following sentences from the pen of the IS: "It is necessary not to attempt to set ourselves up as a distinct tendency" as against the Stalinists. What is the meaning of such a sentence if not to deliver ourselves bound hand and foot over to the Stalinist bureaucrats. For us, however, the perspective is clear: the situation in the French trade union movement is such that it imposes upon us the requirement not to surrender *in any way* the orientation laid down by the French resolution of the World Congress. That variations in Stalinist policy require of us this or that tactic is obvious. But it is a question of something quite different in the foregoing text of the IS.

If we return to the question of entry into the CP, our perspective is clear. We are not hostile to the examination of this possibility, and we had already formulated it well in advance of the letter of the IS of January 14 to the members of the CC. But for us it was above all a matter of fraction work which cannot change the work of the independent party and above all cannot in any way change the independent character of the Trotskyist program with reference to Stalinism. Not only do we think that this fraction work in the CP is necessary, and indispensable, but we say that this idea of entry in the CP must be considered by the whole party as the eventuality for which we must prepare ourselves in the perspective of great social upheavals and continued upheavals in the Stalinist apparatus. For Pablo it is quite another thing that is involved. It is a matter of pure and simple integration into Stalinism, ascribing to the latter the accomplishment of a certain number of historical tasks that Trotskyism is incapable of fulfilling.

Politics has its own logic, and particularly the politics of Pablo. Did not he state to the CC of the 19th and 20th of January that "the Transitional Program" was an inadequate instrument for effectively judging what Stalinism is at the present time? This may appear as a momentary error of Pablo, but since this statement, this idea has made its own way, and at the last meeting of the Parisian region, Comrade Frank, a member of the IS, stated that it

is an incorrect idea of the Transitional Program when it states that the "Third International had definitely passed over to the side of the bourgeois order." And has not Comrade Corvin, member of the Central Committee, also said that to speak of the oscillations of the Stalinist bureaucracy means to put in question the workers' character of the USSR, adding that we will no longer see oscillations, but hesitations by Stalinism in accomplishing the tasks of the revolution. Has not Comrade Mestre, member of the Political Bureau, stated that entry *sui generis* has become necessary because "Stalinism has changed"? All this is evidently not a product of chance. All this only expresses, in our ranks, the growing pressure of Stalinism upon the petty bourgeoisie of Western Europe which finds its echo in our organization.

This explains why I have personally stated that confronted by such positions the party must rise, unanimously, to condemn such crimes. I am not concerned with creating an atmosphere of hostility in the French section "against the International" as the letter of the IS implies. I am concerned with defending the essential programmatic foundations of our movement, which is its wealth and which is its surest guarantee of victory.

The position which I have taken in this battle is the product of all the experience which I have accumulated during years of membership in the working class movement and particularly of my struggle for Trotskyism in the Renault plant. To create the notion that our opposition to the Pablist line proceeds from an infantile anti-Stalinism is to conceal the real character of Pablism, as it is revealing itself every day increasingly, every day more clearly. Today Pablo is compelled to call into question the fundamental ideas of the Transitional Program in order

to prop up his line. What will happen tomorrow?

The methods used by Pablo have caused me to reflect a great deal and I have in particular relived the struggle which Trotsky conducted against Shachtman, Burnham and Abern in 1939-40 in the American section. The methods used by the IS are absolutely the reverse of these. Trotsky, and all the American comrades at his side, fought politically and tried to convince the SWP comrades by the widest possible discussion and the most fundamental. In particular, Trotsky constantly turned towards the party's working class base, addressed himself to it, used the best pedagogical forms so as to accomplish this, that the discussion would at least serve to educate the party. Here, we see the working class base of the party disdained, because it is the majority. We see fundamental questions evaded under false pretexts. To an entire leadership which is opposed to its line the IS replies: "SUSPENSION" and justifies itself by insults.

From all this the party (and when I say party, I mean the whole International) can only lose. It is impossible to destroy a Trotskyist section under the pretext that it does not share the personal ideas of Pablo on the role of the Soviet bureaucracy and on "centuries of transition." To destroy is not the role of a leader of the International: his rôle is not to destroy the human foundation of all politics, entrism or otherwise.

My letter has no other purpose than to warn you of this danger, to explain the situation and to ask your opinion. I hope I have accomplished my task.

With fraternal Bolshevik-Leninist best wishes, dear comrade, I am

Daniel Renard

## 2. Letter from James P. Cannon to Daniel Renard

New York, N.Y.  
May 29, 1952

Daniel Renard  
Paris

Dear Comrade Renard,

I received your letter of February 16. Copies were also distributed to all the members of our National Committee, and in formulating the following reply I have had the benefit of discussion with them on the matter. If I have waited so long to answer, it is only because I am always reluctant to intervene in the affairs of another party without knowing all the pertinent facts and the people concerned. I make this explanation to assure you that I meant no disrespect to you by my delay in answering your letter. Just the contrary. My purpose was to give your communication the serious and deliberate answer it deserves.

In the meantime, the Tenth Plenum of the IEC has taken place, and its basic document on "The Tactical Application of the Third World Congress Line," as well as its Organizational Resolution on the French situation, have been received here. We have also received a copy of the "Declaration by the Political Bureau Majority on the Agreements Concluded at the International Executive

Committee." These documents — the Tenth Plenum decisions and the Declaration of your Political Bureau Majority — seem to me to advance the dispute to another stage and to throw more light on it.

I have used the intervening time, since receiving your letter, for an attentive study of all the relevant documents, including those above mentioned. Naturally, from such a great distance I cannot feel qualified to pass judgment on the many secondary questions and personal antagonisms which are unfailingly involved in such a sharp dispute as your party is now experiencing. However, the general picture from a political point of view now seems clear enough to justify me in offering you and the other French comrades a frank opinion, as follows:

I think the Third World Congress made a correct analysis of the new post-war reality in the world and the unforeseen turns this reality has taken. Proceeding from this analysis, the Congress drew correct conclusions for the orientation of the national Trotskyist parties toward the living mass movement as it has evolved since the war. Further, the Tenth Plenum, in its basic document on the tactical application of the Third World Congress line, has faithfully interpreted, amplified and concretized the line of the Third World Congress as regards its tactical ap-

plication under the different conditions in the different countries.

I note your statement that the majority are "not hostile" to the "idea of entry into the CP" as "the eventuality for which we must prepare ourselves." That would seem to put the majority in basic agreement with the line of the IEC and clear the way for a jointly-elaborated program of practical actions leading to an agreed-upon end. The differences seem to be reduced to questions of timing and pace. I should like to remind you, however, that in a fluid situation timing and pace can be decisive for the success or failure of an action. In such a situation, where an objective is agreed upon in principle, my own preference would be for decisiveness and speed.

I disagree in part with your formulation of the question of entry as "above all a matter of fraction work which cannot change the work of the independent party and above all cannot in any way change the independent character of the Trotskyist program with reference to Stalinism." Two different questions, which ought to be separated, are combined in this formula.

Of course, neither entry, nor any other policy or tactic which could be devised, can "in any way change the independent character of the Trotskyist program with reference to Stalinism." But "*the work of the independent party*" in France, in the present historical conjuncture, can and must be radically changed, and that without unnecessary delay, for there is not much time left to seize the opportunity now open. We must get into the movement of Stalinist workers while there is yet time and by such means and methods as the situation permits, not those we might prefer or arbitrarily insist upon:

A policy of maintaining the French party as an *essentially* independent party, with fraction work in Stalinist-controlled organizations as supplemental and secondary, would turn the necessities of the situation upside down. The situation in France now imperatively requires a policy of *entry* (of a special kind) into the Stalinist movement. The independent party and press should serve, stimulate and guide the entrism movement, not substitute for it or contradict it. It is true, as every Trotskyist knows, that the independence of the revolutionary vanguard party is a principle. Its creation is an unchanging aim of the revolutionary vanguard, always and everywhere and under all conditions. The function of the party, however, is not to exist for itself but to lead the workers in revolution. Further progress in the construction of a revolutionary party, *capable of leading the revolutionary masses*, requires now in France a wide and prolonged detour through the workers' movement controlled by the Stalinists, and even eventually *through a section of the Stalinist party itself*.

The aim to build the Trotskyist party into a mass party remains fixed and unchanging, but the road toward it in France is by no means a straight one. If our French comrades should grow stubborn and formally insist on the functioning of the independent party as the *primary* and most *essential* work in the given situation, the living mass movement with its unbounded revolutionary potentialities would certainly pass it by and leave us with the form without the substance.

The breakup of the coalition on the trade union field

around the paper, "L'Unite," was a progressive development for our party. Those reformist trade unionists who make a speciality of "anti-Stalinism" in order to cover and justify their pro-imperialist policy are an international breed, and they are well known to us. They are not fit allies for Trotskyists in the United States, France or anywhere else. The logic of their Stalinophobia inexorably impels them to the right, and no tactical diplomacy on our part can arrest the process. On the other hand, the French Stalinist workers, by the logic of the irreversible international trend of things, must be impelled more and more on a radical course. It is a matter of life and death for our comrades to establish connections with them and form an alliance with them against imperialism. The disruption of the "L'Unite" coalition, provoked by the right wing, should be taken as a fortunate and most favorable springboard into this new and more fruitful arena.

As far as the anarchist phrasemongers are concerned—in the United States, in France, or anywhere else—time-wasting parleys and coalitions with them for the purpose of waging the class struggle against the imperialist bourgeoisie would make a mockery of things which ought to be taken seriously. This would not be revolutionary politics but a substitute for it.

Your letter, Comrade Renard, as well as the Declaration of the Majority of your Political Bureau on the Tenth Plenum, explains the political essence of your position in the conflict as opposition to "Pablism." You define this as a revisionist tendency, aiming at "pure and simple integration into Stalinism" and thereby a capitulation to it. This question, as you may be aware, has a history in the Socialist Workers Party, and is, consequently, familiar to us. As far back as 1950, when the new tactical turn was first indicated, the Johnsonites attempted to terrify the party with the scare of "Pablism." They sought to construe a struggle in the International Trotskyist movement of "Cannonism vs. Pablism." Since we were fully in favor of the new tactical turn from the start, we did not see any ground for such a contradistinction of tendencies, and said so when the question was first raised by the Johnsonites—an answer which no doubt hastened their departure from our ranks.

We, for our part, are orthodox Trotskyists since 1928 and thereby irreconcilable enemies of Stalinism or any conciliationism with it, not to speak of capitulation. I do not think I overstate the case if I say that should any kind of a pro-Stalinist tendency make its appearance in our international movement, we would probably be the first to notice it and to say: "This is an alien tendency with which we cannot compromise." We do not see such a tendency in the International leadership of the Fourth International nor any sign nor symptom of it.

We judge the policy of the International leadership by the line it elaborates in official documents—in the recent period by the documents of the Third World Congress and the Tenth Plenum. We do not see any revisionism there. All we see is an elucidation of the post-war evolution of Stalinism and an outline of new tactics to fight it more effectively. We consider these documents to be completely Trotskyist. They are different from previous documents of our movement, not in principle or method, but only in the confrontation and analysis of the new reality and the tactical adjustment to it. It is the unanimous opinion of the leading people of the SWP that the authors of these

documents have rendered a great service to the movement for which they deserve appreciation and comradely support, not distrust and denigration.

I am sure that the International movement will not sanction or support a factional struggle based on suspicion of future intentions which cannot be demonstrated, or even deduced, from present proposals and positions formulated in documents. Nobody can learn anything from such fights, and the party is bound to be the loser. If you comrades of the majority should insist on a struggle against a "revisionism" which is not evident to others, you could only disorient a number of worker comrades in the party ranks, isolate them from the other cadres of the International movement and lead them into a blind alley. Unfortunately, this has been done often enough in the past history of the French party by impulsive leaders who did not take thought of their course or heed the opinions of International comrades who sought to help them with friendly advice. I earnestly hope it will not happen this time.

It would be far better, in my opinion, to lay the suspicions aside—or, in any event, not to make them the axis of discussion—and try to come to agreement with the IS on practical steps toward an effective penetration into the movement of Stalinist workers—leaving the different views as to the prospects to the test of experience. Political tendencies which are not clearly revealed cannot be fruitfully debated. If there is in fact any illusion about Stalinism on the one side, or a fetishism of formal independence on the other, the test of experience will mature and clarify such errors and make it possible to deal with them politically. Conversely, if there are no serious dif-

ferences latent in the conflict, experience will eliminate any ground for suspicion in either respect.

An entry into the Stalinist workers' movement and eventually into the Stalinist party itself, under the given conditions, with its rigid bureaucratic structure, is an extremely difficult and dangerous undertaking in the best case. It will be all the more difficult if there is no unity in the party leadership. The situation would be made many times worse if the French party has to be punished with one more unnecessary split. This possibility cannot be ignored.

Don't deceive yourself, Comrade Renard. There is great danger of a split, even though both sides may have renounced any intention in this regard. A split is implicit in the situation as it has been developing in the recent period. In my opinion, the best way to avoid such a calamity—perhaps the only way—would be to shift the discussion for the time being to a concrete step-by-step program, worked out jointly by the party leadership and the IS, to effectuate the imperatively-dictated entry into the Stalinist workers' movement and eventually into a section of the Stalinist party itself.

Along that line—if our judgment is correct—the French party should soon get into a position to expand its influence and prepare for the great role which history has assigned to it in the approaching war and revolution. You can surely count on the sympathy and support of International comrades in this great endeavor.

Yours fraternally,  
James P. Cannon

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### 3. "The Struggle of the French Trotskyists Against Pabloite Liquidationism"

We shall confine ourselves in this document to a recital of the developments of Pablist activities in France and of the struggle which he waged against the French section, we shall not attempt here to examine the problem of the origins of Pablist, a subject of major importance which the International will have to submit to study and discussion, but which would require an explanatory work at least equivalent in length to the present text.

From its very nature, and contrary to the statements of Pablo and his partisans in the I.S., Pablist revisionism, as is well understood in the I.S. and in the I.E.C., had an earlier development. Its first clear but incomplete manifestation, in an official document of the International, is found in the projected theses on the International situation written by Pablo and submitted by the I.S. to the Ninth Plenum of the I.E.C. (November 1950) as a preparatory document for the Third World Congress. These theses, which take as their point of departure the closeness of the Third World War, propose a change (not yet specified) in the tasks of the International, proceeding in the direction of abandoning the building of independent revolutionary parties as the leadership of the masses in the period prior to the war. In this document also figure the first attacks against "pure norms," and the improbability of a "free development toward socialism" is broached.

The I.E.C. was disturbed by this orientation, and in accordance with a tactic which will constantly be his from then on, Pablo agrees to *integrate* certain Bleibtreu amendments, presented by Theo (Holland), into his thesis which coexist with the contradictory statements of the first version in the theses bearing the name of Theses of the Ninth Plenum.

The Central Committee of the I.C.P. had been called together at the very moment when the Plenum of the I.E.C. ended. The uneasiness of the I.E.C. invades it immediately. The members of the French C.C., disturbed by the reading of the projected theses which had been sent them, see the members of the I.E.C. who are present at their meeting in violent conflict with each other. Pablo is absent and it is Livingstone who takes his place and with shocking violence attacks Privas and Frank, who had indicated reservations on the theses within the I.S. Except for two members of the C.C. (Michele Mestre and Corvin), whom Pablo has for the past two months made his direct spokesman in the I.C.P., the C.C. criticizes the revisionist elements introduced into the theses and refuses to approve the draft. It agrees to meet again one month later.

At this January C.C. meeting, certain Bleibtreu-Frank-Privas addenda to the political resolution prepared for the Seventh Congress of the I.C.P. and relating to its

tasks in the struggle against war are adopted, despite a hysterical intervention by Livingstone, representative of Pablo. Privas proposes to the C.C. that he be assigned to the leadership of "La Verite" in place of Michele Mestre. This proposal is adopted.

From the Ninth Plenum of the I.E.C. to the month of March, 1951, when the crisis will break out, the tendencies are in process of being defined within the leadership of the I.C.P. and of acquiring the content which they will finally have. The opponents of Pablo within the I.S. (Germain, Frank, Privas) call the Parisian members of the C.C. of the I.C.P. together, with the exception of M. Mestre and Corvin, in order to advise them of the threats of expulsion from the I.S. pronounced by Pablo against them: by a bureaucratic ruse Privas had already been expelled from the bureau of the I.S., which had given Pablo the majority of three votes against two. Immediately afterward he demanded that Germain and Frank defend the line, which had become the majority line in this fashion, before the I.E.C. and in the sections, or face expulsion from the I.S.

From the outset, a difference in views shows up regarding the methods of struggle:

1. Germain, Frank, Privas, frightened by the organizational threats of Pablo, favor waging a campaign for the defense of democracy, for changing the statutes of the I.E.C., for the recognition of minority rights in the preparatory discussion for the world congress, etc. . . .

2. Bleibtreu is against this orientation, estimating that a struggle against revisionism must be waged with *political* weapons, that abstract democratic demands by a "minority," which does not express itself politically, will interest no one. He proposes a *political counter-attack* by the publication of a counter-thesis by the minority of the I.S. or by the *majority of the I.C.P.* Germain alerts the I.C.P., declaring that "Pablo has been waiting for a long time to destroy the French section."

In order to divert the majority of the I.C.P. from its orientation, Germain advises Bleibtreu (January 1951) of his projected ten theses on Stalinism, formally promising to submit them to a vote by the sections and by the world congress. With this formal promise, the majority of the I.C.P., when advised, agree not to wage a separate fight and to wait for the publication of the Ten Theses, considering that these theses constitute a very clear refutation of the pro-Stalinist revisionist elements in the theses of the Ninth Plenum and a noteworthy contribution to the Trotskyist analysis of Stalinism. Most of the Parisian members of the C.C. fall into line for these reasons, particularly since the I.S. is asking for a discussion with the P.B., enlarged by the Parisian members of the C.C., on the subject of the "addenda" adopted in January.

On the eve of this common I.S.-enlarged P.B. meeting, the members of the French leadership receive a letter from the I.S. placing them under discipline to cancel their vote adopting the "addenda" and to rewrite them along the lines of the theses of the Ninth Plenum. This letter appears shortly after "Where Are We Going?" wherein Pablo develops his most revisionist ideas and gives some of them the most provoking tone ("We must unequivocally line up with the anti-imperialist forces," etc. . . .) At the common meeting of the I.S. and enlarged P.B., Pablo is again absent; it is Germain who represents the I.S. (Livingstone has so angered the French C.C. by his style

of intervention—which earned him the nickname "the cowboy"—that Pablo can no longer use him). One surprise awaits those attending this meeting: it is Privas who is reporting in the name of the I.S. and who, in a long embarrassed speech, tries to justify the positions of "Where Are We Going" which he had sharply criticized shortly before. He concludes that it is necessary to comply with the demands of the I.S. Frank and Germain speak along the same lines. It is a confession of their capitulation, to which they were brought by their idea of a soft "struggle" by means of organizational pressures and measures. From now on, they will be compelled to outstrip themselves from day to day and to show themselves more Pablist than Pablo. The effect of this turnabout on the C.C. is the reverse of that anticipated by the I.S. Without any prior consultation among themselves after receipt of the I.S. letter, the members of the C.C. all react alike. They readdress to the I.S. its demand for clear explanations, for explanations of "bad formulations," for more precision whether new views are involved which they consider as revisionist. The meeting decides on calling an immediate extraordinary C.C. session and on publication of an international political resolution. It is noteworthy that the division in the C.C. between majority and minority leaves on the majority's side the comrades who are doing mass work (in the factories and trade unions, the youth organizations, etc.) and on the other side the flotsam which was unable to find a working milieu outside the party. The text (of the resolution) is worked out collaboratively.

The C.C. reassembles in April 1951. For the first time, Pablo comes there personally, not to defend his positions but to attack the French majority, which he accuses of conservatism and which, according to him, is succumbing to the pressure of Shachtman, of the POUM, of the Yugoslavs and of the neutralists (grouped around the weekly "The Observer"; it is necessary to point out that these neutralists are pro-Stalinists; they will support the Pablists at the time of the split, will give publicity to their publications and their meetings; Germain is one of the acknowledged and assiduous editors of this paper).

The C.C. adopts the theses, prepared by the P.B. and Parisian members of the C.C., decides to postpone the date of the Seventh Congress of the party, against the wishes of the Pablists who are afraid of clarity and are using the argument of authority. Frank drafts a criticism of the majority theses which bears all the earmarks of political capitulation. Frank covers up the revisionism with which he does not really agree and attacks positions which are really his own by trying to read into them what isn't there. The majority, after having outlined its international political position, develops all aspects and all practical consequences of its policy in the daily work of rooting the French section in the masses. A series of reports (trade union, youth, organizational) is drawn up. The Pablist faction presents an opposition document on each of them: on trade union work, it proposes abandonment of the orientation toward rallying a class struggle tendency (which, according to them, cuts us off from the Stalinist workers, who are increasingly rallying about their leadership in anticipation of imminent war), and proclaims that we must enter the C.G.T. (90% of the wage-earning members of the party really are in the

C.G.T.), in order to do faction work within a Stalinist organization and to "get closer to the communist workers," a task which they believe can be fulfilled by getting closer to the policy of their (the communist workers') leadership. Similarly, the Pablist document on youth work in effect advocates giving up building the Revolutionary Youth Movement, proposing instead work in the Stalinist youth organization, the Union of Republican Youth of France; the majority supports the document on building the party which had been prepared by Privas in September. The minority, to which Privas belongs, opposes it and advocates integration of the party into the "Fighters for Peace."

But the conclusions of the minority on these problems have as yet none of the clarity in orientation that they will assume after the Third World Congress. Nevertheless, their direction recalls the positions developed by the right-wing tendency in our party in 1945-46 according to which we had to get closer to the politics of the Stalinist workers if we wished to get closer to the Stalinist workers themselves.

Let us recall that in the summer of 1951, after having reached the Yalu and provoked Chinese intervention in Korea, MacArthur is dismissed. The Pablists then publish a pamphlet, over the heads of the French leadership, explaining that "we have just missed having war," thus unveiling the impressionism of the I.S.; the latter does not on that account alter its perspective of "war-revolution" in a year or at most two, of ever increasing radicalization of Stalinist policy and of seizure of power by the various C.P.'s such as took place in China. These "optimistic" perspectives for tomorrow—their optimism is relative to the future of the Kremlin bureaucracy not to that of the Fourth International—serves in reality to conceal the most profound scepticism as regards the working class's own resources, to whom they deny the possibility of entering any large scale struggle and of raising its level of consciousness prior to the war.

However, some extreme manifestations of pro-Stalinism, which should have served as a warning signal, showed up in weak sectors of the party. A young provincial militant, Maurice Burguiere, went over to the Stalinists, and was only won back by the arguments of the January "addenda"; at Lyon on the other hand, another young militant, LeFort, drew up theses which he considered, and not without reason, as the logical conclusions of the Tenth Plenum theses and which declare that the Stalinist bureaucracy will stop playing a counter-revolutionary role as soon as war breaks out. Burguiere will completely go over to Stalinism after the split, denouncing Trotskyism as an imperialist agency.

The theses of Germain ("Ten Theses on Stalinism") which Frank had proclaimed as the document which should straighten Pablo out, are published in the month of May, but as a discussion document and with a preface which places them under the aegis of the Ninth Plenum. This obviously does not prevent Pablo from calling this document "untimely." The Political Bureau of the French section adopts them as a resolution for the Third World Congress (without the preface). The seventh congress of the party will likewise adopt them, to the unusual and comic indignation of their author.

As a supplement to the theses of the C.C. majority,

Bleibtreu publishes "Where Is Comrade Pablo Going?", an article critically analyzing "Where Are We Going?". This text, published by "La Verite" after the split under the title "Defense of Trotskyism," but submitted as far back as this time to the I.S. as a document for the preparatory discussion for the Third World Congress, is not distributed by the I.S. in the International; the other French documents, notably the theses on international orientation, are also not distributed.

From the still confused and timid character of the revisionism, certain majority comrades are inclined to conclude that what is involved is not a revisionist *course*—Pablism—but certain revisionist errors, and that although an energetic struggle against them is of course necessary, they can be corrected without serious losses at the Third World Congress. This is the reason for a certain weakness in the struggle by the majority at the Seventh Congress of the party, which takes place in July 1951, and at the Third World Congress. Despite that, the Seventh Congress of the party confirms the decisive weight of the majority which counts 2/3 of the militant forces on its side (it will be over 3/4 at the time of the split). The struggle there was a violent one. The minority tried to use the argument of authority, in anticipation of the decisions of the world congress. Naturally, the liquidationist revisionists circulate the rumor that the majority wants a split. The congress reaffirms the principle of discipline toward the decisions of the world congress. The I.S. declares that it is impossible to postpone the date of the world congress as requested by the I.C.P. so that discussion on the new positions of the I.S. can take place. Although the main French texts have been published within the discussion period, they will not be distributed in the International. This prepares the maneuvers of the world congress.

The Third World Congress takes place in France. The delegates from distant countries are called a month before its sessions and are "insulated" by the I.S. They are prepared by a campaign of slander against the French majority, which is pictured to them as splitters (it is even insinuated that some are "captives of the Yugoslavs"). The three days of general discussion in the congress boil down to a series of violent attacks against the French section, contradictory attacks, the Pablist delegates attacking it one after another on the basis of imaginary positions. The Pablists are not afraid, in the course of their criticisms of the I.C.P. positions, to attack the theses of Germain on Stalinism, characterized by a Dutch leader as a reflection of imperialist pressure!

The I.C.P. presented three documents to the congress: its theses on international policy adopted by its Seventh congress, the "Ten Theses on Stalinism," then, during the course of the congress, numerous amendments to the theses of the Ninth Plenum correcting all the revisionist declarations in that document. The vote of the congress, without precedent in our movement, motivates the refusal to declare itself on the French theses (after a night of reflection) by the fact that the delegates were not informed on them (although they were able to polemicize against them during two out of three days); and the refusal to take a position on the "Ten Theses" on the score that Germain, their author, "did not write them with the object of having them voted on."

Pablo wants to get rid of the majority by means of a French Commission set up as a tribunal. Some delegates are opposed to this procedure. The report made by Frank to this commission is a slanderous attack against the majority without counterposing program and conception of building the party. His sole aim is to have the congress hand over the real leadership of the I.C.P. to its Pablist minority. The majority does not accede to this and Pablo cannot carry out his operation successfully, failing in an attempt to split the majority by the offer of a dubious compromise. . . . The last session of the French commission and of the congress saw a relaxation of the hostile atmosphere organized by Pablo against the French delegates. Pablo has to yield and accept the fact that there is no precedent for the violation of democratic centralism in the designation of leadership of national sections; the I.C.P. retains the leadership which its own congress has established.

For the I.S. the international discussion has definitely ended with the congress. This includes the discussion on the Chinese revolution ("the most important event which has occurred since October 1917") which did not take place at the world congress and which the I.S. will open only after it will place the French majority outside the possibility of participating in it. By making a forbidden ground of every problem which poses the question of Stalinism anew, Pablo leaves the field free for the development of his pro-Stalinist revisionism.

An I.S.-I.C.P. commission had been formed for drafting a program applying the line of the Third World Congress to France. Germain represents the I.S. there. The world congress confirmed for France the line of building an independent party. The resolution drawn up by the commission scarcely goes beyond this decision and proclaims the maintenance of what has been achieved. Pablo, in the course of a visit to the P.B. of the I.C.P. states: "it was not Pablism which the Third World Congress adopted!" Nevertheless, hardly have the delegates left France when the Pablist offensive is renewed; each sphere of activity of the party supplies an occasion for defining *the turn* toward the line of the 3rd World Congress. The special point of this offensive will first be trade union work. The Pablist minority is connected with all sectors of party work. By virtue of this, the proposed document of orientation in trade union work presented to the P.B. had been drawn up with the participation and agreement of Pierre Frank. Nevertheless we see the latter supporting an amendment by Privas at the P.B. which, by its tendency toward total alignment on Stalinism, by that very fact alone, brings into question (by extension) the necessity for an independent party in France. The P.B. asks the I.S. for its opinion on the Privas amendment. The "enlarged I.S." at which this question is placed on the agenda is a star-chamber affair at which Frank makes a fraudulent report on the activity of the party in the trade union group of "Unity." By means of this report Pablo succeeds in obtaining full power to settle this question. In this manner he is able to make up for all the time lost at the world congress. The document on trade union orientation which he draws up concretizes "Where Are We Going" in the direction of pro-Stalinist and liquidationist revisionism. He writes: "Stalinist policy surely becomes *in practice* a policy of militant mobilization of the working class masses against the war preparations of imperialism. . . . It constitutes . . . *not an epi-*

*sodic or transitory* turn, but rather the expression of a forced march which the evolution of imperialism toward the counter-revolutionary war imposes on the Stalinist leaders."

The Pablist offensive continues on the level of youth policy and that of the paper. The leadership (majority), in various documents on these questions, denounces the transition from the positions of the Third World congress (and of the resolution of the French commission appointed by the congress) to liquidationist Pablist positions. This entire battle, however, takes place in the P.B. It is closed to the party which the P.B. does not have the right to keep informed. An extraordinary congress is consequently the only way out. Pablo cannot again run the risk of nullifying his bureaucratic successes before a representative assembly. That is why, on the eve of the Central Committee called for January 20, 1952, an ultimatum document (dated January 15) unveils his batteries. This is the "entry *sui generis* turn." This text will be minutely analyzed by the French majority. It is the program of liquidation. The P.B. must accept it or resign. The C.C. denounces it, driving Pablo to decisive admissions: "We cannot today discuss what the Stalinists are doing . . . nor with those who cling to the formulas of the transition program. . . . We will discuss with those who agree . . . etc. . . ." As a matter of discipline, the leadership agrees to begin carrying out entrism into the CP but demands an extraordinary congress in order that the party can be clarified on this "unprecedented turn." In order to avoid the destruction of the party, the leadership refuses to agree to the principal point of the Pablist ultimatum: surrender of the leadership to the minority.

Pablo thereupon declares the majority of the C.C. suspended, without the I.S. having met during the course of the C.C. sessions.

The Pablists had prepared an act of violence against the party along the lines of taking over locals, files, etc. . . but they fail. The majority refuses to submit to the illegal suspension, to the sole leadership of Pierre Frank, appointed gauleiter for the I.S.

Emergency measures assure the security of the party. The majority publishes all the documents of the discussion and prepares the 8th Congress.

In these difficult circumstances the party shows its political maturity and its clear attachment to the principles of Trotskyism. All the living elements condemn the Pablist act of violence. The meetings called by Pierre Frank only manage to gather a new Pablists.

The extraordinary congress is prepared. The Pablists have to resign themselves to coming to meetings called by the majority. The general discussion confounds and discredits them. Their sole strength lies in using the threat of expulsion and in using the bond of international organization to play upon the sentiments of militants bred in the most profound internationalism. The period of suspension (January 20-beginning of March) witnesses an intensive political life. Numerous writings unveil the real pro-Stalinist liquidationist face of Pablism.

Nevertheless, at the 10th Plenum of the I.E.C., the majority of the I.C.P. accepts the distorted proposals made by Pablo (the extraordinary congress will take place, but the leadership is changed: it is to be dominated by Germain, who is to have a major vote. The majority accepts this formulation, because it hopes that in the light of the new developments of Pablism, French isolation will cease

and that sections will join it in order to put a brake on revisionism. It agrees to a heavy sacrifice in the interests of international Trotskyism, to which it sends out an appeal.

The period lasting from the 10th to the 11th plenum, under the leadership of this new two-headed political bureau (Germain constantly acts along Pablist lines, but the majority keeps the levers of command in its hands) is a dark period. \*

Except for the "Unity" conference which takes place at the same time as the Tenth Plenum, it is a period of party atrophy and decline.

In the "Unity" conference, the majority won a striking success, dealing a crushing defeat to the Yugoslav agents, readily isolating and scattering them, whereas the Pablist tactic sought to isolate us, in order, in the final analysis, to destroy two years of work, much to the advantage of the Yugoslav agents.

But seeing the leadership of the Fourth International abandon Trotskyism, many militants abandon their militant work. The party is paralyzed. The I.S. refuses the majority elected by the 7th Congress the right to present its political report to the 8th Congress which is in preparation. On the eve of the Eleventh Plenum of the I.E.C., Germain presents a new Pablist ultimatum: complete capitulation (not to defend our positions at the congress, the latter being transformed into a *conference for carrying out entry sui generis*) or outright removal from the leadership. There is no further choice. Pablo, through Germain's mouth, is demanding our self-destruction. The Eleventh Plenum gives him a free hand. The majority then decides to call the congress. The Pablists know that the C.C., with the support of the entire party, will reject the ultimatum. Consequently, a few days before the meeting of the C.C., they ransack the technical apparatus of the party, and issue a pamphlet, which they distribute to the congress of the Indo-Chinese B.L. (a group which will be criminally but needlessly split on this account on the very eve of its return to Viet-Nam), accusing the majority of preparing a split. Secretly, two months previously, they had filed a statement with the police department establishing an I.C.P. with a completely Pablist leadership. By this splitting tactic they think they have put an end to the party. At the C.C. they refuse to retract their splitting actions. The central committee suspends them. They organize a minority congress.

The Eighth Congress of the party finds that the split, so far as numerical forces are concerned, is of slight importance. All the working class elements of the party re-

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\* A period marked specially by the publication in "Quatrieme Internationale" of the report by Pablo on "entry *sui generis*." Pablo thereby publicly offers his collaboration with the Kremlin.

main attached to its program and completely understand the pro-Stalinist liquidationist character of Pablism; but the split isolates us physically from the International for a period, because of the tactic of isolation which Pablo had employed concerning us, in order to first get rid of the main obstacle which the French section represented. This isolation initially discourages some militants. However, the majority does not lose its hope in the strength which lies in the attachment to principles.

Historical dialectic serves the Marxists and events come to our aid. The brief course of Stalinist adventurism in France has brought the Pablists to madness. After the disastrous demonstration of May 28, 1952, they proclaim: "The French revolution has begun under the leadership of the men from the Kremlin" and they demand of the Eleventh Plenum that it expel the majority which "is deserting the revolution."\*\*

While the split is taking place, the last Stalin course of United National Front comes as a brutal contradiction of all the prophecies of Pablism.

The first C.C. after the congress (September 1952), reaffirming its unalterable attachment to the Fourth International, drafts its plan of struggle for its reintegration in conjunction with a struggle against liquidation within the whole International.

Just as the party was able, upon being freed from the debilitating factional struggle, to turn outward and during the course of the year 1952-1953 to achieve a series of important successes (thanks to which we will win back many militants lost during the struggle against Pablism and before), so on the international level, our new situation allows us to establish direct contact with many Trotskyists in the International, as a starting point for the realignment of the International.

Disappointed in its hope to destroy Trotskyism in France by the split, Pablism resorts to the most odious means for accomplishing its work of destruction: police actions, slanders, collaboration with the Stalinists. These operations dealt serious blows to our cause but are finally turning against their authors, who are discredited from now on.

With the struggle against Pablism, the French section of the International experienced its longest and most painful crisis in (party) building. Heavily proletarianized during the last few years, tempered in the class struggle, it has magnificently survived this trial and demonstrated both its political maturity and its capacity for action. In this three-year struggle the incomparable value of our program has once again been verified.

October 1953

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\*\* These same people say of the strike wave of August 1953 that it was not the revolution nor even a general strike!

## SECTION III: THE SWP MAJORITY POSITION ON STALINISM IN THE COCHRAN FIGHT

["What the New York Discussion Has Revealed," by Joseph Hansen appeared in *SWP Discussion Bulletin* Volume XV, number 4 (February 1953). It was the result of a sharp debate in the New York Local of the Socialist Workers Party over the attempt by Mike Bartell (Milton Zaslow), the local organizer, to reorient the work of the local towards the Stalinist milieu. This debate marked the full-scale outbreak of a fight with the Cochran-Clarke-Bartell faction, a fight that had been brewing ever since Clarke's return from the Third World Congress. Bartell,

Clarke, and their supporters claimed to be the "real" supporters of Pablo in the SWP and the "real" interpreters of the line of the Third World Congress.

[Hansen's document is a critique of Stalinism and a presentation of what most SWP leaders took to be the clear meaning of the Third World Congress documents. The reply by Harry Frankel (Harry Braverman) presented the Cochranite stand on Stalinism. His contribution is included in Part 4 of this collection.]

*"What the New York Discussion Has Revealed," by Joseph Hansen*

The discussion that has developed in the New York Local over the "Report and Tasks" submitted by Comrade Bartell is as heated as our party has seen in a good many years. Invective, flareups, strained personal relations—these appeared, not at the conclusion of a bitter factional struggle, but during the first weeks of discussion on perspectives and orientation of the New York Local. The tone, set by Comrade Bartell and his supporters, is in complete contrast to the calmness and objectivity that governed our discussion over the class character of the East European countries. The subjectivity of the current discussion appears still stranger in view of the length of that earlier discussion and its profundity. How are we to account for this difference?

An easy answer, of course, is to hold Comrade Ring and Comrade Stevens responsible. They questioned the orientation outlined by the New York Local Organizer. Instead of orientation they should have concerned themselves only with immediate, "concrete" questions because orientation concerns the party as a whole and cannot be resolved by a part. Therefore, indignation over their ill-advised temerity is completely in order. This is a certain justification for this feeling, no doubt. The question of Comrade Bartell's proposed orientation has proven unresolvable on the local level, just as he maintained. But then how could Comrade Ring and Comrade Stevens know this in advance? How could the Local itself know it in advance of discussion? Was it excluded that Comrade Bartell would recognize the incorrectness of his orientation and change his mind?

This favorable variant—resolution of the question on a local level—was not realized; but that does not discredit the position taken by Comrade Ring and Comrade Stevens. In fact the insistence of Comrade Bartell that this is a national issue involving the entire party's position on Stalinism demonstrates how correct they were in questioning the orientation of the New York Organizer even though it now means that the dispute transcends the local level. Thus, if we approach things objectively, it is clear that we cannot put the blame on Comrade Ring and Comrade Stevens for the heat in the discussion. Whether their views on Stalinism turn out to be right or wrong, the party

really owes these comrades a vote of thanks.

Our attempt to save ourselves the trouble of thinking got us nowhere, as was to be expected from such a superficial approach. We have to dig deeper. Where such heat is generated in a dispute as we see in the New York Local, a Marxist must ask himself, "Is this perhaps the form taken by a political difference not yet brought clearly, fully or consistently into the open? If so, what is the political difference?" From this viewpoint, the heat is only a surface manifestation of no more than symptomatic interest. Our task is to try to determine its political content. Once this is done and the real difference becomes clear, we must then account for its origin. Finally, we must decide what to do about it.

### *Manifestations of a Tendency*

First of all, let's attempt to get at the gist of the position represented by Comrade Bartell and his supporters. I propose to do this by making abstractions from the Organizer's report and remarks. To this I will add further abstractions from speeches of his supporters and from arguments they advance in the corridors. I will leave aside subsequent assertions that certain remarks were not made, or if made were only "half-baked," as well as contentions that no departures from the traditional fundamental position of our movement are involved. My aim is to synthesize a structure that will stand or fall by its internal consistency. I recognize that the result as a whole is likely to be challenged by Comrade Bartell and his supporters as unfair and unwarranted and perhaps worse. Some may agree that parts truthfully reflect their views but that other parts do not. They may contend that they cannot be held accountable for them and reject them out of hand. However, this procedure is not intended to win friends and influence people by diplomatic means. The purpose is to show the logic of the tendency and where the various arguments that have been advanced fit in.

1. It is contended that the deepening reaction in America has so profoundly affected the workers that opportunities for fruitful work in the trade unions and other mass or-

ganizations at present are extremely limited if not nil. Consequently we must adjust our tactics accordingly.

2. It is argued that "The American population in general is neither able to understand nor is interested in studying the conceptions of the Third World Congress. But since we are only able to recruit or expand our circle of sympathizers today on the basis of our world program, we are of necessity very isolated."

3. We must break out of this isolation. Otherwise we face the danger of degeneration. We cannot adjust our press and other mediums to the new level of thinking of the American workers. On the contrary, we must make our press, especially the paper, more theoretical; because—

4. Fortunately a milieu is presented to us for possible recruitment—the "politically conscious" circles. If this does not hold true for the country as a whole it is at least true of New York which in this respect "resembles more a European city than any other in America."

5. The politically conscious circles consist primarily of the Stalinists and their periphery. They are equipped to understand our ideas.

6. Even more, they are willing to listen to our ideas. In fact Trotskyism can be said to have become "legitimized" among many Stalinist members and sympathizers. "Indeed, their movement could be said to be rife with 'Trotskyist conciliationism.'"

7. In the view of some, this manifestation is due to fresh currents appearing among the Stalinist ranks in opposition to their counter-revolutionary leadership. But others tie it in with the dual character of Stalinism. They say that besides being counter-revolutionary, as we have long recognized, Stalinism is also revolutionary.

8. Under present conditions—the lack of basis for a deal with imperialism—the revolutionary side of Stalinism tends to come to the fore. Thus, regardless of their subjective attitude, the Stalinists can go objectively only to the left. They can no longer betray. In fact, the Stalinists are eventually capable of projecting a revolutionary line in the United States.

9. In proof of this, it is contended, apart from ourselves Stalinism remains the only current of conscious opposition to imperialist war and the witch-hunt. Thus in America they are on the side of the revolutionary forces. They haven't buckled under the war pressure.

10. And abroad, the Stalinists have led or are leading successful revolutions in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, China and Korea, as well as defending the Soviet Union.

11. In addition to this, at least two practical considerations demand that we place major emphasis on work in this field. (a) As the witch hunt deepens we are going to be persecuted more and more; therefore, we must seek allies who will help defend our rights. These, of course, they say, are the Stalinists who are similarly hounded. (b) An internal crisis, especially in the periphery of the Stalinist circles, offers us a golden opportunity to win recruits.

These eleven points represent, in my opinion, a reasonable facsimile in essence of the position that is erupting in the New York Local and around which the discussion is now revolving in the corridors, in comrades' homes and partially on the branch floor. True enough, it is not pressed with the crassness and consistency this bare outline suggests, but as I said before I am not concerned here with filling in the diplomatic niceties that are used to make it

more presentable. It is more important to state the issues in skeleton form as we see them. To get any clarification at all, we must first say what is.

Before characterizing this position, it might be well perhaps to look at its symmetrical complement, the explanation offered for the resistance displayed to going along with it.

#### *Their View on What's Wrong with the Party*

1. It is contended that those agreeing with Comrade Stevens and Comrade Ring have a hopped-up view on what can be accomplished at present in the trade unions and other mass organizations, either seeing ferment where none is present or unrealistically visualizing an early upsurge which will open up big opportunities for us.

2. This out-of-the-world view leads such comrades to cater to certain prejudices of the politically backward sections of the American working class.

3. Among these is *reactionary* opposition to Stalinism. Concessions to this take the form of Stalinophobia in our ranks.

4. This is only one manifestation of a sectarian attitude long evident in the leadership of the party, a consequence of prolonged isolation and the concomitant growth of habits, moods and methods characteristic of an ingrown sect. This explains the unreasoning resistance to taking advantage of the opportunities presented by major concentration on politically conscious circles. In fact the comrades really oppose even a secondary tactic in this direction for fear of being tarred with the Stalinist brush.

6. Despite the subjective revolutionary views of such comrades, their fear of Stalinism and resistance to work in that field represents objectively buckling to the war pressure of American imperialism.

7. Among the evidences of this unhealthy sectarian and Stalinophobic tendency can be cited: (a) The fantastic line on trade union and other mass work presented by Comrade Stevens, Comrade Ring and others. (b) The insistence on largely meaningless and costly election activity in the style of the Socialist Labor Party. (c) The resemblance of our paper to the DeLeonite *Weekly People*, a typical instance being our failure to get in on the ground floor on the Rosenberg case. (d) The monotonous insistence on the "independent role of the party" and the resistance to a new, fresh approach in propaganda work. (e) The presentation of Stalinism as counter-revolutionary "through and through." (f) The sterility displayed by a section of the leadership over a period of years in analyzing the great new events of our time.

Now that we have been wised up on what's wrong with the party, we may feel prepared to go still further along this unaccustomed line of thinking.

#### *Far-reaching Generalizations*

Certain comrades are already making far-reaching generalizations by combining their views about the revolutionary role of Stalinism with their conclusions about the sectarian impasse they think our party faces:

1. Three revolutions have taken place in the post-war period—Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, and China. But the Trotskyists did not lead them.

2. World Trotskyism made a historical contribution by

keeping alive the body of Marxist thought. But if every Trotskyist were to drop dead tomorrow, the revolution would continue.

3. The victory of socialism is not only inevitable; it is now automatically assured. Capitalism has become so decrepit it faces a hopeless situation today. Even under Stalinist leadership, the masses will down it.

4. Any dispute over the "independent role" of the party is largely meaningless in the light of the invincible world upsurge now brewing. Objective conditions today assure victory despite anything and no matter what.

5. We can still play a role however by fructifying the politically conscious currents with our ideas. To do this we must end our isolation and put ourselves in contact with the circles where advanced thought is going on and we have a receptive audience. Our problem is to develop (a) skillful propaganda and (b) a tactic that will assure contact with politically conscious people.

Does all this sound far-fetched? I assure you I did not draw it out of the air. It represents the "thinking" now going on in a section of the New York Local. I have only boiled it down and put it together in a certain order.

### *The Real Trouble*

What it points to is graphically illustrated in the case of one comrade of a serious and logical turn of mind. Not having lived through any mass upsurge such as the rise of the CIO, he does not know from personal experience what power resides in the workers as a class. He doubts anything will come from them, at least in America in the coming period. He is wholly disillusioned and thus agrees completely with the bleak perspective painted by Comrade Bartell. On the other hand he agrees with the emphasis on the "revolutionary" character of Stalinism and does not differentiate the Kremlin clique and caste from defense of the Soviet Union. As a matter of fact he has "no differences" with Stalinism and is "prepared to enter the CP." That he has not done so indicates that he has some doubts in the back of his mind and that what he is really doing is simply presenting what he considers to be conclusions consistent with the position now being pushed by Comrade Bartell and others. I am sure that Comrade Bartell does not agree with this comrade and in explaining the "dual" nature of Stalinism to him will lay heavy stress on its counter-revolutionary side. For my part, I hope the comrade will closely follow the development of the discussion now unfolding and try to gain a better grasp of Marxist method. This should help him, we may hope, to reconsider his present extreme position on the character of Stalinism.

Aside from such an embarrassingly consistent view, however, which may, moreover, turn out to be an isolated case, it seems clear to me that the tendency which has appeared in New York and which may have adherents elsewhere must be characterized politically as *conciliation to Stalinism*. This holds whether you regard Stalinism as more revolutionary than counter-revolutionary or vice versa. This political difference is what is at the bottom of the heat in the New York Local.

The question of tactics toward Stalinism or a maneuver in that direction does not enter in. I, for example, am in complete disagreement with the political appreciation Comrade Bartell has of Stalinism and yet wholeheartedly favor work in this field. I will say more about this later.

### *The Origin of the Differences*

At this point let me make a concession to Comrade Bar-

tell. I agree with him that the history of the difference in orientation and the difference in political positions behind it does not begin with his report as Organizer to the New York Local. The differences have been some time in gestating.

No serious difference has yet appeared in our party without previous intimations. Every comrade trained in the Marxist method and familiar with the history of our movement is aware of this. When a dispute breaks out, one of our first concerns is to link it with the past. Often this will at once cast a revealing light on the issues and in any case help fit them properly into the ideological development of our movement.

I trace the current differences back to the discussion on Eastern Europe. It was there they made their first appearance although in a form quite different from their emergence today. First of all, in taking the position that Stalinism had brought about an overturn in property forms in these countries, I raised the question myself as to how this affected our estimate of the political character of Stalinism. My answer was that the power to make such changes did not require us to revise the concept of Stalinism developed by Trotsky. Stalinism still remained counter-revolutionary to the core.

It was precisely this question that caused me to hesitate long before reaching a definitive position on Eastern Europe. I felt I had to absolutely sure of my ground. It was necessary to think things through over and over again and test the conclusions from every side. In my opinion, a cautious attitude was not only justified but thoroughly called for, especially on the part of those with a keen sense of responsibility for the integrity and continuity of our theoretical heritage. While I am on the point, let me add parenthetically that I was confident the party would eventually reach a correct decision. This was assured by the full and thoroughgoing discussion possible under the regime in our party, by the traditional interest of the party membership in theoretical questions and by the general recognition that we consciously sought a model discussion with no factional alignments, no needling, no pressure other than continued friendly and democratic discussion. The comradely atmosphere facilitated my reaching a deeper understanding of the role of Stalinism in Eastern Europe as I am sure it did everyone else.

I was able to foresee the danger that might arise from drawing illicit *political* conclusions about Stalinism from the *sociological* changes taking place in Eastern Europe under Stalinist auspices. When Comrade Clarke, who was then the most outspoken defender of the position that nothing basic had happened in Eastern Europe and that these countries were still capitalist in character, taxed me in debate with the charge that my position meant assigning a progressive role to Stalinism and called in question the whole role of Trotskyism, I had no difficulty answering him. It was clear to me that he had taken a superficial view and had not thought things through to the end. From the viewpoint of Trotskyist theory, the overturns in Eastern Europe did not mean Stalinism had become revolutionary. They simply indicated that the desecrated and strangled October Revolution of Lenin and Trotsky was still alive. It was not that the character of Stalinism had changed. It was simply that the social foundations laid down by the October Revolution forced the bureaucracy to make these changes.

As Pierre Frank later formulated it in his report adopted at the Third World Congress of the Fourth International, "It goes without saying that in recognizing the character of the bureaucratic action in the buffer zone countries we not only do not attribute any progressive character to it, not only do we continue to consider it counter-revolutionary

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as a whole, but we underscore the limits of bureaucratic possibilities. They were brought to bear on bourgeois countries in full decomposition where social relations had already been very unstable before the war and where the bourgeoisie had been considerably undermined during the war."

It now appears that the argument about the danger of characterizing the Eastern European countries as "workers states" because this would mean assigning a progressive role to Stalinism and call in question the whole role of Trotskyism has been brought up to date in a bold new way. You change the minus sign to a plus like this: "Yes, the role of Trotskyism is somewhat obscure, but fortunately at the very moment this became clear, Stalinism showed that it could play a progressive role, thus cancelling out part of its counter-revolutionary character. So all is well, even though it's not the way we would have liked it. Old, outmoded formulas prevented us from seeing what happened in Eastern Europe while it was going on, but at least we are in the lead today in drawing all the necessary political conclusions. Now let's have no more sectarian dragging of feet in lining up on this new estimate of Stalinism."

Comrade Cannon especially was concerned about the danger of this type of thinking appearing in our movement. In his opinion this danger far outweighed any progressive element in the overturns in Eastern Europe in and of themselves. And in this he was dead right, in my opinion.

He raised the question several times in the Political Committee to my knowledge and at least once in a Plenum of the National Committee in the sharpest form. He acknowledged that these territories could be assimilated into the Soviet Union, but that Stalinism could convert them into independent workers states—isn't that a concession to Stalinism? The reaction was varied among the comrades who held that the buffer zone countries were deformed workers states. One at least, appeared to take it as a charge with personal imputations and responded accordingly. For myself, I did not especially appreciate having my position questioned as a concession to Stalinism but it occurred to me that aside from the degree of "independence" of these states, and aside from whether it was personal or not personal, Comrade Cannon was asking a *political* question. He knew where we stood subjectively; he wanted to know if we had thought this through politically and had fully appreciated the danger and if so what was our answer. At the Plenum my response was along these lines: "Yes, if you follow formal logic and identify Stalinism with the Soviet Union, then you can make the error of conceding it can play a progressive political role. But if you approach it dialectically and differentiate Stalinism from the property forms it rests on, then you can account for the overturns without granting Stalinism one ounce of credit. In fact you can put a fresh edge on our attack because the conclusion is that the counter-revolutionary political consequences of the overturns far outweigh the progressive sociological aspect."

This should be sufficient to indicate that the main issue in the current dispute in the New York Local is not exactly new. The pattern now being "thought out" by a section of the New York Local, offers few considerations that have not already been brought forward in essence either in the form of prognosis, query or warning. What has happened is that the potential danger foreseen during

the discussion on Eastern Europe has become actual.

### *The Pessimism over the American Workers*

In tracing the origin of the present differences, it would be quite one-sided to confine our attention to the development of attitude toward Stalinism. Even more decisive in my opinion is the attitude toward perspectives and present possibilities lodged in the class struggle in America. The pessimism over the so-called "backward" anti-Stalinist worker observable in the position of Comrade Bartell and his supporters is intimately related to the optimism they express over the so-called "politically conscious" in reality Stalinist, petty-bourgeois circles. The ratio between the two, indeed, appears to be a direct one. The more profound the lack of faith in the one, the greater the hope and confidence in the other.

I am not against turning a dark cloud inside out in order to find a silver lining, but this is not always realistic in politics. Comrade Bartell's effort to rationalize his position by explaining to us how desirable a "heavy overcoat" is during the molecular process leading from the winter of reaction to the spring of upsurge is particularly ludicrous. "It has reached the point around here," he tells us, "where you cannot give a straight, clear answer to questions without being called 'non-dialectical.'" And, as his version of a straight clear answer combined with the utmost tactical flexibility, he offers us the politics of the weather vane.

The whole question of the status of the class struggle in America, its perspectives and our orientation, is so important that it must be considered separately. I can mention it here only in passing and for a more realistic approach than that offered by Comrade Bartell and his supporters refer you to "Perspectives and Tactics in the Unions," the report made by Comrade Dobbs to the New York union fractions published in the No. 11 January *Discussion Bulletin*.

Let us return to our main theme, the problem of the character of Stalinism.

### *"Through and Through"*

When Comrade Stevens in his debate with Comrade Bartell mentioned that Stalinism is counter-revolutionary through and through, it was like tapping a hornets' nest. The response was immediate. What! Counter-revolutionary "through and through"! Why, that concept has been "outlawed" in the world Trotskyist movement! This, the first reaction, is by itself sufficient to indicate the hypersensitivity of these comrades and their resistance to calling Stalinism by its right name. Such a danger signal should serve to alert the entire party to the political softness that has appeared in our ranks toward the gravedigger of the world socialist revolution.

Comrade Bartell, thinking it over, put down the following reply: "Why is it that Stevens and Ring who see two sides to every question, see only one side when they look at Stalinism? How do parties (Note the slipshod identification of Stalinist parties with Stalinism in general.—J.H.) which are counter-revolutionary 'through and through' become transformed into parties which lead revolutions?"

Is it not the logical conclusion of this conception that all revolutions or transformations carried through by Stalinist parties or by the Kremlin, or by a combination of both, are in reality *counter-revolutions* (China, Yugoslavia, Korea, Eastern Europe)? What has such a view in common with basic Trotskyist conceptions, or with the real facts of the class struggle?"

These cautious questions do not help the discussion very much; least of all do they help Comrade Bartell. Let the comrades who believe that Stalinism is subjectively counter-revolutionary but objectively revolutionary turn back and read those questions again. Don't they imply that a force which can "lead revolutions" is not counter-revolutionary? Isn't the leadership the subjective factor in a revolution? Isn't Stalinism therefore *subjectively* revolutionary? Isn't this confirmed in America by the opposition of Stalinism to the war and the witch hunt and their refusal to buckle under the war pressure? And if Stalinist is both objectively and subjectively revolutionary isn't it *revolutionary* "through and through"? Comrade Bartell, of course, does not hold this view; he holds only the premises for it. But what do such premises have in common with basic Trotskyist conceptions, or with the real facts of the class struggle?

We had better turn back to our basic Trotskyist conceptions in order to gain the theoretical clarity needed to find our way in the real facts of the class struggle. Before referring to the views developed primarily by Trotsky, however, let us consider briefly the position of our co-thinkers abroad on this important question.

#### *The Inside Dope on the Third World Congress*

The documents of the Third World Congress were published in a special 64-page issue of *Fourth International* (November-December 1951). They have been read, studied, digested and assimilated by the American Trotskyist movement. Yet certain comrades, including Comrade Bartell I believe, hold that our party as a whole has not really grasped the full meaning of the positions reached by the Third World Congress and that one of the evidences of this is our alleged reluctance to engage in any tactical maneuvers whatsoever with the Stalinists in America. And even if we agree to work among the Stalinists, the way we drag our feet indicates that we have not understood the new world view of Trotskyism on the character of Stalinism as propounded by the Third World Congress—that's the claim. According to these interpreters of the texts, the Third World Congress went beyond Trotsky's basic analysis of Stalinism, bringing Trotsky's teachings on Stalinism "up to date" and working out a new program in relation to it from which a new estimate of the role of our movement and tactics toward Stalinism flow on a world scale.

How these interpreters of the texts of the Third World Congress hope to convince anyone with an open mind, I do not venture to guess, although I will admit that some people are strangely impressed with information that is labelled "the inside dope" and can be lined up on that basis. Abern proved that some years ago and it appears that the disease has reappeared in our ranks.

What was new in the documents of the Third World Congress? First of all, it brought up to date, as do all such gatherings, the Trotskyist analysis of world events. It recognized the vast acceleration of the tempo toward another imperialist war under the leadership of American

imperialism. It analyzed the tremendous mass upsurge, especially in the colonial countries, and the consequent pressures that tend to pass beyond the control even of the Kremlin. It declared that the new imperialist attack on the Soviet bloc and colonial countries would tend from the very beginning to become transformed into civil wars in which the proletariat would prove victorious over both imperialism and Stalinism. In the words of Michel Pablo, "In general, we say in the Theses and in the Political Resolution, our movement will have to struggle from now on against the war of imperialism and attempt wherever possible to itself organize and lead this struggle, to act as the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat in these countries." The Congress "wanted to arm our movement with a longer revolutionary perspective" that "combats the species of defeatism which takes the form of a 'now or never' attitude." And corresponding to this, it outlined in a broad way the present tasks of the Trotskyist movement in a series of countries.

Secondly, it took the position that the buffer zone could now be characterized as "deformed workers states," thus summarizing the discussion that had been going on in the Trotskyist movement. It accounted for errors in our previous theoretical estimate of the sociological character of these countries and explained how the overturns flowed from the dual character of the Soviet caste.

Thirdly, while recognizing that "the fundamental policy of the Soviet bureaucracy at the present time is determined by its fear of the revolutionary consequences which would arise from a world war with imperialism" and that therefore the Soviet bureaucracy has "abstained from exploiting the unfavorable relationship of forces for imperialism," still this is not the whole picture. The Soviet bureaucracy, "faced with the obvious and accelerated preparations of imperialism for war and with the revolutionary reactions of the masses, is obliged to carry on a real struggle against these preparations through the medium of the CPs and to a certain extent to take into account the reactions of the masses." Thus we can expect that the Soviet bureaucracy, despite the dangers that it runs in its relations with imperialism and by the extension of the revolution in the world, is obliged not to purely and simply sabotage these struggles but rather to try to use them to its best advantage."

Finally, it visualized the possibility "*under certain exceptional conditions*"—and this limitation is underlined in the original—of Stalinist parties under the impact of mass upsurges "*projecting a revolutionary orientation, i.e., of seeing themselves obliged to undertake a struggle for power.*"

This variant, which some comrades have taken as the occasion for a flight into the wild blue yonder, is a development foreseen by Trotsky himself. Commenting in the Transitional Program on our demand that all the traditional mass parties "break politically from the bourgeoisie and enter upon the road of struggle for the workers and farmers government," Trotsky says:

"Is the creation of such a government by the traditional workers organizations possible? Past experience shows, as has already been stated, that this is to say the least highly improbable. However, one cannot categorically deny in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.) the petty-bourgeois parties, including the Stalinists, may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie. In any case one thing is not to be doubted: even if this highly improbable variant somewhere at some time becomes a reality and the 'Workers and Farmers Government,' in the above mentioned

sense, is established in fact, it would represent merely a short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat."

So far as the political tasks in the buffer zone are concerned, the Third World Congress made no changes. Here is how the International Executive Committee summarized it: "The report defended the designation of the 'People's Democracies' as having acquired, beginning with 1949, a definitive character as 'deformed workers' states,' and envisaged the defense of these countries against imperialism, as well as a program of political revolution against the bureaucracy similar to the Trotskyist program for the USSR. The slogans of independent Socialist Republics for Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, etc., and their voluntary federation were to remain as previously the central slogans for these countries."

On the tactical side, the Third World Congress stressed the importance of the workers in the ranks of the Communist parties and called attention to the need, bearing in mind the relation of forces, for the Trotskyist parties to follow their development and intervene actively in the process wherever possible. Here too, the Congress essentially followed a line developed by Trotsky himself.

All these decisions of the Congress were important and far-reaching, but abstracting them from the concrete world events under analysis, and looking at the decisions in the light of our theoretical heritage, not a single change was made in the fundamental position laid down by Trotsky, particularly Trotsky's theoretical appraisal of the character of Stalinist *politics*.

In fact, the Third World Congress stressed that no fundamental change was involved. Pablo, the main reporter declared: "On the character of the USSR and of the Soviet bureaucracy, we do not add anything new to what has already been said in the past. We do not alter any of our fundamental programmatic definitions of the past. But we stress the defense of the USSR as well as of the 'People's Democracies' and China against the war of imperialism. This defense is to be understood as in the past not as a slogan as such but as a strategic line of our International whose practical application remains subordinate as in the past to the general interests of the world socialist revolution."

That is clear enough, but Pablo emphasized and underlined this point: "So far as the anti-bureaucratic meaning of this defense is concerned, this is clearly explained in the Theses as well as in the Political Resolution and in the amendment we propose to include in the latter with the aim of removing all ambiguity on this question. We want to remove all grounds of criticism from those who are afraid we are lightmindedly abandoning even a particle of the attitude which Trotskyism has had in the past toward the Soviet bureaucracy."

Pablo even spelled it out for those capable of reading. Explaining what was meant by the formula about a Stalinist party in completely exceptional circumstances seeing itself obliged to undertake a struggle for power, he said:

"How should it be understood? Can the Communist parties transform themselves into revolutionary parties? The experience with the CPs does not permit such rash and dangerous assumptions. These parties can in exceptional circumstances (advanced decay of the bourgeois regime, a very powerful revolutionary movement) project a revolutionary orientation, but the question of their transformation into revolutionary parties, especially into Bolshevik parties, has not been answered in the affirmative,

not even in the most favorable cases known thus far (Yugoslavia, China). On the contrary.

"These instances, Yugoslavia in particular, demonstrate that while these parties can, as a result of exceptional conditions (and in the absence of any other revolutionary organization), be obliged to open up a struggle for power and even to attain this end despite their opportunism; when conditions change and become difficult they prove incapable of pursuing a consistent, revolutionary policy to consolidate and extend this power. They remain centrist parties subject to new retrogressions. However, the fact that under exceptional conditions these parties can project a revolutionary orientation retains all its importance and should act as a guide in our line toward them."

While we are checking the position taken by the Third World Congress—the real position down in black and white and not the version being peddled as the "inside dope"—let me call attention to the remarks of Pierre Frank who reported on the "Class Nature of Eastern Europe."

"Ascertaining the existence of such transitional regimes does not at all upset our evaluation of the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism nor our evaluation of Stalinism as a disintegrating force in the USSR and as a force organizing defeats of the world proletariat.

"(a) An evaluation of Stalinism cannot be made on the basis of localized results of its policy but must proceed from the entirety of its action on a world scale. When we consider the state of decay which capitalism presents even today, four years after the end of the war, and when we consider the concrete situation of 1943-45, there can be no doubt that Stalinism, on a world scale, appeared as the decisive factor in preventing a sudden and simultaneous collapse of the capitalist order as a whole in Europe and in Asia. In this sense, the 'successes' achieved by the bureaucracy in the buffer zone constitute, at most, the price which imperialism paid for services rendered on the world arena—a price which is moreover constantly called into question at each new stage.

"(b) From the world point of view, the reforms realized by the Soviet bureaucracy in the sense of an assimilation of the buffer zone to the USSR weigh incomparably less in the balance than the blows dealt by the Soviet bureaucracy, especially through its actions in the buffer zone, against the consciousness of the world *proletariat*, which it demoralizes, disorients and paralyzes by its whole policy and thus renders it susceptible to some extent to the imperialist campaign of war preparations. Even from the point of view of the USSR itself, the defeats and the demoralization of the world proletariat caused by Stalinism constitute an incomparably greater danger than the consolidation of the buffer zone constitutes a reinforcement."

I think our co-thinkers abroad would agree possibly that nothing in the positions taken by the Third World Congress would contradict the following summary statement about Stalinism:

The ferocious desire of the bureaucracy to preserve its privileges and its power against imperialism, that is, of defending the Soviet Union in its own manner, may lead it to actions that seek to give an impetus to the class struggle. The mounting war danger tends to produce differentiations within the Communist parties and within the caste itself. It is not excluded that a part of the Stalin-

ist structure will split and take the road toward a revolutionary orientation. Stalinism can no longer betray with the same facility as when it could maneuver between opposing imperialist powers and make perfidious deals with one camp or another. But the same general conditions that narrow the possibility of a long-term deal also foster revolutionary movements which the Stalinist caste fears. Hence the betrayals of Stalinism tend to take other forms besides open deals with imperialism at the expense of the proletariat. It is evident that in the period now facing us of settlement of final accounts, the Soviet bureaucracy will provide us with some demonstrations of the most abominable betrayals ever perpetrated by it against the world socialist revolution.

In the light of this brief review, the talk about a basic revision in our views taking place at the Third World Congress is clearly nothing but fantastic nonsense.

### *The Real Objective Frame*

The Third World Congress, I repeat, did not depart from Trotsky's basic views on the character of Stalinism. In fact, it utilized them in considering the new world situation that faces us. We can check this for ourselves by once again reviewing our basic concepts.

What is Stalinism? This could be answered easily enough with a definition. However, let us take the more difficult course of determining what it is through objective analysis.

To discover what it is from the qualitative side, we must find out what its social base is, for it is classes that set the characteristics of the political superstructure. The base of Stalinism consists of a peasant and labor aristocracy on which rests an enormous state bureaucratic apparatus. This is topped by the Bonapartist oligarchy. The social base of Stalinism is the *petty bourgeois* formation which has arisen in the Soviet Union.

Trotsky continually stressed the colossal size of this formation. In 1936 he estimated the top ruling circle at a half million, the bureaucratic apparatus at five or six million, the labor and peasant aristocracy at another five or six million; all these, together with their families, amounting to 20 to 25 million, some 12% to 15% of the Soviet population. Following World War II it has swollen even more in the Soviet Union and expanded into the buffer zone.

Trotsky also continually stressed the enormous privileges of this formation which measure the deepening differentiation in Soviet society. In 1936 he estimated that this 12% to 15% of the population enjoyed as much of the wealth of the country as the remaining 80% to 85%.

The Soviet bureaucracy is composed of first and second generation White Guards, Mensheviks, former capitalists, degenerated Bolsheviks and fascist types, together with a small passive minority that reflects the social interests of the workers. This counter-revolutionary grouping governs through the Bonapartist dictatorship of Stalin. By Bonapartism in this case we mean a counter-revolutionary regime resting on property forms that are the product of revolutionary conquest. While defending these, it does so through political forms that are the antithesis of those seen during the rise of the revolution. The usurpation of power by this caste represents the first stage of the bour-

geois restoration in the degenerated workers state.

The caste has all the vices of a ruling class and none of its virtues. It clings to its social position, its material privileges with a desperation and fury exceeding that of any ruling class yet known. Viewed *politically* it is counter-revolutionary to the core, its methods paralleling most closely those of the Nazi regime. It is no exaggeration to say that the oligarchy headed by Stalin as semi-crowned emperor is the scourge of the Soviet Union. Only *capitalist* counter-revolution based on the destruction of the present property forms could prove worse. (Trotsky excluded the possibility of *feudal* counter-revolution.)

The objective frame of Stalin's politics is determined by the interests of the caste. The *limits* are set by the new social relations in the Soviet Union. It is extremely important to note this well.

Having arisen in struggle against revolutionary socialism, in fact having usurped power by smashing the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky, Stalinism is in mortal opposition to world revolution. A river of blood marks the boundary it has drawn against the movement founded by Leon Trotsky.

It is true that representing only the first stage of the bourgeois restoration, the horde of rapacious, gangster-minded bureaucrats constituting the caste is still forced to operate through property forms that are socialist in principle. This is its basic contradiction. It has progressively undermined these property forms inherited from the October Revolution until today they are extremely weakened and from the viewpoint of socialist content scarcely recognizable. Nevertheless, it has not destroyed these forms up to now, and, in pushing beyond the frontier of the Soviet Union under the impact of World War II, has even exported them. In relation to the property forms, the caste thus plays a dual role—it will fight for its power and privileges against both the workers and imperialism.

In the Soviet Union the growth of the working class, fostered both qualitatively and quantitatively by the successes of planned economy on which the privileged bureaucracy rests give this contradiction an explosive character, inducing the most savage political measures by the caste.

Viewed from the interests of the Soviet Union as a whole, the politics of the Kremlin appear irrational, even "fantastic," as I heard one comrade say on seeing the headlines about anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. From the viewpoint of the privileged caste, however, Stalin's political course is self-consistent, even shrewd and brilliantly calculated. For instance, unable to get a deal with Anglo-American imperialism at the close of World War II and unable to share power with the native bourgeoisie of Eastern Europe, the caste found it in line with their own ravenous appetites to climax plundering the regions by toppling the regimes they had propped up in the occupied zones. This also coincided with their idea of the right way to defend the USSR. The frameups and blood purges, aimed at smashing potential centers of resistance in the working class and periodically undertaken as preventive civil war measures, are a logical continuation of the same policy in the eyes of the caste as a whole. They really see Stalin as their own benevolent despot.

Self-destructive? Yes. That is one of the characteristics of parasitism—it devours the base that sustains it. Like

the ruling classes whose vices it shares, this petty bourgeois caste refuses either to dissolve itself or to defend the Soviet Union in a way corresponding to the interests of the country. That is why we call for a political revolution in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. The overthrow of the Kremlin oligarchy by the Soviet masses, coupled with the program of world revolution, is the axis of our defense of the social conquests of the October Revolution.

Using the concepts derived from this analysis it is not too difficult to understand the pathological hatred of the Kremlin for Trotskyism (revolution) and such counter-revolutionary policies of the Kremlin as the deliberate use of anti-Semitism. We can even foresee worse to come. The increased danger to the Soviet Union arising from the war preparations of world imperialism is transmitted through the oligarchy and bureaucratic caste against the Soviet workers. Far from a revolutionary course, the tendency under the pressure of mounting war danger is to step up the purges and terror. The aim is to counteract and reduce the threat of forces tending to disturb the status quo.

Let me summarize—the Kremlin's politics derive from the enormous caste of millions upon millions of privileged bureaucrats on which it rests and are in strict accord with the interests of that caste as a social formation. It is the parasitic caste that determines the objective course of Stalinism in relation to both world capitalism and the international working class. Marxist method, analyzing the social base of Stalinism, yields this as its first and main result. Further differentiation can reveal some modifications such as restraint by Stalin of the most unbridled bourgeois wing of the caste but nothing in the main "law" will be changed essentially.

#### *What About Foreign Policy?*

Foreign policy is simply the extension and development of domestic politics. This holds true for all states including the Soviet Union. In the early days of Lenin and Trotsky this meant above all a policy projected through the international working class to which diplomacy was strictly subordinate. With the smashing of the revolutionary socialist party under the blows of the counter-revolution led by Stalin, this was reversed. Narrow diplomatic considerations came first, the world working class second. Since the interests of the privileged caste now dominated the government, foreign policy reflected this change. The aim became maintenance of the status quo. The Communist parties abroad were converted into border patrols. It would be a mistake to consider that the Stalinist machine was not motivated at first by subjective revolutionary aims. But limited by the caste, these were converted so that objectively they had counter-revolutionary results. And the Kremlin gang of usurpers eventually became consciously counter-revolutionary. This shift in outlook reached its culmination in the planned sabotage of the Spanish revolution and the deliberate butchery of the flower of the Spanish working class, one of the crimes of Stalinism that paved the way for World War II.

The contradiction in the Kremlin's foreign policy resides in the antagonistic need of the caste to maintain the status quo while still appearing as the banner bearer of socialist revolution in order to attract the necessary following of masses desirous of changing the status quo by ending capitalism. As a consequence Stalinism has played an especially odious and perfidious role in the working class

outside the Soviet Union. Trotsky characterized it as the "syphilis" of the workers movement and this was no epithet but an analogy that applies rigorously. How many revolutionary workers have we seen infected by Stalinism who ended up with general political paresis as the final outcome of this foul disease? In my opinion it would be correct to say that no one, not excluding Hitler, has dealt socialism such deadly blows as Stalin.

Because a Stalinist party requires a mass following which can be bargained off or manipulated to serve the interests of the Soviet caste, all of these parties tend to suffer from a fundamental contradiction—the antagonism between the servile leadership controlled by Stalin's GPU agents and the ranks, attracted by the communist or socialist slogans, who feel the pressure of working class opinion and desires. It is this contradiction which opens up the possibility for our active intervention as well as such developments under strictly limited conditions as we have witnessed in Yugoslavia and China. In face of the current illusions in a section of our ranks in New York about grandiose possibilities among workers deluded by Stalinism it might be well to remind ourselves of the other side of the picture that not once but hundreds and even thousands of times the subjective revolutionary aspirations of such workers have borne objectively counter-revolutionary consequences under the guidance of the agents of the Kremlin. That happens to be the lesson of history. An example that should be fresh in everyone's mind is the counter-revolutionary course played by Stalinism in America during World War II. Will anyone in our ranks venture to deny the frightful cost of that course to the American working class as well as workers elsewhere, including the Soviet Union?

#### *The Test of Recent Events*

While not overlooking the progressive side of the overturns in Eastern Europe and the fact that the Kremlin, faced with grave dangers, can give an impulse to the class struggle and some CPs in circumscribed conditions can project a revolutionary orientation, let us review some other facts of far-reaching import. What have been the consequences since the end of World War II of the repeated purges inside the Soviet Union and the GPU's encirclement of the Soviet workers *against* the workers abroad? The renewed credit won by the victory of the Soviet Union in the struggle against German imperialism was dissipated in a few short years. For millions of workers the Soviet Union does not represent an attractive beacon—35 years after October!—but a land of police rule, concentration camps, blood purges and now officially instigated anti-Semitism. This sentiment cannot be brushed aside as simply "reactionary"—it must be taken into account as an objective fact that is not without a healthy meaning. (Yes, I know that the imperialist warmongers try to capitalize, and not without success, on this sentiment for their own utterly reactionary ends.)

In Eastern Europe the *political* consequences of the overturns are not less dismal. Within these countries the first bright hopes of the workers and peasants have been smashed to powder. In other countries delusions were first created about the possibility of revolution by bureaucratic means from the top with possibly the help of the Soviet Army. These delusions played a role in helping Stalinism to sabotage socialist revolution in Europe. Later, Eastern Europe became a new horrible example to workers in other lands demonstrating what to expect when "socialism" comes to power. This, in political language, is known as muddying up the consciousness of the workers.

The fact that the majority of workers and peasants in Eastern Europe think the sociological changes were progressive and are prepared to defend them against any attempt of imperialism to restore the hated former regime does not alter our estimate. These same workers are, by and large, opposed to Stalinism, for they can appreciate at first hand its counter-revolutionary political character. Our estimate is not even altered by the fact that many workers in other lands, especially the colonial areas, regard the changes as progressive. Any conclusions they may draw from this about a revolution being possible in their countries under *Stalinist* leadership shows how the changes muddled up their consciousness and is thus evidence of the unfavorable political consequences of the overturns.

And while the bourgeoisie which the Kremlin first propped up in Eastern Europe had the crutches kicked from under them, what did Stalinism do in Italy and France? In both countries, the workers surged forward in a series of mighty nationwide strikes into the very seats of power—and Stalinism stood in their road like a boulder in front of an express train. Due to this policy, demoralization set in, especially among the vanguard, a demoralization that has not been overcome to this day, as we can see from the skepticism with which the French workers viewed Stalinist appeals for action during the past year in relation to the diplomatic needs of the Kremlin's foreign policy. Substituting leftist adventures for the free development of the class struggle does not mean initiation of a revolutionary course. Like countless previous similar adventures it can mean further dampening of the class struggle. This is the objective result despite any subjective revolutionary desires suddenly felt by some Stalinist bureaucrats.

If Stalinism had not prevented Italy and France from going socialist as the workers desired, what changes it would have made on the face of the world political map! By now all of Europe would be working out the problem of constituting a Socialist United States in collaboration with the Soviet Union and China. Against that colossal power American imperialism would never have dared raise the threat of another war. It would have been too occupied at home with the repercussions in the American working class.

The counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism in world politics has played a tremendous role in paving the way for World War III. By restraining the workers, sabotaging their drive toward power, by taking posts in capitalist governments and helping to bolster European capitalism, by limiting the Chinese and Korean revolutions in the international political arena, by the false, delusory slogans of disarmament, peaceful co-existence, maintenance of the status quo—by these policies and much more, Stalinism freed the hands of world capitalism and permitted it to openly prepare for atomic slaughter. The crimes of Stalinism in this respect become all the more enormous in light of the weakness and decay of capitalism and the mounting power and dynamism of the movements of the workers and oppressed peoples.

Let us add the Yugoslav revolution to the picture. What did the Kremlin do there but deliberately attempt to drive this new workers state into the arms of American imperialism? Thereby they tried to discredit it and prevent it from extending, especially into the buffer zone. This undermined not only the defense of Yugoslavia against imperialism but also the defense of the Soviet Union. Could Wall Street's hired State Department brains have devised a foreign policy better fitted to serve the interests of American imperialism and the preparations for war in the given circumstances?

As for the Tito regime, it has revealed that an education in the school of Stalinism does not exactly constitute a guarantee that the graduates will follow a revolutionary course even if, under mass pressure, they take the road of independence from the Kremlin and come to power. Our co-thinkers now call for a political revolution in Yugoslavia such as we advocate against the Kremlin. This means that the Tito regime is judged to be politically counter-revolutionary.

The unfavorable turn in Yugoslavia after the promising beginnings—a Stalinist-trained leadership that headed a revolution and actually broke from the Kremlin!—should serve to remind us to be doubly cautious about China. There the relations between Peking and Moscow remain enigmatic and the leadership of the Chinese revolution up to the present stage has far from made clear what its ultimate program will turn out to be. I for one am not yet prepared to give them a vote of political confidence—and that does not alter my recognition of the colossal significance of the Chinese revolution and its world-shaking potential.

While we are ranging about the world, we might as well check up on one more revolution that is missing from the references that have thus far appeared in the speeches and arguments of Comrade Bartell and his supporters. I refer of course to Bolivia.

You might think that of all places the Kremlin would be especially concerned here to give an active revolution a push—at least a bit of nominal aid. After all Bolivia can prove to be the Achilles heel of U.S. imperialism—it is only necessary to visualize the consequences of that revolution catching on in other Latin American provinces of Wall Street's empire. Yet the Bolivian Stalinists are in the camp of President Paz who is now receiving aid from the State Department which obviously hopes to utilize him to contain the revolution and later liberate the tin mines. Here, the Stalinist ranks, so far as I am able to determine from following the press of our Bolivian co-thinkers, are not exactly rife with Trotskyist conciliationism, although the Trotskyists are a power in the working class and clearly playing both a subjectively and objectively revolutionary role.

The case of Bolivia demonstrates how far the Kremlin is prepared to go to block proletarian revolution, even in the very foundations of American imperialism, even in a land distant from the Soviet bloc area, and even while the danger of another imperialist assault on the Soviet Union grows in acuteness.

The main lesson to be learned from our brief analysis of Stalinism is that it is counter-revolutionary in essence, deriving this character from its social base, the parasitic caste that is devouring the remaining conquests of the October Revolution. Despite its desperate efforts to maintain the status quo, in accordance with the interests of the caste, Stalinism must be viewed dynamically as a process. It fosters the tendencies within the Soviet Union toward *bourgeois* relations. It is in violent contradiction to the planned economy, to the needs of the Soviet masses, and to the interests of the international working class. Insofar as it defends the remains of the October Revolution against imperialism its actions have a progressive content but we do not place this aspect on an equal plane with its counter-revolutionary role. The caste has a dual character but the duality is not of two characteristics about the same size and weight which alternately come to the fore like the interconnected and interrelated little figures in the Swiss clock that foretell the weather. It would be more accurate to say it is a fusion of opposites but of opposites of disproportionate size, degree and dynamics. The counter-revolutionary pole is the active and pre-

dominant one. Even this does not quite give the full picture, for counter-revolution *permeates* Stalinism, so that everything it touches becomes contaminated. Even such actions as can be considered progressive *in and of themselves* are infected by counter-revolution and *in relation to other factors* are *not* progressive. Hence the paradoxical character of the categories required in our theoretical appraisal of Stalinism and its role.

### *The Source of Our Appraisal*

Stalinophobia is a blind, unreasoning rejection of Stalinism, the chief fault of which is an unscientific refusal to put on rubber gloves and go to work on the foul and dangerous disease with the aim of stamping it out. Our approach has nothing in common with this emotional attitude. Our approach is based on programmatic norms which are in turn grounded in the development as a whole of world capitalism and its antithesis, the socialist revolution.

Let's refresh our memory. As against imperialism we have defended from the very beginning the new property forms that came into being following the advance of the Soviet Army in Eastern Europe on the heels of the defeated armies of German capitalism. Our stand is based on the fact that these property forms are superior to capitalist forms and in principle constitute an essential step, on the economic and social side, of the socialist revolution. But we never advocated that the Kremlin undertake the overturns, we opposed the extension of Kremlin influence and, consistent with this position, we advocate the independence of these countries from Moscow.

There's no deep mystery about our reasons for this. On the *political* plane, the steps taken by the Kremlin dealt a first-rate injury to the defense of the Soviet Union and did incalculable harm to the development of the world socialist revolution. In exchange for territories, Stalin gave world capitalism time to recover from the devastating political effects of World War II and time to reorganize itself for a combined assault on the Soviet Union. Without a formal pact as in 1939, Stalin repeated with Truman what he did with Hitler, only on a bigger scale. Stalin's actions were in accordance with the interests of the Soviet ruling caste. In contrast, our stand—defend the new forms, oppose Stalinism—was an extension of our principled defense of the Soviet Union and accorded with the interests of the world working class.

Our defense of Eastern Europe is *subordinate* to our defense of the Soviet Union. But even our defense of the Soviet Union is relative. Here is how Trotsky put it in 1939:

"Mistakes on the question of defense of the USSR most frequently flow from an incorrect understanding of the methods of 'defense.' Defense of the USSR does not at all mean rapprochement with the Kremlin bureaucracy, the acceptance of its politics, or a conciliation with the politics of her (bourgeois) allies. In this question, as in all others, we remain completely on the ground of the international class struggle. . . .

"The defense of the USSR coincides for us with the preparation of world revolution. Only those methods are permissible which do not conflict with the interests of the revolution. The defense of the USSR is related to the world socialist revolution as a tactical task is related to a strategic aim. A tactic is subordinated to a strategic

goal and in no case can be in contradiction to the latter." (*In Defense of Marxism*, pp. 16, 17-18.)

Just what did Trotsky mean by this? Was he simply taking a noble stand, counterposing good proletarian policy against the bad policy of Stalinism? Did Trotsky have in mind that the methods he advocated would shorten the pain and travail—cut down the overhead cost—in contrast to Stalinist methods which mean a more difficult and costly route but which get us there inevitably just the same? Was it a question of a short cut versus the long way around? Or was Trotsky referring here to a life and death question on which the very fate of civilization hinges? To understand fully what Trotsky meant, we must turn to the level where the antagonism between Trotskyism and Stalinism is most fundamental.

### *The Strategic Concept of World Revolution*

Viewing the fate of world capitalism from the long-range historic point of view, revolutions such as the one in Russia as well as in China and the entire colonial world are only partial and therefore far from decisive inroads into the capitalist system. You cannot speak either of the actual definitive doom of capitalism or of an actual definitive base for socialism until the socialist revolution conquers in the industrially advanced countries. The ultimate decision rests with the working class of these countries, above all the United States. Until they move, the fate of revolutions elsewhere remains in doubt. Among the most striking evidences of the peripheral character of these revolutions is the bourgeois character of some of their main slogans (democracy, nationalization of the land, national independence, etc.) and the transitional character of the regimes they erect even under the best of leadership. The *main* struggle still remains before us. It will be fought out in the very heart of the world capitalist structure.

From this fact, with which all our comrades are no doubt thoroughly familiar, flows our programmatic norm—the main weapon of the proletariat is *politics*, i.e., consciousness combined with the will to change the capitalist status quo. Thus Trotskyist politics, the politics of the world socialist revolution, is the expression of the interests of the international working class. *That* is the objective frame controlling our methods of struggle. All our tactics are subordinated to achieving the final victory. Put in another way, all our tactics are designed to smash the obstacles in the way of that victory. That is what we mean when we say that *only* the Marxist program can assure the victory over capitalism. And that is why we run into head-on collision with Stalinism. Its tactics are designed to maintain the position of the parasitic caste in the Soviet Union and therefore objectively to prevent the defeat of capitalism. Thus it bars the victory of world socialism. In this way Stalinism is an instrument of world imperialism—and a most effective one, it should be added.

Our world strategy calls for sweeping out the parasitic caste in the Soviet Union with an iron broom. The political reasons for that from the viewpoint of the revolution in the main centers of capitalism are obvious. If we could hold up the Soviet Union once more as an example of what we mean by a workers state, it would give incomparable force to our propaganda and agitation. Look at the Soviet democracy, we could say; the high cultural level, the rights that children enjoy, the provisions for women workers, the freedom from national and racial

oppression, the great achievements in art, in literature, in scientific thought, in new contributions to Marxism. And if that can be accomplished in a backward country, think what can be done in America and a whole world with the workers in power. As the miserable reality of the Soviet Union stands before us, we have to start by explaining, no, that's not what we mean by socialism—we don't mean concentration camps, purges, anti-Semitism, the stifling of all creative thought. We're against all that. Yet despite this degeneration, look at the amazing accomplishments of planned economy even under police rule—see what power it displayed in war and vitality in restoring the country after—and try to visualize what could be done in a free America with planned economy. We do the best we can, naturally, but the sample of our wares is not exactly something to stir an American worker's enthusiasm. Even if he's fed up with the pressures and tensions of life under capitalism and worries about the threat of depression and war, the thought of the slave labor and police rule in the USSR causes him to hesitate. That's why it's necessary that our defense of the Soviet Union be geared in direct opposition to Stalinism. The immediate interests of the Soviet workers demand it. The interests of the socialist revolution in America demand it even more imperatively.

Let's consider one more fact. Unless the international working class drives forward in the main capitalist centers under the program of revolutionary socialism, then not only will China, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union go down, but all of civilization may be levelled under the impact of atomic war. That is a possible outcome of the unity—or dual danger if you prefer—of Stalinism and imperialism against revolutionary socialism, a unity deriving from their common opposition to proletarian revolution and the threat it holds for both capitalist exploitation and bureaucratic parasitism. I do not think this is probable, for the coming struggle is bound to unleash political forces beyond the control of either of the antagonists in which Trotskyism will inevitably come into its own as the subjective factor. And in that case, even though the opening of the war may in the worst event destroy the work of centuries and exterminate mankind by the tens of millions, socialism will make it possible to recover within decades and then to open up the dazzling possibilities foreseen by Marx and Engels a hundred years ago. But this probability hinges not only on the new opportunities but upon us—our capacity to maintain our theoretical conquests and to advance them in the class struggle.

As yet our generation has not experienced personally the full power of proletarian politics—we have not lived through a revolution. We could catch the feeling of the power of it through the personality of such figures as Trotsky who was saturated to the bones in it and personally participated in the leadership of the October Revolution. But only when it breaks in America will we be able to really appreciate what explosive potential resided in the molecular forces surrounding us in 1953. Meanwhile we must argue with some comrades who have grown pessimistic about the American workers and come to think that perhaps there might be something revolutionary in *Stalinism*.

#### *Applied in Practice*

Let's get down to cases now and at the same time answer an argument advanced by a comrade in the New York Local: What are you going to tell the North Korean worker—that his leadership is counter-revolutionary?

The North Korean upsurge is a good example of the explosive potential that has been building up in the co-

lonial world during the past decade. It is not difficult for anyone acquainted with the program and deeds of the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky to visualize what world-shaking consequences this upsurge would have had under their guidance.

The evidence shows, however, that Stalin tried to contain this revolution. We do not know the facts as yet about the exact relations between the North Korean leaders, the Mao regime and the Kremlin, but there were indications at the very beginning of dissatisfaction with Moscow and particularly with the limited military aid that was forthcoming—even when paid for. It was lack of such aid that barred an early and decisive victory of the North Koreans in the civil war with the Syngman Rhee regime.

Since then, it appears that the Kremlin has been interested in maintaining a strictly limited war. The Third World Congress of the Fourth International observed in its resolution on the international situation:

"The Korean war itself reveals how mightily the colonial revolution comes into conflict today directly with the armed forces of imperialism. The Soviet bureaucracy has been unable to openly betray a movement of such scope without placing its own existence at stake, and it has taken care to intervene as little as possible in the conflict while favoring the exhaustion of both the imperialist and revolutionary forces."

Furthermore, "the assistance of the Soviet bureaucracy has been dispensed only in doses, deliberately calculated to permit the war to continue but insufficient for victory."

The reactionary role of the Kremlin in the Korean conflict is even clearer on the political plane. The contrast between the line of Lenin and Trotsky in the face of the invading armies of imperialism and the line of the Stalinists could not be sharper. The Bolsheviks *explained* their revolution besides defending it militarily. They explained it to the workers of the entire world, above all the troops in the invading armies. They pointed to the model legislation of the Bolshevik government as an example of what they were fighting for. They invited workers in to take a look for themselves. They asked them to help in every way possible and especially by advancing the class struggle at home and in the armed forces. And they got help, including arms and contingents from the invading forces. The imperialist powers eventually were compelled to withdraw *because on the political plane the Bolsheviks were more powerful than they were*.

In Korea, however, the emphasis is on the alleged bestial nature of the American soldier, his similarity to the Nazi storm troopers, his lust for rape and cold-blooded murder. It is true that American prisoners of war are treated well and some attempts have been made to utilize them to demonstrate that the North Korean and Chinese governments are not barbarous as the American brass tries to make out, but the propaganda is not designed to explain to the American soldiers what is involved fundamentally and it thereby plays into the hands of the imperialist powers. Instead of fostering the legitimate desire of the American soldiers to find a great cause, it muddies their consciousness and even stands in the way of the logical development of their urge to get out of Korea and return home. Still more, the absence of revolutionary socialist propaganda along these general lines facilitates the foreign policy of American imperialism now being advanced under the slogan of "Let Asians fight Asians" which is aimed at consolidation of Japan as a spearhead in the projected new assault on the Soviet Union and China. Only revolutionary socialist politics can effectively counter this imperialist course.

It is ABC politics for a revolutionary socialist in these countries to point these things out according to time and

place and with due regard for his own safety and the sensibilities of those he hopes to win to his views.

The plain fact is that the socialist revolution can be won in these lands and on a world scale only by consistent development on the political plane. Episodic gyrations taken by the Kremlin cannot be substituted for this. At best, some of these gyrations can only provide an opportunity for hardened revolutionary socialists to build their own party. To overturn world capitalism and lay the basis for a new order requires a steady course, a Marxist program, complete theoretical clarity, the physical presence of a revolutionary leadership—in brief construction of a revolutionary socialist party. Hard as it may seem to accomplish this task, no one has yet devised a substitute.

### *Trotsky's Concepts Confirmed*

The validity of Trotsky's basic concepts, it appears to me, has received fresh confirmation in the explosive new developments that are heaving the foundations of world capitalism. The role of Stalinism in particular confirms Trotsky's teachings. Using Trotsky's concepts it is not too difficult to follow the course of events no matter what secondary errors we may make in determining the qualitative point of change in some of the more complex happenings. For example, although we were slow in reaching a correct appraisal of the sociological changes in Eastern Europe; nevertheless, the SWP took a correct *political* position in the main toward these countries as well as toward China, Korea, the Soviet Union, the colonial lands. We have consistently defended them against imperialism without losing the capacity to differentiate both Stalinism from the property forms and the colonial bourgeoisie from the nations temporarily dominated by them. Above all, in the erupting revolutionary situations abroad, Trotsky's concepts have enabled us to follow and understand Moscow's principal motives.

We have seen how the Kremlin in accordance with the interests of the parasitic caste attempts to contain and behead the masses in order to eliminate and forestall the danger to its own rule. Where this was not possible and it has been forced to go along, it has sought to keep them within bounds, mindful at the same time of the possibility of throwing them on the bargaining table in deals with the imperialist foe.

Where the revolution continued to well up despite everything, then Trotsky's concepts enable us to understand why, under the impact of forces beyond the immediate control of either the Kremlin or Washington, Stalin's native agents can come into collision with the home office, if they show enough intelligence to see it is a question of their own necks. Under such special conditions, Stalinist parties can go much further than they wished or expected, as Trotsky himself foresaw might be the case (the opposite phenomenon to the inclination of some Stalinists in the main centers to go over to the bourgeoisie).

Trotsky's concepts enable us to peg these steps as partial, contradictory ones that by no means signify a historical mission for Stalinism. Stalinism is congenitally unable to lead the workers in the industrially advanced countries to victory because this transcends the interests of the parasitic Soviet caste.

Finally, under the terrible exigencies of the mounting threat posed by the world coalition of capitalism, even the Bonapartist oligarchy dreams of raising the specter of revolution behind the imperialist lines, we can understand why the Kremlin's previous course militates against the realization of such a turn and how in fact adventurist impulses can lead to still further defeats and setbacks, playing an objectively counter-revolutionary role. (I am

not referring here to impulses given the class struggle under certain conditions which lead to actions that pass beyond the control of the Kremlin.)

Thus we are able to account for the role of Stalinism in the world of today without violating any of the fundamental concepts of Trotskyism. In fact it is only through these concepts that we can reach a clear understanding of that role.

One more possibility remains open—that the Bonapartist oligarchy has turned against its own social base and is now developing politics in opposition to the interests of the privileged caste and in favor of socialist revolution. I suggest the possibility of this alternative to Comrade Bartell for theoretical consideration, but warn him that such a concept is anti-Marxist to the marrow. It would not be far different from imagining that Eisenhower would become a peace-lover and turn away from the war danger because of the catastrophic consequences it can have for American capitalism. Just as Eisenhower's politics is bound by the frame of the narrow interests of the American capitalist class, so Stalin's politics cannot pass beyond the frame of the narrow interests of the Soviet parasitic caste.

### *The Question of a Maneuver*

It may seem like an anti-climax now to turn to the question of tactics toward the Stalinists, particularly the "concrete" work of the New York Local in this field. So long as we do not have an agreement on our political attitude toward Stalinism there is not much point in discussing fifth-rate tactical matters. However, the discussion in New York started on this level and now we can return to it with a better understanding of what is involved.

To try to work out tactics from blueprints can lead not only to tactical errors but to strategic ones. Tactics must be related to real, specific situations—that's why tactics toward the Stalinists differ so profoundly for the Trotskyist movement from country to country.

In the USSR and buffer zones, the fountainhead of Stalinism, our co-thinkers seek to overthrow the bureaucracy; the pressure of the masses finds its political medium in underground Trotskyism and takes its clearest form in the revolutionary struggle for power. In China, where the Communist Party was carried to power on the crest of a revolution and in the process underwent a change in political physiognomy under pressure of the masses, the Trotskyists give critical support and seek to collaborate with the Mao government. In such countries as France and Italy, where the Stalinist organizations dominate the labor movement and our forces are relatively weak, the Trotskyists follow an entrism tactic of special type aimed at capitalizing on the contradiction inherent between the Stalinist bureaucrats and their mass base in the working class. Contrariwise, in England—which has cities resembling "more a European city" than any in America—no such tactic is called for in relation to the Stalinists, who constitute a miserable, discredited minority outside the Labor Party.

In the USA where the Stalinists are likewise a miserable, discredited minority without a mass following and the apparatus is among the most strictly controlled of all by the Kremlin, and where Trotskyism over a quarter of a century has built up precious political capital among advanced workers, our major tactic is open struggle for political leadership of the working class. This still leaves

open the possibility in America of subordinate maneuvers in their direction, but the condition is ideological clarity about Stalinism, otherwise we can dissipate our hard-won political capital over night.

For example, we are not attracted to the Stalinists because of the fact that they inscribe the word "peace" on their banners. This is simply the Russian word for "status quo" rendered in English. To put our concept of the word "peace" into this treacherous form of the Kremlin slogan would be to delude ourselves and fall into a deadly trap. Peace cannot be won until capitalism in its main strongholds is replaced by socialism. The Stalinists are incapable of accomplishing that task—in fact, as I have already stressed, aside from the trade union bureaucracy, they constitute the principal obstacle to it in the working class movement. The same goes for *Stalinist* "opposition" to war.

To seriously think that they can project a revolutionary orientation in America reveals a lack of understanding of what a *revolutionary orientation* really means in this stronghold of world capitalism and a lack of understanding of the relation of class forces in America and the composition, size and reputation of Stalinism. This fatuous belief prepares nothing but the loss of a number of comrades to Stalinism. If it were accepted by the party as a whole it would mean cutting the throat of American Trotskyism. To include the Stalinists among the "revolutionary" forces in America is not qualitatively different. Even to believe that they will really come to the defense of our civil liberties displays ignorance of the character of Stalinism, and considerable political naivety.

Don't get me wrong—I'm not against the cherished New England custom of bundling up on a sleigh ride when the roads are frozen over; but with characters contaminated with Stalinism, I believe in first taking a few precautionary measures. The whole success of a maneuver in the direction of Stalinism—and that's all it can be in America is a maneuver of secondary importance—depends on the thoroughness of our understanding of its limitations plus granite hardness about the strategic objective of the maneuver: to help the American workers in the necessary task of eliminating Stalinism as a political force in this country.

I readily admit that some comrades who support Comrade Bartell visualized the tactic as such an operation. But I think they tend to overlook a slight contradiction. The very arguments used to try to facilitate the maneuver, like the undue emphasis and painting up of the possibilities of the maneuver, stand in the way of its success. They reveal a grave theoretical and political weakness on the part of those comrades most enamored with carrying it through. This signifies that the overhead costs of the maneuver can exceed anything to be gained from it. That is why it is necessary to pause for station identification so to speak, announce once more just who we are and where we can be found on the political dial.

These conclusions are not simply theoretical. They also represent hard historical experience—our own experience in maneuvers with the Socialist Party in the Thirties and the experience of our world movement during left turns executed by Stalinism. To argue that our party is weak and small and we can gain new recruits in a hurry by such a get-rich-quick maneuver is not an argument in

favor but one against. A maneuver is most dangerous of all for a weak and small party, particularly if it reveals ideological weakness. This arises from the fact that a maneuver to be successful requires formal concessions, even formal adaptation (but no concessions or adaptations in essence). These, understood wrongly by those who lack hardness, can pave the way to capitulation to the enemy. And so your scouts and foragers are absorbed and you end up in disaster.

Thus from the viewpoint of the work of the New York Local itself in this field I come to the conclusion that the discussion is not at all "mystical and confusing" as Comrade Bartell seems to think. Comrade Bartell is simply projecting the mysticism and confusion in his own mind about the character of Stalinism and some other matters. Perhaps the development of the discussion will help dissipate these mists. In this respect the discussion represents part of the essential preparation for any serious work among the Stalinist groups and especially among Stalinist workers on the job and in the unions.

#### *In Defense of Trotskyism*

It is obvious that our party now faces an internal discussion of the most serious kind. The party as a whole and every comrade in it will receive one more test, determining how well he has assimilated the lessons of the past, how well he or she has withstood the fierce pressures of our terrible epoch, what qualities of leadership they have. Each one will establish criteria by which to judge the arguments, the speeches, the documents, the positions taken. It is best to state these openly and before the whole party. Mine are as follows:

1. Stalinism, viewed historically, is a temporary reaction that set in after the high point of the October Revolution. It will fall at one point or another with the revival of the political upsurge of the masses. It has no historic mission whatsoever.

2. The current world struggle catches Stalinism between the millstones of imperialism and the world revolution. It will be crushed between them in the relatively near future.

3. In its desperate efforts to survive, the privileged Soviet caste will use any means that do not conflict with its own interests. It thus fights against both imperialism and the proletarian revolution, but if the danger from imperialism becomes especially great it is capable of trying to give an impulse to the class struggle. However, its counter-revolutionary political character puts strict limits to the extent of the impulse it can give. Above all, it fears doing anything which would enable the Soviet workers to settle accounts with it.

4. We are prepared to take full advantage of the difficulties faced by Stalinism. This requires (a) opposition to Stalinophobia and (b) opposition to conciliation toward Stalinism. A repetition of Stalinophobia would mean the reappearance of a form of Oehlerism in our ranks, which rejected a maneuver in the direction of the Social Democracy simply because it was headed by Social Democrats. Full-blown conciliation toward Stalinism would mean the reappearance in our ranks of a tendency not seen since the days of the Left Opposition, when many revolutionaries were taken in by Stalinism simply because it made a left

turn. In both cases—Stalinophobia and conciliation towards Stalinism—the basic error is *identification* of the bureaucratic leadership with the revolutionary-minded masses it temporarily heads.

5. The same basic error is apparent in the unfounded pessimism (even cynicism) over the character of the mass movement in America. The defeatist mood, sluggish mentality, concern for privileges and reactionary politics of the trade union bureaucracy are identified with the ranks it heads. The American workers, in fact, preserve their full revolutionary potential and are even now gathering their forces in molecular fashion for great new steps forward that can place the whole question of the socialist revolution on the agenda in the not too distant future.

6. Besides pessimism about the American workers, the danger at present in our ranks is conciliation towards Stalinism. Turning away from the workers, a section of the party is inclined to see hopeful signs in Stalinism. The adaptation of either the Kremlin or the Stalinist bureaucracies of certain Communist parties to conjunctural phases of the new war danger or to mass movements that seek the abolition of capitalism is misinterpreted as a basic change in the political character of Stalinism. This danger in our movement must be squarely faced and defeated.

7. In the coming showdown on the world arena our task is (a) to oppose the imperialist war preparations with all our strength, (b) to do this by sinking our roots further in the mass movement, attentively following the course of the class struggle, and extending and deepening it in every way possible.

8. This means giving political expression to the genuine grievances of the workers through every possible avenue, particularly our press.

9. In line with this perspective, our paper should turn more consciously toward the masses.

10. Our major orientation must continue to be toward the unions and mass organizations of the American working class and oppressed minorities, with any tactics toward the Stalinists strictly subordinated to this perspective. This means constant close attention to our work in the unions and in mass organizations of Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and other minorities. And it means maximum utilization of the election arena, participation in struggles for civil liberties and civil rights, campaigns to widen the circulation of our press, and in general the conscious development of the independent role of our party in America.

February 23, 1953

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#### SECTION IV: PABLO'S ROLE IN THE COCHRAN FIGHT

[As the insistence of the Cochran faction that they were correctly interpreting Pablo's views became more strident, the SWP began to receive reports from abroad confirming those claims. In May 1953 James P. Cannon wrote to Pablo seeking clarification on this. In reply, Pablo declined to say whether he shared the Cochranite positions, refused to elaborate on his relationship with them, and, in passing, indicated his support for Frankel's document on Stalinism as opposed to that of Hansen.

[This led the SWP Majority leaders to conclude that Pablo shared the views of the Cochran-Clarke-Bartell faction, and that he had been giving them secret encouragement. As a result, Cannon and other SWP leaders began to prepare for a fight against Pablo's views, should that prove necessary. This was the purpose of Cannon's correspondence with Sam Gordon, a Trotskyist living in London, who had expressed differences with Pablo and criticisms of the ambiguities of the Third World Congress

documents.

[Among the first allies to rally to the defense of orthodox Trotskyism at that time was Gerry Healy, the leader of the British section. Although Healy had, until then, been an admirer of Pablo, the discovery that Pablo was aiding a revisionist tendency in the United States convinced him of the necessity to change his estimate.

[Another indication to the SWP majority that forces outside the SWP were secretly taking a hand in the internal struggle was the sudden breakdown of a truce agreement with the Cochran faction reached at the May plenum of the SWP National Committee. Shortly after the plenum, the Cochran faction began to sharpen its struggle against the majority and to act as if it were preparing for a split.

[For further material about this period, see *Speeches to the Party* by James P. Cannon (Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973).]

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#### 1. Letter from Farrell Dobbs, Morris Stein, and Joseph Hansen to George Novack

New York, N.Y.  
January 30, 1953

Dear Manuel:

Please show this letter to Tom, Jerry, Gabe and Ernest. We hope to receive a report of their and your comments

reasonably soon. You will understand, of course, that our letter is not intended to solicit intervention but to convey our point of view with the hope that we will be able to find agreement.

F.

New York, N.Y.  
January 30, 1953

Dear Manuel:

The minutes of the last few meetings of our Political Committee will give you a rough idea of the acuteness of the internal situation which is moving rapidly toward a show-down fight. You will note that at the meeting of January 13 we submitted a statement defining what we consider the basic reason for the present intolerable relations and proposing a Plenum to grapple with the differences.

You can rest assured that we have done everything we could to avoid an unnecessary or premature internal struggle. We had hoped that the maturity of the cadre, armed as it is with the experiences of previous internal struggles, would enable us to conduct a discussion of political differences in a comradely atmosphere, free from personal recriminations and unwarranted factional maneuvers. In a word, we had hoped to avoid a faction fight which is so costly in energy, in resources and which more often than not can lead to split.

Our efforts to maintain an objective atmosphere enabled the party to conduct the 1952 election campaign in an effective manner, but soon thereafter the Cochranites sharpened internal relations to the point of creating an intolerable situation.

It is now imperative that the political differences engendering the internal friction be frankly posed. In our statement we summarized the differences as follows:

"Are we justified in continuing to consider ourselves an independent party and consequently in engaging within our means in the rounded activity demanded of a party, or should we close the balance sheet on our experiences as an independent party and conclude that we have failed, that we can operate only as a propaganda group, that we must abandon the effort of acting as a party and instead devote our time, energy and finances predominantly to propaganda?"

The fact is that except in private conversations, nobody has as yet openly made the proposal that we abandon our orientation toward the building of a party and transform ourselves instead into a propaganda group. It is likely that the exigencies of the internal struggle will compel the Cochranites to deny that they entertain such an idea. But when we examine all the points of friction within the committee for a period of over a year and a half, these can be traced to two different concepts of our tasks here in this country. We believe we can demonstrate this in the course of the discussion.

You will recall that in the struggle of 1939-40 the basic issues were posed sharply, not by the petty-bourgeois opposition but by the Old Man and ourselves. The opposition shied away from posing the basic issues because they were not aware at the outset what forces were driving them and where they were heading. They were in rebellion against our entire political line and our concepts of the party. Yet they merely quarreled over incidents. Had they grappled with the basic questions at the outset, this unprincipled combination of Burnham, Shachtman, Abern and Johnson would have fallen apart before instead of after the split with us.

Our present opposition finds itself similarly unable to

challenge our political line and concepts of the party, except through incidents. They, too, lack basic agreement on fundamentals. They, too, represent an unprincipled combination. They don't advance any serious political line, because they can only agree on incidental questions.

Clarke started out, as you will recall, with a critique of our defense work, playing down the importance of our independent intervention in the struggle against the witch hunt and pressing for a penetration of the CP defense movement. Yet it is precisely our impressive independent work in the Minneapolis case, Kutcher case, Trucks Law fight, etc., that compelled the Stalinist ranks and periphery to pay attention to us, gave substance to our united front proposals to the CP, made it impossible for the Stalinist officials to dispose of us by their slanders, and now appears to be compelling them to modify their public attitude toward us in the field of civil liberties.

This is a typical example of Clarke's general tendency to subordinate independent party work in favor of an orientation of penetration into the Stalinist movement. Bartell and Frankel manifest a similar tendency. These comrades seek to apply mechanically in this country a tactical line that would be proper in France, for example, where the Stalinists predominate in the labor movement, but which does not conform to America where the Stalinists are isolated from the labor movement. This line has pushed them toward a pre-occupation with Stalinist groups and Stalinoid discussion circles as the main line of activity.

As far as the policy of our press is concerned, they have sought to soften and minimize all criticism of the Stalinists and have tended to react sharply when Stalinism is forthrightly attacked in our press. They were especially displeased with Cannon's pamphlet, "The Road to Peace," and have been reluctant to push its sale. In general they tend to be sharply critical of every article in which we differentiate ourselves from the Stalinists.

Cochran, on the other hand, has shown no interest in the possibilities of infiltrating the Stalinist groups. As a matter of fact, he went to the extreme of denying at a PC meeting last spring that there is such a thing as a Stalinist milieu.

Yet Cochran, Clarke, Bartell and Frankel are functioning as a common faction under Cochran's leadership. Up to this point there is only one proposition to which they have agreed among themselves. This is the proposal that the party's activities and resources be channelized into propaganda work. They want a committee set up to devote full time to applying Marxism to the American scene.

What keeps them together is a common sentiment rather than a common line. This is a sentiment of frustration and defeatism in relation to the American working class. One incident is especially illuminating in this respect. About a year ago, the steel workers held a special convention to consider the crisis in the contractual relations with the corporations. The convention was full of fight against the steel magnates. When Stein reported to the PC on the convention and indicated that a strike might be in the offing, Clarke ridiculed this. How could there be a strike, he asked, so long as the country is heading toward war and the union bureaucracy is committed to support of this war policy? This readiness to write off the American class struggle can be traced through the incidents over

which we clashed.

Losing faith in the fighting abilities of the working class at the present stage, they can have no faith in the capacity of our party to play an independent role in the mass movement. This is why they have behaved like nihilists rather than constructive critics. They seek to turn the party away from its present course but have no new course to offer. Even their petty gimmick of a committee of thinkers and writers was not put forward as a supplementary project. It was counterposed to electoral activity and the Trotsky school.

Why did they fight so bitterly against our proposal for an early Plenum of the National Committee? After all it is more than six months since we had any national gathering and we would normally be about due to have such a meeting in any case. Their answer was that they needed four months in which to write down their views. We granted them this time. But why do they need so much time? Is it because they have so much to say? It is safer to assume that it is because they don't know what to say. It is safe to predict that when their documents are presented, they will consist of attacks on our positions, real or alleged, rather than a presentation of a clear line of their own. It is to be expected, for example, that they will write a long document charging us with Stalinophobia, adaptation to imperialism, sectarianism, etc., etc.

At this stage there is no sense deploring the development. The struggle is upon us and we must have the maximum mobilization to wage it effectively and to see to it that we obtain positive results from it. We must above all utilize this struggle to rearm the party for the difficult haul ahead.

Concretely, this means to reinspire the party once again with a proletarian orientation. This may sound like a platitude, but it is far from it on two grounds, first because it is precisely our proletarian orientation which is being challenged and secondly because under the pressure of the opposition and due to our own neglect, we have permitted a situation to develop whereby trade union work has become more and more de-emphasized.

Cochran aggravated this problem by his pessimistic report on the trade union question at the last convention. His report was not challenged at the convention because of the truce based on the unanimous May 1952 Plenum resolution and the accidental arrangement of radio time which cut off discussion. This report has since been interpreted by the Cochranites as official party policy. This erroneous assumption must be corrected in the forthcoming discussion.

Comrade Bartell's report to the New York membership for pre-convention discussion states that because of the relative quiescence in the trade union movement, the party should turn its main attention to the political and semi-political elements "who are equipped to understand" our ideas, that is, to the Compass Clubs, the Huberman-Sweezy group, etc. He sees a sectarian danger if we fail to turn with sufficient energy toward these discussion circles. To him it is sectarian not to consider this milieu as a center of concentration for us. He also holds it sectarian to insist on programmatic clarity in approaching these groups.

The real sectarian danger to our party, however, is

not in underestimating the importance of these groups, but in neglect of the living labor movement where the masses of the workers are to be found. The real danger of sectarianism is in turning our back on the labor movement and becoming excessively preoccupied with petty-bourgeois discussion groups.

We propose to bring this real danger sharply to the attention of the party. We propose furthermore to review our conduct of the press and correct a mistake which has crept in of tending to write for a highly political audience and one, moreover, under heavy Stalinist influence. We must devote more attention to the issues which preoccupy the workers in the present state of their consciousness, that is, the speed-up, high prices, high taxes, housing, Korean war, etc. There is a lot of fight in the American working class which can be seen from the strike statistics for 1952. The working class has been fighting in defense of its living standards. We must be fully alive to these struggles, help the workers with our press and through our intervention to raise their consciousness to a higher level.

We used to get out a fine socialist paper for workers. But we now tend to raise our propaganda and agitation too far above the present level of the workers' consciousness. Our task is to find once again that necessary tie with the workers' thinking that will permit us to establish contact at their present level of consciousness and then help them generalize their grievances and demands at a higher political level.

If we permit the situation to drift any longer, we will tend to get more and more on the wrong track under the pressure of the opposition. We propose instead that our course be corrected, not by any new gimmick, not by putting the American proletariat on ice for the present, but by getting deeper into the union movement. Only if we participate in the partial struggles of today can we play a role in the bigger struggles of tomorrow.

The New York pre-convention discussion now in progress has revealed that the danger of drifting away from the working class and its mass organizations is real. It is one of the consequences of the line emanating from Bartell and his friends.

In his report to the New York Local, Bartell said: "The changes in our general approach here in New York can be summed up as follows: we shifted the axis of our activities from the general mass of politically uninitiated workers to a narrower but more selective audience of left-wing groups, politically-minded workers and intellectuals, and student youth; from expansion of our organization and activities to retrenchment and more modest tasks."

The general thought of this quotation is stated much more crudely in the discussions in the branches where it all adds up to one thing: a retreat from our main objective because the going is tough and a search for a new milieu. In the concrete relationship of forces in the United States today, this means a retreat into a sectarian propaganda circle existence.

To justify this orientation these comrades have introduced into the New York discussion some of the crassest revisions of our concept of Stalinism. They are unable to sustain their orientation merely on the practical grounds of working where you can get the best results. The fact

is we have no results as yet from the Local's preoccupation with Stalinist circles. We are therefore given a political reason. We must be with the Stalinists because we are part of the same anti-war camp, and as Bartell put it in his report, the Stalinist movement "remains the only current of conscious opposition to the war and reaction (apart from ourselves)."

We thus see the peculiar phenomenon of a group of Trotskyists, educated for many years in the struggle against Stalinism, seeking to slur over the sharp differences between the Stalinist peace line and our class anti-war line. That has never been our method. Moreover, even from a practical point of view, one would have to conclude that the Stalinist peace front or anti-war front doesn't amount to a pinch of snuff in this country and our place to carry anti-war agitation is not to them so much as to the workers organized in powerful unions. We have always envisaged the struggle against war as the extension of the class struggle onto a higher political plane.

The Cochranite opposition is trying to find justification for its line in the basic documents of the Third Congress. But in order to do so, they must pervert and distort what has been written. For example, at one membership meeting Lou Scott, a Bartell supporter, challenged a comrade who referred to the Stalinist leadership and program as counter-revolutionary through and through and declared this concept has been outlawed by the Third World Congress. Others have since devised a formula in support of his contention. They say Stalinism may be subjectively counter-revolutionary but objectively it has ceased to be so because it can no longer play a counter-revolutionary role for the simple reason that it cannot get a deal with American imperialism.

What the comrades of the opposition will say on this subject in the document they now promise to publish we do not know. But it will probably be some sort of an attempt to substantiate these concepts because we have seen that tried already in the discussions in the Political Committee and in the staff of the press. Some of the worst clashes we have had were over such questions as the meaning of Stalin's diplomatic moves, for example, in Germany. Clarke and Frankel in the staff and in the PC played with the idea of giving critical support to Stalin's diplomatic moves. Clarke said he was within an inch of proposing critical support to Stalin's diplomatic offensive on the German question.

This incident is only one of many of a similar nature which spell out their contention that Stalinism has changed its fundamental nature because of the change in the objective situation. We cannot go for this line. We say it is false to the core and anybody indulging in such illusions is headed for disaster.

We agree entirely with the Thesis adopted by the Third World Congress when it says that by its very nature the Soviet bureaucracy will oppose the development of the revolutionary forces in the world even in the case of a general war against the USSR. What the change in the objective situation really means is that in a generalized revolutionary situation the chances of the Kremlin *successfully* betraying revolutionary struggles becomes diminished. But this does not in the least imply that we will not see in the period ahead of us some of the most vicious acts of betrayal yet perpetrated by the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The closer its doom, the harder the bureaucracy will fight for its survival and the more monstrous will be its crimes. There must be no illusions on this score in our movement and we for our part will not tolerate any.

These are in general outline the issues around which the internal struggle has already started in our party. We have absolutely no doubt as to the outcome of this fight. The developments in the New York pre-convention discussion now in progress are a preview not only of the issues but also of the sentiments of the comrades. For some time we feared that a majority of New York Local might have already been sucked into the opposition and you will notice in our Statement that Cochran, when he threatened to by-pass the PC with his own pet projects, mentioned the New York Local as the first place he would seek to influence. We feared we might be in a minority in the New York Local because the administration has been in Bartell's hands and it has been used to carry on undercover factional organization for a long time now, while we did absolutely nothing along those lines, trying instead to mitigate the factional atmosphere created by the Cochranites. They, in turn, have been taking it for granted that the Local was in their pocket. But when Bartell's report was challenged, we learned that a majority of the City Committee, that is six out of eleven comrades, were opposed to his orientation. Even without our active participation in the New York struggle, more and more comrades are turning against the line of the Cochranites. Our tendency in New York appears to have a narrow majority. This majority should continue to grow as we take the struggle out of the narrow confines of a Local dispute over the Organizer's report and project it into the party nationally around the real basic issues.

To us this very encouraging support in the New York Local indicates that the party is fundamentally healthy, that the membership will not go for any nostrums or quack remedies in the present situation, that it will be possible to orient the party toward a deeper penetration of the workers' movement.

The orientation around which we are mobilizing for a show-down fight with the Cochranites is in our opinion fully in accord with the basic line of the Third Congress and the Tenth Plenum. The Cochranites, however, are telling the membership that the Twelfth Plenum has reversed the Tenth. They mean to imply that the documents of the Twelfth Plenum justify their position as against ours.

This situation is not helped by the way these documents paint an unrelieved picture of black reaction in this country, nor is it aided by the broad assertion that "some of our members still have the tendency to reason along the lines of old, out-dated schemas" with regard to tactical line in relation to the Stalinists. These two examples illustrate how the Cochranites are using against us various formulations and omissions in the documents which they hail as a general confirmation of their line.

Please convey this general evaluation of our internal situation to our friends and assure them that we are embarking on this struggle only because the unbridled attacks on fundamental party line leave us no other course.

We have been as careful as we could to approach this problem objectively. We have been very patient with our opposition. Our patience has been misinterpreted by them

as uncertainty or weakness on our part. They have rewarded us with extreme provocations.

We can no longer live with this intolerable situation in the Political Committee. The issues must now be taken openly to the membership for a discussion and political decision. This is the best way to proceed and we don't intend to be diverted from this course.

FD  
MS  
JH

P.S. Jim has been on the West Coast for several months but we have been in consultation with him on the internal situation since the explosion in the PC over the Los Angeles election campaign.

## 2. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs

Los Angeles 27, Calif.  
March 9, 1953

Dear Farrell,

I received the copy of the letter you sent to our friends and also a copy of their answer and Jerry's comment. I wrote Joe briefly on this general subject a couple of weeks ago. I laid aside the material you sent with the idea of writing more fully on the subject when I got my hands free from the cursed task of working up the last two lectures into printable form. Then I got bogged down in two solid weeks of reading—searching through the classics for all possible references to the problems of the transitional period and the references to the future socialist society and some of the works of the Utopians, etc.

We have been quite disturbed here, both by your joint letter and the reply to it as well as Jerry's remarks. We feel that there is a danger, that without any such intention on either side, you both may be stumbling into an unnecessary, or at any rate premature, conflict. This could cut across the task of settling accounts with the distinctively American revisionism which is urgent and unpostponable; and which, moreover, must be done and can only be done here in the United States by the leaders of the SWP.

You know I am super-sensitive about any manifestation of "Cominternism." I have had experience with this business in my life-time and the burnt child fears the fire. Any one can be as "internationalist" as he wants to be, but he can't make the different national parties uniform and subject to handling by a uniform method. The weakness and inexperience of the different European parties and of all of them together, due to the failures of past leading cadres in each of the parties, imposed upon the IEC the task of virtually leading each one of the national parties directly. The IEC is in effect the leading body of a *European* Trotskyist party, and this has been the case ever since the first European conference which was held toward the end of the war.

In my opinion, this is not the best system. No national party will amount to much till it throws up a qualified, indigenous leadership of its own selection. The more or less direct leadership of the IEC in the meantime was the best that could be done in the circumstances. I think we have all recognized this and made due allowances for the exceptional circumstances. But I have never agreed with those who saw in this set-up the model for all time. The IEC, in my view, will not accomplish its real work until the various national parties, with the help and guid-

ance of the IEC, finally develop a national leadership in each case.

I agree still less with those who regard the direct leadership of the IEC over all the European parties as a model system and want to extend it across the oceans. Insofar as I was able to make any sense out of Clarke's attitude after he returned from Europe, he caught a bad case of "Cominternism" in much the same way that one can catch the measles or the seven-year itch by unguarded exposure, and transmitted the infection in turn to such people as Bartell and Frankel who are very susceptible and very apt to catch anything that is going around. They would like—again as far as I've been able to make head or tail of their symptoms—to transfer the leadership of the American party to Paris and cancel out, in passing, everything that has been accomplished by the homegrown American leadership, including its programmatic documents, its organizational tradition, and its authority based on those achievements.

A typical expression of this tendency is Bartell's "Report and Tasks." He says on Page 4 that "the Third World Congress armed us . . . with clear answers to all the big questions of our time," and leaves unmentioned the Theses on the American Revolution which deals with one fairly "big question of our time," which the Third World Congress didn't deal with. (It had previously endorsed the American Theses and apparently considered this endorsement sufficient, which from my point of view, it was.) The answer to the "big question" given by the American Theses happens to be the one which has to govern our work and our perspectives in this country unless we are to condemn ourselves to the role of analytic bystanders "cheering for revolutions in other lands," as Dan Roberts aptly put it in a letter. This is a sure prescription to kill the party; not merely to weaken and disorient it, but to kill it, for a revolutionary party cannot live without perspectives.

I am not in the least worried about the possibility of the International leadership giving any support to this fantastic "internationalism." But I am worried about the possibility that they may consider it their duty to "intervene" and try to compromise the struggle now unfolding. That would not work; no compromise can be accepted. In view of the fact that not only the policy and the perspective but also the leadership has been challenged, this fight cannot be settled in any other way than by a showdown.

I suppose I am just about as "internationalist" a person as there is, and have been since 1928, at least; and when

the chips are down, just about as loyal partisan of the Fourth International as you could find on a world tour. But I try to see the Fourth International as it is, in the given stage of its development; with all the limitations imposed upon it by historical circumstances; with the great disparity in the experience, tradition, development of cadres, etc., between the Trotskyist movement in the United States and that of Europe. I think I am stating a fact and not expressing a baseless national conceit when I say that we know more about this problem pressing for solution in the SWP, and know better what to do about it, than our friends abroad. And I sincerely believe that the best thing they can do is to watch the development of the struggle attentively, expressing their opinions on the political issues when they finally become clear to them, and—for the rest—to let the American party deal with it in its own way.

This course appears to me to be so obviously indicated that I would not think it worth mentioning if it were not for the unfortunate experiences of past "interventions," which are still fresh in our recollection. Agreeing with us on our political position in the Morrow affair, and also in the Shachtman affair, they nevertheless stepped in and tried to "do things differently" over our heads. They were totally wrong in each case. And by the same token our own procedure was 100 percent correct and got the maximum results for the benefit of our party out of each situation.

As it was, the unfortunate intervention from Paris didn't do much harm because neither Morrow nor Shachtman knew how to exploit it, and because we didn't pay much attention to it. We were lucky enough to get out of the unfortunate situations precipitated by unwise and untimely intervention on their part, but we can't hope to be lucky every time. For that reason I would much rather take chances with our own handling of the affair now coming

up without any unnecessary complications.

What made us uneasy about your letter to Manuel was that it might be taken as an invitation for the IS to intervene, even though the letter specifically stated that you were not asking that. Our apprehension was increased somewhat by the reply sent to you, which seemed to indicate an intention on their part to "do something" about the American situation, and the implication that it is up to them to straighten it out. In any case we would be very sorry to see the emphasis of the struggle shifted in this direction.

The line of action which you have already mapped out—to confront the opposition with an open political discussion of all the questions, stated or implicit, in their position, and your decision to permit no infringement on the authority of the leading body or any paralysis of its functions in the meantime, seems to us to be the right way to proceed from now on. We are very pleased with Joe's opening barrage in the Internal Bulletin; and the reports of the active intervention by Tom and other leading people in Local New York; and the firm positions taken by Arne, Ted, Larry, Vincent, and the leading people in San Francisco-Oakland and Seattle, to say nothing of Los Angeles—which include the points we have heard from up to date.

I do not share Jerry's apprehensions that a real thorough-going struggle in the SWP, on clearly defined political issues, will have a disrupting effect on the international movement. The international movement has profited and learned from every struggle we have conducted in the SWP in the past. And if we conduct this one along the lines already indicated, there is no reason why it should not have the same general international result as the others.

Jim

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### 3. *Letter from Morris Stein to Michel Pablo*

New York, N.Y.  
February 20, 1953

*Paris*

Dear Gabe:

Received today your three letters. One of February 13 signed by the three of you, the February 14 about Stuart and February 17 about help for Greece.

We'll do the best we can to send some bundles to Greece. Our past effort has been only partially successful. Many of the bundles were returned to the senders who then had to pay the cost of the postage for sending it back. It appears that the Greek authorities do not deliver more than one bundle to a person within one year.

Your letter on Gordon shocked me very much. The whole thing sounds unbelievable. I have known him for his unquestionable loyalty over many many years. I cannot imagine him undertaking a sudden struggle against the line of the Third Congress without first submitting his

views to the leadership. I had several letters from him of a personal character. In none did he indicate a difference with the Third Congress. In his last letter some two months ago he indicated that according to his view the 19th Congress of the CPSU indicated a shift to the right. This is of course a debatable question which need not call into question the line on Stalinism arrived at at the Third Congress. I too have a criticism of your report to the 12th Plenum on this score. I think it was wrong to make the entire axis of your report the questions of whether the 19th Congress represented a right or left turn. This is especially true in the light of the editorial in the latest *Quatrieme* where the question of "Right" or "Left" turn in relation to Stalinism is correctly qualified as of limited significance and where you say that their present line is left only in relation to their line of 1941-1947. On this qualified basis no one would question that the "left" line remains in force. Then why the long argument to prove this small point?

We'll see Manuel in a few days and get a complete re-

port from him. If your information is correct. I can assure you we'll intervene. We are not at all diplomatising when we say we are in complete agreement with the line of the Third Congress. In the unfolding struggle we'll defend this line. Our problem is that some people are trying to read into this line something that isn't there—conciliation to Stalinism. This is what we propose to combat and I am confident we'll do it in agreement with you.

Our problem here is the opposite of what you faced in France. There you faced an exaggerated anti-Stalinism

which was a convenient cover for a do-nothing policy in relation to the living movement in France. Its opposite here, Stalinist conciliationism, represents a cover for a do-nothing policy toward the living movement in the U.S. Superficial people might see in our struggle here a source of encouragement for Bleibtreu and Co. Anyone who thinks so will be quickly set straight on that score.

You'll hear from us as soon as we have had a chance to discuss with Manuel.

Warmest greetings,  
M.

#### 4. Letter from Sam Gordon to James P. Cannon

May 13, 1953

Dear Bob:

I feel I cannot delay forwarding the following information to you at once.

Burns returned yesterday from an I.E.C. and called me up to have a talk.

The main topic of the discussion was a statement on the recent developments in Russia, a draft of which you have probably seen. There was general agreement on this, but Burns (after a previous consultation with me) raised two points: 1) On the question whether restorationist tendencies within the bureaucracy had been superseded by economic progress. (He put forward the view that before this is put forward as an official view, a great deal more discussion was necessary.) 2) On the practical tasks posed in point 2C of the draft. (He put forward the view that this was unclear and could disorient the work in a number of places insofar as it puts an over-emphasis, based on a situation which had far from matured, on attention to Stalinist movements. He proposed that this point be simply dropped.)

According to him, this brought about a sharp clash of views with Jerome and such of his supporters as Frank, Dumas, etc. They were "all hopped up" over the new perspectives, saw visions of rapid denouements, etc. He stood his ground, received a certain amount of concessions to his views from Ernest in a summary, and from one or two others, but was "lectured" by Jerome and his other friends. Finally, the draft was turned over to a commission for editing after being agreed to "in principle" and Burns thinks, or "hopes" that his objective will be met.

There was also, he went on, a restricted I.S. in which the S.W.P. question was raised. According to him, Frank

and Dumas as well as Theo are already lined up with the minority. Jerome, he revealed to me for the first time, had been behind Campbell "from the beginning," and now said that on Russia "we must choose between Wright and Frankel," J. being for Frankel. In Burns' opinion, Ernest and Livio are not very firm on this line. Burns himself is "politically" with the S.W.P. majority, but feels that the sharpness and tension has obscured issues and desires very much a more objective discussion. He was cagey at the I.S. and exerted his efforts only to postpone taking a stand until an end of June meeting. This much he has achieved. According to him, his objective now is to get an I.S. majority with Ernest and Livio in order to prevent a pro-minority stand for which Jerome and Frank (the two others) are going to push.

Burns is very much worried about the whole situation and feels his own responsibility rather strongly. Organizationally he has always gotten along well with Jerome, likes him a good deal; now he feels that J. does not know what he is letting himself in for, that he is up in the clouds, suffering terribly from isolation. He wants to save Jerome, he says, from "cutting his own throat." He therefore intends to pursue a very cautious course.

He has indicated that he will write to you himself, at least in part, about these matters.

It goes without saying that I sympathized with him in the position he is in, although I expressed the opinion that I would be very firm and frank politically first of all and fit in the organizational problem within this framework. He replied that he has his own method of handling such a situation, and we left it at that.

I will leave further comment for some other time, as I think you should have this information without delay.

Yours,  
Tom

#### 5. Letter from James P. Cannon to Michel Pablo

Copy for Jerry

May 22, 1953

Dear Comrades:

Comrade Ben Stone, who has belonged to Local New York for eight years, joined the caucus of the Cochran

faction last February when it started open recruitment in New York. He has just broken with them and come over to the majority. Enclosed is his announcement of the action. This will be followed by an article in preparation, analyzing his experiences with the Cochran group-

ing and its real views and character. In discussion with Comrades Warde and Hansen, Comrade Stone made the following observations:

1. He and others were first drawn into the Cochran combination on the basis of New York Local issues alone, and then maneuvered step by step into opposition on national and world questions.

2. The Cochranite leaders assure their followers that Pablo's views are the same as theirs. They have not, however, given any specific evidence to substantiate this claim.

3. To back this up, the Cochranite leaders declare that Clarke has been Pablo's "right-hand man"; is today his closest associate and co-thinker in the U. S., and is best qualified to know his real views.

4. The Cochranite leaders contend that they are the authentic representatives of the Third World Congress line as presented by Pablo; that Cannon formally accepts, but actually has mental reservations about it; and that when Pablo's anticipated intervention occurs, it will

be on their side.

5. Comrade Stone says that what sustained him in his association with the minority against the majority developed into something much more fundamental. He came to believe that the Trotskyist movement had been bypassed by the historic process; that the Stalinist parties will most likely head the coming revolutionary upsurges of the masses throughout the world, including the United States; that it is political realism to recognize this predominant trend, and adjust to it now.

6. He expressed the opinion that the Cochranite ranks had been largely recruited and remains bound together under the impression that they support Pablo's real views and Pablo supports them.

We are sure you will be interested in this information.

Fraternally yours,  
James P. Cannon  
National Secretary  
Socialist Workers Party

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#### 6. Letter from Michel Pablo to George Novack

May 28, 1953

Dear Friend,

You have not written for a long time, nor have I received any news on the trip to . . . despite my insistence concerning this matter.

A letter arrived yesterday signed by Jim commenting on conversations by Stone. To whom was this letter addressed: to me, or to others beside myself—I do not know. I do not yet wish to reply to Jim for this reason.

The meaning of this letter could be that we ought to intervene now in the discussion and to clarify our viewpoints on the disputed questions, at least myself personally.

In any event it becomes evident that we cannot delay in intervening in one way or another. The discussion has actually been open in the movement if only by the fact that your bulletins have been somewhat circulated everywhere, have been read and discussed. At the 13th Plenum, numerous delegates, surprised, some even disturbed, posed the question to me and wanted to know what the position of the IS was on it.

So far as the observations by Stone contained in Jim's letter are concerned: naturally it is impossible to prevent this one or that one from claiming themselves to agree with my personal opinions. I want only to remark on this point that personally I have no other views and opinions than those of the official line of the movement, as well as my written texts, which are sufficiently explicit to permit no equivocal interpretation.

On the other hand, it is absolutely correct, and I have said so very loudly both to you and to everyone else, that George, during his stay here, very considerably contributed to the elaboration and success of the Third World Congress. Here he showed an entirely different political countenance than the one currently attributed to him. I do not deny the possibility that he could have changed since his return to your country and undertaken a wrong line in flagrant contradiction with his entire conduct here, more especially on the question of Stalinism and our perspectives in the United States.

But I confess that no *text* appearing up to now from the minority establishes this in a clear and convincing manner.

Naturally it may also be that orally amongst themselves the leaders and members of the minority discuss in quite a different manner than in their writing and that their real views are actually expressed orally amongst themselves. But you will have to admit that could not be a basis for us to make a serious and responsible judgment.

What I see up to now in the writings of the minority is above all tactical divergences—moreover of secondary importance—so far as the wholly immediate present stage in the United States is concerned.

On the other hand I do not at all share the manner of wishing to extract from these divergences, as well as from the criticism of the past line of the leadership on this or that point, a founded condemnation of the leadership for sectarianism or incapacity.

So far as the discussion on the special question of Stalinism is concerned up to now it has produced two important documents, Hansen's and Frankel's. I regret that Jim rushed to congratulate Hansen so warmly for his work. It does not contain errors as such, but simplifies too much, erases nuances and can give rise to summary and mechanical interpretation.

Frankel's work is considerably more developed and on the whole remarkable.

If it is false to accuse any tendency whatsoever in the party for "sectarian-Stalinophobia," it is rash to accuse another tendency as "pro-Stalinist" for having produced a document like Frankel's.

I don't know what you will do at the Plenum. But I have already written you and I now repeat it: In my opinion the real discussion ought to revolve around the prevailing concrete situation in the United States, of the situation of the workers' movement, the tasks and perspectives of the revolutionary party.

This ought to be the axis of the discussion, without sacrificing the context to it, the latter naturally being nothing else but the world situation in its entirety.

Perhaps this discussion is now necessary but could be useful both for yourselves and for the entire movement only if it unfolds in a less heated atmosphere and without any obligatory perspective of an almost inevitable split at the end.

If during the developments of this discussion any people challenge by writing, in documents, or texts, the political or organizational principles of our movement, they will receive the reply and treatment that they will then deserve.

Finally, a last remark: The present struggle amongst yourselves is the result of a difficult situation of the organization, being subjected to the enormous pressure of the atmosphere now characteristic of the country and reflecting its consequences. This situation is in contrast with that of the whole of the rest of our movement, which in a general manner finds itself on an ascending curve realizing the greatest progress since its birth. Our achievements and even more our possibilities everywhere in addition are really remarkable and are even becoming ex-

cellent to the extent that the crisis of capitalism is amplified and the disorientation of the Stalinists increases.

The necessary condition for maintaining this ascending rhythm in the whole of the movement, and fully realizing the new possibilities, is the homogeneity, the solidity, the capacity likewise for constant political elaboration of its leadership.

In the entire struggle you are now conducting, it would be well if you do not lose sight of the global interests of the movement in its present stage.

It is absolutely necessary that I be able to see you this summer. Do not forget that.

Very fraternally,  
Gabe

### 7. Letter from Gerry Healy to James P. Cannon

May 27, 1953

Dear Jim,

I have received the Stone information and felt it necessary to write you at once on this matter. What I have to say is for you and your closest associates. It should not be divulged in written form for obvious reasons.

There is an element of truth in what Stone says about your minority and Pablo. This is what we have to face up to at once. The situation has been for some time extremely complicated here, because I personally have gathered this in the course of private and personal conversations with Pablo. Several weeks ago when he was present at our Congress I had cause to warn him in the presence of Cde. Lawrence about the dangers of correspondence with a man like Clarke. He hotly defended himself at first but cooled off when I sharply reminded him that even if every letter he wrote was correct, nevertheless it could be interpreted in certain circumstances to mean some kind of support, by an unprincipled tendency, thereby permitting them to feed from it for a time. I told him that as secretary of the international he should be extremely careful.

The problem of Pablo has for some time been a source of great anxiety for me. For the past few years I have been extremely close to him and have grown to like him considerably. On the present issue I thought and still think that it would be possible to prevent him from making serious errors, by endeavouring to hold him back until the issues in the SWP become sufficiently clear. At this stage, however, we need to get together and exchange ideas.

Pablo suffers badly from isolation in Paris. That French movement is a "killer." It really is impossible to hold an international centre together when you have no national section to help it. Real international leaders can arise no other way except through a basic experience and training in building and leading a national section. Pablo has not yet got this and as a result has grown impatient. This has reflected itself most sharply on organizational questions. On several occasions we have clashed very sharply on how to allocate the financial budget. He tries to cover ground which is absolutely impossible from our slender material base.

Building a party, as you know, is a very real thing, and

so also is building an international. There is a limited amount of human beings and resources at our disposal and you can only utilize these in a certain way. Some things you can do; others, no matter how important, you cannot. The essence of leadership is to know what you can and what you cannot. A correct political line forms the backbone of all of our work, but it is not enough and sometimes unless one understands its practical application in the circumstances surrounding the movement at one's disposal, then it can be a simple matter to abandon it and slip into the camp of opportunism and adventurism.

Take this talk about Stalinism. Impatient comrades thinking in terms of China, Eastern Europe and now even the USSR, see the impact of the post-war revolutionary forces upon these countries, but fail to recognize one vital thing that, as far as we know, we have not one single organized cadre group in these areas. In matters of theory they are carried away into the field of generalizations to the extent that they generalize themselves out of existence in the countries in which they are operating. They become overseas "revolutionaries" and then begins the real drift into opportunism on the home front. They fight mythical battles all over the globe and then look for a "short cut" in the country where they should be really fighting. It is the politics of illusions and impressionism.

There is no way around the hard day to day grind in building a party. Whilst it is true that the revolution has thrown Stalinism into a crisis, it still remains a powerful reactionary force. It has huge resources and tremendous apparatus scope. In the historic sense its "sun has set" but right now it can deal the most savage blows against the revolution. Our sections are the vanguard of the revolution because they represent the only conscious force on the world scale which is organized for the revolution. They are our most precious capital. No matter to what extent the crisis upsets Stalinism, unless our people are on the spot there will never be a proper change in the situation. The revolution can make big changes—it did in Yugoslavia, but it cannot by itself transform Stalinists and centrists into cadres of the F.I. That is the historic mission of our movement and the sooner we tear aside illusionary, deceptive and opportunist revisionism the better.

The politics of your "realist" minority is in practice the most unreal thing imaginable. It consists in scouring

the globe for revolutions — hypnotizing itself with the way in which the empirical puppets of Stalinism are tossed from pillar to post in these enormous events; then drunk with "new thinking" they turn scathingly towards our small movements and squeal about "sectarianism," whilst at the same time they throw aside our conscious role and parachute around in space, only to land up eventually in the age-old camp of the enemy — Stalinism or imperialism.

The trouble with Pablo, Jim, is that he is a little disappointed with our terrible struggle to build an international. It must be said, however, that he has been in the forefront of the fight. Great progress has been made over the post-war period in organising a proper functioning international organization. He has done a remarkable job and right now he needs our help. The disease of impatience and isolationism has gripped him to the point where he unwittingly (at this stage) provides a little cover for Cochran and Clarke.

The situation remains serious and that is why we must now have an overall strategy to deal with it. I have tried "going alone" a bit with him and pursuing a policy of gradually breaking him away from these people, but's not enough.

This man wants to do the right thing — of that I am sure, but right now only a strong political line can make him see reason. There is nobody in France who can provide

this, as I see it. At the last IEC we came into conflict on a number of matters (I will write separately about these.) There was a new IS elected and it will meet once a month (next meeting June 20). I am a member of this body. The fight will open about then on the international. We should have your plenum material to discuss at that time. Also you should give me your views to help my work.

I think we must do everything possible to prevent a head-on collision between Pablo and you. We should begin the clarification here and it looks as if we shall have the support of the section. One or two may wobble, although of course it's a little early to say. Anyhow we are pushing for clarity here now.

The disease which has gripped the movement is serious — a big fight lies ahead. I think we can transform it into a victory, but great care is needed with people such as Pablo. You can rest assured that we shall enter the arena of struggle behind you. At the moment I cannot speak officially for the section, but we have blasted conciliation to Stalinism here for some time now, and there shouldn't be much trouble. However, in these days you never know.

With best wishes,  
J.

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#### 8. Letter from James P. Cannon to Sam Gordon

New York, N.Y.  
June 4, 1953

Dear Tom:

Your two letters of May 13 and May 25 have been highly appreciated here. In the new shuffle and division of labor in our leading staff, I have been placed in charge of "foreign affairs" and will pay the closest attention to it. You will be hearing from me directly on all matters in this domain and I will undertake to keep you fully informed.

As a beginning, I am enclosing herewith the following material:

1. My speech to the majority caucus of New York on "Internationalism and the SWP."

2. Our Plenum resolution on "American Stalinism and Our Attitude Toward It."

3. Two letters I wrote from California sometime ago on the question of "Cominternism" (February 3 letter to Joe and March 9 letter to Farrell).

4. Letter of May 22 to Jerome, with copy to Jerry.

5. Jerome's dissimulating "answer" to this letter addressed to Manuel under date of May 28.

6. Manuel's answer to this "answer" under date of June 2. (This blunt answer will call an abrupt halt to dissimulation, at any rate.)

7. Copy of my final speech to our recently concluded Plenum.

8. Plenum resolution on the "Internal Situation."

(If the last two documents, or any others, are not enclosed in this letter, they will follow shortly.)

For convenience I will arrange this report under separate headings.

#### 1. Our May Plenum

The Plenum ended not with a split, as was easily possible, but with a firmer consolidation of party unity based on the unconditional acceptance of majority rule and the agreement to continue a literary discussion at a slower pace and in moderated tone, without a "power struggle" for leadership.

The "power struggle," which has been going on for the past year, established a definite relation of forces in the party which were indisputably reflected at the Plenum. The minority finished with control of the Michigan organization and a fluke majority in the small Seattle Branch, which will not last long. That's all! Even in New York, where they had the advantage of controlling the apparatus and the long period of preparatory underground factional organization, they wound up in a definite minority, although the minority in New York is a strong one (about 40%).

At the Plenum, Burch and Breitman and Jean Simon (Cleveland alternate), who had previously taken an independent position, swung over to the majority and joined the majority caucus. Marcy, who has his own independent political position, as you know, stated categorically that the Buffalo Branch would not follow the minority in a split. It was this *relation of forces*, established in the course of uncompromising struggle, that made a favorable outcome of the Plenum possible and pulled the minority back

from the split which they had contemplated.

After three full days of discussion, we demanded that the minority give the Plenum a clear statement of their attitude toward the realities in the relation of party forces. We demanded that they acknowledge the authority of the Plenum, acknowledge the right of the majority to lead the party and determine its policy, and discontinue the "power struggle." *On that condition*, we offered to give them fair representation on the party staff and full democratic rights as a minority in the subsequent development of the literary discussion; and the right to maintain their faction organization, if they wished to do so.

As an alternative, if they did not agree to that, we offered to call a party convention to decide and settle the fight. The minority then stated that they did not want a convention and did not want to continue the faction fight in terms of a "power struggle." They stated that they recognized the relation of forces and the right of the majority to run the party. They favored the proposal for a continuation of the discussion in literary form at a slower pace and in a calmer tone; they asked for fair representation on the staff; and suggested that some of the harsh characterizations made of them in the draft resolutions of the majority be moderated, but emphasized that this suggestion was not put forward as an ultimatum.

We answered with an acceptance of their declaration. Sub-committees from the two sides then met to work out concrete details of the settlement. In the negotiations we agreed upon a new Political Committee of six majority and two minority, the minority being free to select their own representatives. The minority is to have a member of the full-time staff as executive editor of the magazine, but the editorial policy will be controlled by a board of three, two of whom being majority. Instead of moderating the harsh characterizations of the minority in our draft resolutions, as they had suggested, we went further and agreed to eliminate all harsh characterizations from the resolutions altogether pending the further development of the positions of both sides in the literary discussion.

The negotiating committee soon came to agreement on all these details and on a further proposal that the resolution on the internal situation should be a joint one, and that it include a declaration that both sides in the future course of the discussion should refrain from any talk of split. This resolution was adopted unanimously by the Plenum with considerable relief and enthusiasm.

It was agreed that I should make the final remarks at the close of the Plenum. What I said was apparently received with satisfaction all the way around. Factional tension has been almost entirely eliminated, and the social given by the New York Local last Saturday was a jubilant unity affair.

Two conclusions can be drawn from this experience:

1. The party crisis caused by a factional struggle, *which was instigated in Paris* and which brought the party to the brink of an unnecessary split, was resolved by the inner resources and capacities of the SWP itself.

2. A new flareup of factional struggle for a long time to come is impossible after the Plenum, unless it also is *instigated from Paris*.

## 2. "Foreign Affairs"

The entire majority leadership here has finally become convinced, against their will, that the SWP has been used

as a guinea pig for experiments in duplicity and intrigue which characterized the later years of our experience in the old Comintern; but which we never expected, and for a long time could not believe were possible, in the international movement inspired by Trotsky.

My letter to Jerome under date of May 22 could not fail to be understood as formal notice that we are aware of the maneuvers against us; that things are going to be different in this relationship from now on; and that any kind of monkey business is out of date as far as we are concerned. My sending a copy of the letter to Burns was designed to let him also know that we are on guard and ready to react to the first openly hostile move against us. Our people throughout the country have been fully informed of what has happened and our evaluation of it, and it is already too late for anybody to take us by surprise.

Our next step, in the event of any overt act against us, will be an international roll call to find out who are our friends and who are our enemies. This roll call will not be confined to a few individuals who mistake themselves for the movement, but will be addressed to the entire world movement itself. I hope that Burns takes a firm stand on our side. Collaboration between him and us has been very beneficial to both in the past, and can continue to be so in the future. But, as you know, all collaboration, as far as we are concerned, has to have a firm and clearly-defined principled basis.

If Burns, as we hope, is on our side, this is my first request to him, which you can transmit. I would like to have a full and complete report of everything he knows about the conspiracy against the SWP leadership from the beginning. Your letter indicates that he has had previous knowledge of these machinations. We have pieced them together by deduction, but we would like to have more detailed factual information.

I smelled something about this business a long time ago, as did others here. But we did not want to permit ourselves to believe that anyone with whom we had collaborated in good faith would attempt to play such a double game with us. The two enclosed letters I wrote from California — the February 3 letter to Joe and the March 9 letter to Farrell — seem now to have been written, so to speak, in anticipation. But they also show very plainly that I hoped for the best and did not want any rupture of collaboration to be initiated from our side.

You know that from the beginning of the reestablishment of international collaboration, after the end of the war, we wanted the organizational procedures to be regulated and moderated by the realities of an association of still feeble organizations; and feared any methods of super-centralization which, in the circumstances, could only be a caricature. Our concern was not for ourselves, but to protect the weak, young groups and parties and give them a chance to grow and develop their own initiative, and to select out an indigenous leadership of their own in each case. You know how often we conveyed, through you and Bob, these suggestions which were the fruit of such long experience and deliberate thought on these matters. You know also how our suggestions in this respect were disregarded.

We have had the uneasy feeling for a long time that the unfortunate results in France — the loss of the majority in two splits since the end of the war — might have been avoided if the wise men in Paris had been willing to recog-

nize that the building of a party, and the selection of an indigenous leadership capable of leading the party with the necessary authority, is a long, difficult and complicated process; and that the experience of others in this field might have been worth some consideration.

It is not a question of a "hard" or a "soft" policy in factional struggles, but knowing how to alternate them and to use each at the right time. For example, I don't know how much blood I lost in impotent fuming over the method of dealing with the Haston gang in England. That was too soft, for too long a time. I always thought the Burns group should have been helped to get out of that Haston jungle at least a year earlier, to give them at least one year more of precious time to lay the foundation of a real movement. I felt the same way about the ultra-soft and diplomatic policy with the Geoffroy group in France.

Conversely, we were flabbergasted at the tactics used in the recent French conflict and split, and the inconceivable organizational precedent established there. That is why I delayed my answer to Renard so long. I wanted to help the IS politically, but I didn't see how I could conscientiously sanction the organizational steps taken against the majority of an elected leadership. I finally resolved the problem by just ignoring that part of Renard's letter. But I am not very proud of the fact that such an evasive course seemed to be imposed by the circumstances.

Now we have an experiment with the SWP, with light-minded talk and proposals for "intervention" which, if it has any effect at all, will only be to stir up another needless factional insurrection against the leadership and again endanger the party unity. I can tell you plainly that it will not seriously affect the SWP, because we will simply smash such an insurrection if it is attempted. But what do these methods signify for weak and inexperienced parties? And what does an irresponsible rupture of the collaboration with us mean for the whole world movement? These are serious questions which serious people had better begin thinking about, and I sincerely hope that Burns and his friends will be among them.

### 3. *Third World Congress*

I was surprised and disappointed at your impulsive action in regard to the Third World Congress documents. We accepted them *as they were written*. When they try to tell us now that we don't understand them, we do not reply by saying that we reject the resolutions. We say, rather, that we reject any special interpretation of them that is not clearly stated in the written language.

If there is something in fine print that we overlooked; or if something was written in invisible ink, to be deciphered by a special caste of priests who have been secretly tipped off—we don't accept that part. We don't admit the right of anybody to read into the documents anything that is not already there in plain print. We don't believe in priests. We don't need special agents, who know the secrets or special interpretations, to explain the resolutions to us the way the Catholic prelates explain the bible to ignorant laymen. It only confuses matters to admit, even by implication, that somebody has a special right to "interpret" the documents; and that therefore, since we don't agree with some of the "interpretation," we reject the documents. We would be greatly pleased if you can see things this way and coordinate yourself with us accordingly.

The question of Stalinism, and our attitude toward it in the new stage of its development, can become terribly complicated and clouded if the slightest suspicion of hidden motives and double meanings enters into the consideration of the question and the interpretation of the documents. We, for our part, do not want to begin with this attitude. But we have had to admit that the persistent contentions of our minority, put forward with such inexplicable assurance, that we don't "understand" the Third Congress documents; that the documents don't mean what we think they mean just from reading what they say in cold print; and now the new evidence that their self-confidence is not self-generated, but has all along been prompted by assurance of support from Paris—all that has ceased to be merely annoying and has become rather alarming.

Our disposition here is not to withdraw our support for the written documents, but to watch alertly for the next stage of the evolution of the discussion on this question.

As you know, from the early days of our movement in this country, I personally haven't had much use for global politicians who can easily solve all the complicated problems of other countries, but manifest ignorance and indifference toward the concrete problems of their own country. That, as you will recall, is what our old fight against Carter—and to a large extent against Shachtman—was mainly about. We have the concrete problem of Stalinism right here in the United States, where we have to do our work and prove our worth as revolutionists, not as mere speculators and commentators on all the affairs of the great globe itself.

We are not going to allow the slightest ground for ambiguity, or misunderstanding, or misinterpretation of our analysis of American Stalinism and its prospects, and our attitude toward it. That is why we have set our opinion down in a special resolution on American Stalinism, which was adopted by the Plenum. In the final draft we will edit out some of the sharper expressions, but nothing else will be changed. The copy of the draft resolution enclosed herewith makes our position clear, I think.

In the subsequent discussion I hope to elaborate on this question more fully, taking each section of the adopted resolution as the point of departure for either a series of articles or a long connected one.

### 4. *The Majority Faction in the SWP*

The faction fight in the SWP was settled quite definitely, and for a long time to come, at the Plenum. Under normal conditions, this would lead to an attenuation of the factional organizations and eventually, probably, to their transformation into tendencies, rather than organized groups. The only thing standing in the way of this normal evolution is the threat of some artificial "intervention" from Paris, which would feed the flames of factionalism, again call in question the authority of the majority leadership, and plunge us headlong into an embittered factional organization struggle, with the implicit threat of split.

We have decided to prepare for this possibility. For that reason we are maintaining our caucus organization from top to bottom, on a military basis, and imposing an absolute discipline upon every member of the faction. This excludes the right of any individual to take any kind of action outside the faction, which might in any way cut across or compromise the line of strategy decided upon by the faction leadership. If you recognize the necessity

for this strict procedure in this next period, and are willing to work with us on that basis, we will naturally be glad to include you in the majority faction and coordinate all our work with you, furnish you with all information, and give you precise instructions in regard to any procedure. I personally don't have the slightest doubt that you will find this agreeable, as well as necessary in the situation, and that you will confirm the agreement in your next

letter.

For the moment, at your own discretion, you are free to show this letter, and all or any part of the enclosed material, to Burns and his friends so that they can get an absolutely clear picture of our position.

Fraternally,  
Jim

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### 9. Letter from Sam Gordon to James P. Cannon

June 22, 1953

Dear Jim:

I was glad to get your letter of June 4 and the enclosed material. After a long time without more than a general notion of what was going on at your end, I have in recent weeks had a veritable flood of bulletins, resolutions, minutes, etc. I am only just emerging from it. Meanwhile I have had to have prolonged conversations with Burns and others. Since my free time is considerably restricted and my eyes have been troubling me a bit lately, I have only been able to work haphazardly on a reply to your letter, really only on notes, that I started over a week ago and am now trying to knock into shape.

As you indicated, there could be no doubt about my agreeing to your proposition. I assume, therefore, that you were not waiting anxiously for confirmation from me. It is necessary, however, to clear up a few matters and to get a good, thorough mutual understanding.

The material you enclosed was very interesting all around and revealed to me more than ever that on all kinds of subjects our thoughts were running in the same or similar channels. There are some questions on which I have a somewhat different opinion from yours, but these are minor to my mind.

I have also seen the main political resolution of the Plenum and can vote for it with both hands. It was sorely needed at this stage internationally.

As I proceed, I shall try to make clear my own particular views.

#### *Plenum Results*

Everybody on this side too heaved a great sigh of relief at the outcome. I personally think that the peace, even if it turns out to be only a prolonged armed truce of the kind which this instable world of today has come generally to accept as a substitute, is a very good thing. The swift pace of objective developments nowadays is a great help in correcting erroneous views, for one thing. In a calmer atmosphere of discussion this could possibly serve to mend the fissure which has appeared in our ranks. In any case, there is a considerable time lag in understanding the issues between the place where the dispute arises and other places. A slower tempo will therefore aid in crystallizing a firm international opinion. Moreover, there are a good many questions which have only been posed in the discussion (particularly on the recent developments since Stalin's death) and on which everyone needs self-clarification.

Meanwhile I ought to inform you about the reactions of others at the first news of the Plenum settlement.

Here in *London*, while there was relief and approval, there was a certain amount of skepticism. The outbreak of hostilities came suddenly for most people, and just as they began to sort out what was what and who was who, the reestablishment of the peace came just as suddenly. One view expressed is: perhaps the differences were not so serious as contended. Another view: perhaps the peace is not as real as it appears. It will take some time before the proper perspective on the struggle will be in focus. The resolution on the "Internal Situation" has just come in. No doubt it will help in this respect.

Most people are studying the bulletins very carefully, nevertheless, although there are very few who have been able to get beyond those dealing with the New York discussion up to now. (This will give you an idea of the time lag.)

Burns showed me a letter from *Paris* in which Jerome jubilantly expresses the following opinion more or less: The peace settlement is due to Jim's wisdom, to the great ideological cohesion of the minority, to the Paris intervention which those at whom it was directed could not fail to understand, and also to Burns' group's resolution which acted in the same sense (presumably as the Paris intervention). He writes that it was a great victory for the SWP and for the international movement, which it was of course. Since I am not acquainted with the contents of the intervention, however, I cannot presume to understand this reaction altogether. You will probably be in a better position to.

#### *Your Conclusions from the Experience*

You underscore that the factional struggle was *instigated in Paris* and that a new flare-up is impossible unless it springs from the same source. Elsewhere you repeatedly refer to the "conspiracy against the SWP leadership." It is necessary to be very clear on how this is meant.

If you conceive of the whole thing as a plot hatched by evil people for unclear motives, then I must say you are putting it on rather thick. There is no doubt about what you refer to as "Cominternism" in organizational procedure, the long-standing unrealistic concept of super-centralization and all the foibles that have gone with it. But I think we have always asked ourselves in similar circumstances: what are the politics behind the organizational procedures? It is necessary to do so in this case as well.

The factional struggle in the SWP was certainly insti-

gated in Paris if you mean by this that the political fountainhead was there I think this should be clear to all by now. When Frankel says that the "new thinking" is not going on in New York alone, that is a pretty broad hint. (By the way, of all that has been written up to now on the opposition's side, Frankel's contribution appears to have been the most impressive, the only thing effective, among people here, and should be taken up in the coming literary discussion.)

In my opinion the "new thinking" is not by any means finished, but is developing. In the sense that further developments in political line may cause another flare-up of the struggle, what you say about the future is quite true.

The root is political, and I shall try to explain my view of the politics when I come to the point on the Third Congress documents. Now the question is, how does this tie up with the organizational procedures? As I see it, here is the picture.

#### *What Happened in Paris?*

The essence of the "new thinking" is that the objective situation has developed along lines unforeseen by our movement, by our theory of Stalinism. It was anticipated hypothetically—not as a genuine possibility—in some of Trotsky's writings. But Trotsky was a genius, whereas the cadres he left behind are not. The movement has to be rearmed, but the old cadres are putting up a conservative, "sectarian" resistance. Hence arises the need to reorganize the cadre everywhere, to lop off the deadwood, to shape and mold the cadre anew.

That, put in the most objective terms (there is no need here to go into the fallacy of all this), is how the problem very likely appeared in Paris after the Congress. What followed concretely between say Jerome and Livingstone, was a tacit understanding, a sort of "entente." There was broad agreement, but not necessarily any specific commitments. L. must have made up his mind that he would open up a fight in the SWP at that time and perhaps told J. that. The latter may have advised caution and probably explained that in any case, in view of his position, he would have to retain a certain impartiality, as the struggle unfolded. Aid from him could therefore only come in the form of developing the political line. That, too, may require concessions of a secondary nature to the conservative resistance, as was the case with the main Congress documents—he may have continued to explain—but nothing essential would be "given away." As to direct organizational support, time would show if and when that would become practical.

You can interpret that as duplicity, as a conspiracy, or what you will, but it is evidently politically motivated and that must be borne in mind all the time, as the key to an understanding of the struggle. Knowing the men involved intimately, and having observed their way of thinking and acting, I would say it is not a matter of bad faith producing bad politics, but of bad politics rationalizing what appears to be bad faith.

#### *Burns' Opinion*

I don't know what Burns can tell you specifically about the facts regarding what you call the "conspiracy." I have transmitted your request to him and know that he has

sent you a first reply; meanwhile he is trying to reconstruct incidents in his memory. But he is sure of his overall impression that there was collaboration from the beginning, correspondence and so on.

In any case, he says, Gabe's last letter (among the material you enclosed) is striking not so much for evasion or dissimulation as it is in *revealing* what his position has been. I think he has a point there.

#### *The Third World Congress*

You write that you were "surprised and disappointed" at my "impulsive action" in regard to the Third World Congress documents. I presume that by "action" you mean my last conversation with Manuel and the message I asked him to convey. I am sorry to hear that you were disappointed, and puzzled at your surprise. But I assure you it was not impulsive, but deliberate.

I had expressed reservations on these documents from the first and this was fairly well known in the leadership. If I am not mistaken it was even recorded in the minutes. I had early expressed the opinion to members of the present majority that it seemed to me Clarke's interpretation of the documents was the interpretation meant by the authors. After the correctives introduced by the X Plenum, I agreed that I might possibly be mistaken. I thought it could not hurt to wait and see, and meanwhile assume that it was a matter of the line straightening itself out, so to speak. I acted everywhere on that assumption.

From observation in various places, in the ensuing months, it became plain to me that Clarke was not the only one to have such an interpretation, but that it was fairly wide-spread among people who had nothing but the documents to go by. After the November plenum I became convinced that the line in Paris was not only not straightening itself out, but on the contrary. It was shaping up more and more according to Clarke's concept of it. I dropped Bob a few lines in that sense. It became urgent, in my opinion, to counteract this trend and, above all, to alert the majority that if they expected political solidarity from Paris in the fight, they were due for great disappointment.

The Barr-Short-Herrick letter arrived. Taking that into consideration as well as Manuel's views in a number of conversations, I asked him to convey to you my full opinion, and told him he could convey it to Jerome as well. I suppose this last part is what you consider impulsive. That was deliberate on my part and meant to get Jerome to show his hand.

I think it served the purpose. His reaction was a letter to you (in reply to the Barr etc. letter, I believe) which was a giveaway. Burns showed me a copy at the time, saying he thought it was a "mistake." It started him thinking, however. For all I know, it had the same effect at your end.

What are you disappointed about? What is the argument? Was there a question of discipline involved? I am not aware of any, unless discipline applies retrospectively, so to speak.

Perhaps there is some further misunderstanding as to what my action consisted of. In that case I had better clear it up. I did not propose to reject the documents, or to ask you to reject them. Here is what I had in mind.

There had been a good deal of uncritical "hoopla," to

borrow one of Frankel's expressions, about these documents that was part and parcel of the developing "Cominternism," in my opinion. I thought it necessary to begin a reexamination of what was written and to speak up critically. It was becoming self-evident that you could not go on very long talking about two different lines and upholding one and the same text as a basis. A new clarifying statement of position was becoming urgent.

For my part, it was not a matter of reading fine print or of granting special rights to priest-interpreters, by implication or otherwise but of facing reality. There were obviously contradictory elements in the documents on the basis of a general agreement on the new relationship of class forces in the world and on the broader, long-term perspectives. These contradictory elements were so weighted or slanted that I could not—and believed that the SWP could not—continue to support the documents without further elucidation. Let me point out how I viewed this, as briefly as possible.

#### *How the Documents are Slanted*

1. While stress is correctly laid on the new element in the relationship of forces, which has become irreversibly favorable for the working class and socialism, this is given a slant so as to make it appear that the process is from now on more or less *automatic*, will not face any major obstacles or delays. (It is partly from this conception that the notion is fed about Stalinism being no longer able to betray. I leave aside for the moment the question as to how this ties up with the idea that we are in for an epoch of deformed revolutions, with which one of the authors was preoccupied in previous discussion, whether this represents a reversal.)

2. Due weight is given to the new fact of Stalinist leadership being forced in the post-war period to head revolutionary mass movements which tend to get out of hand (mainly in Asia, that is, by adapting to the colonial revolution). The overwhelmingly counter-revolutionary role of the Stalinist parties in the capitalist countries (particularly in Western Europe), still quite recent, is barely given a place in the balance-sheet. (This one-sided presentation further feeds wrong notions about Stalinism.)

3. Correcting a previous misconception, the drive toward war (and its character of international civil war, war-revolution) is put forth in fresh and incisive fashion. But there is a tendency to go overboard here, too, to lay major stress on the time-table attributed to imperialism, to allow for no serious hitches. (This is continued in subsequent writings and is in contradiction to the concept of huge masses entering the political arena which in itself could—with events of recent months, obviously does—put a brake on the war drive.)

4. "Growing homogeneity in each of the two camps" is set forth as the perspective, although the crisis in both capitalism and Stalinism is dealt with at length in the abstract. The unity of the capitalist camp is overstressed altogether. The dynamics in the anti-capitalist camp is not given much attention. (On this last point, the latest documents dealing with the USSR are an effort to make up for this.)

5. From all the foregoing the conclusion is drawn that a large-scale "deal" (that is, an accommodation of the Stalinist bureaucracy to imperialism) is virtually excluded, although there is mention of possible partial, temporary,

incidental agreements. (This further feeds the notion that Stalinism can no longer betray.)

6. The basic counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism is set forth correctly in the abstract, but in the concrete the revolutionary qualities of the Stalinist cadre is given undue and altogether incorrect emphasis. (A mountain is made out of a mole-hill and the illustration of how this works out in practice was given by the minority in the SWP.)

7. As a result there has been a serious misjudgment of the trend in Stalinist policy, particularly after the XIX Congress of the Russian CP—the latest aspect being the virtual ignoring of the recent "peace" maneuvers.

8. This whole line of reasoning also affects the otherwise quite correct estimate of the effect of Stalin's death: Insofar as it sees the elimination of the restorationist danger on part of the bureaucracy at a time when, in my opinion, it arises more concretely than ever before with the weakening of the bureaucracy on the threshold of the showdown with imperialism. All past experience has been that an obsolescent social force, before disappearing from the historical scene, makes common cause with all that is out-lived and reactionary in the final showdown. If this does not hold true of Stalinism, then we are in for a serious revision of theory in one respect or another.

To sum up: the slant given in the Third Congress documents is too one-sided, too pat and formal in its logic, in reality too superficial to serve as a correct estimate of the objective situation and in outlining perspectives with regard to Stalinism (although the document did introduce important modifications that were very valuable). In this sense it lends itself to misinterpretation in the direction of revising our basic theory of Stalinism and makes for faulty analysis of new events which can disorient our movement.

That is the way I see the problem in brief. I could go into great detail, with chapter and verse, but obviously this is not the place. The question is what to do about it?

In my opinion it is not a matter of withdrawing support from a general line, but of explaining what we understand by it. This has largely been done in the discussion. It further requires encouraging a critical attitude to the documents. They are not a *finished* analysis, but an important contribution which must be made more precise. Meantime, if there is to be no open conflict with Paris *politically*, it is necessary to find a formula for an understanding on current operation of the line.

On this last point, I would be perfectly satisfied with your Plenum resolution as a basis. Could such agreement be found? That is really the key question as to whether a resumption of the factional struggle will be "instigated by Paris." For the formalism and one-sidedness of their politics is merely reflected in the super-centralization and lack of realism of their organizational procedures.

I agree with you that our attitude to Stalinism "can become terribly complicated and clouded if the slightest suspicion of hidden motives and double meanings enters into consideration of the question and the interpretation of documents." I am only too well aware of the danger. At the same time I think that the greatest danger is an ambiguous political line in this respect. You have your resolution on "American Stalinism" and that is excellent. Unfortunately, however, Stalinism is not just an American

problem, if I may permit myself an understatement.

These are my views on this whole question. I don't know if this will please you, but I am sure you should know them.

For my part, I don't see any obstacle to coordinating myself with you.

#### *Majority Faction*

In view of the present circumstances, your decision is fully justified. As far as I am concerned, I am quite willing to work with you on the basis you propose, but want to stress to you the need of the fullest possible consultation before any important move is undertaken.

#### *Burns*

Burns has declared his complete political support of the Majority, and has stated to his committee that he will act in this sense in Paris. While the committee as a whole has not yet taken a position, there are a few who share his stand and most of the others want time to go over discussion material. For some time to come, therefore, his will be a delicate situation, although there has not been an opposition to the stand he has taken and none is expected. I am sure you will take this into consideration in any steps you contemplate.

I have shown him all the material you sent. In this connection I ought to tell about his reaction to your caucus speech. He appreciates the SWP cadre as perhaps no one else on this side does, because he really knows from hard

experience what building a cadre means. Whatever his shortcomings, he has done most toward that end here. It is a group far superior to anything they have had here in the past. He therefore winced when he came to the part where you make comparisons and remarks that in this respect you were thinking in terms of ten to fifteen years ago.

I think there is a good deal in what he says, and it would be well to bear it in mind. His group has got to be regarded as a partner, and there will be other partners as well, I am sure. And the problem of relations with them will have to be given some thought.

#### *Problems Raised*

You write that in case of any overt act against you, you will undertake an international roll call. How do you envisage that? It is a rather sticky question, as they say here.

In my opinion Jerome will be very cautious about any "intervention" now. The danger is that he may just throw in the towel, as he has threatened to do a number of times in the past when he was under similar pressure. That could create all sorts of problems.

The best thing would be to try to find some *modus vivendi* with him for the time being, and to work out a long-term solution carefully and by close consultation.

Fraternally,  
Tom

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#### *10. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs*

Los Angeles, Calif.  
July 9, 1953

#### *New York*

Dear Farrell:

I enclose herewith a letter to Tom which I wish you would ask Reba to forward, as I don't have his address. I think we ought to wait for a report on the IS Plenum before coming to a definitive conclusion as to just what its resolution saluting the Plenum's outcome signifies. I have given quite a little thought to the whole matter as no doubt you have. I am disposed to suspend final judgment until we get the missing information, as to what the resolution signifies and just what brought about such an apparently sharp reversal of the previous trend over there. There's much food for thought in Tom's observations on many points. I will write on this at length a little later. Meantime if any opinions have been formulated in New York I would be glad to hear about them.

I am eagerly awaiting the translation of the draft resolutions for the Fourth Congress. *This time*, at any rate, we will go over all such documents with a fine tooth comb and make sure that our point of view is made clear and taken into consideration, and eliminate all possibility of contradictory interpretations of supposedly official documents.

Our resolution on American Stalinism will have to be considered as a serious contribution to the international discussion on this question. It is true, as Tom says, that

Stalinism is not merely an American phenomenon, but American Stalinism happens to be that part of it which we have to understand and deal with. I read this resolution over again yesterday. I think it is 100% correct and that in the next stage of the discussion in our party this resolution should be elaborated and expounded at length.

If we really succeed in clarifying this question of the nature and perspectives of American Stalinism we will do a great deal to reinforce party peace and unity. That will still leave the question of the role and perspectives of the trade union bureaucracy and the perspectives of our party in relation to it. When we finally succeed in clarifying *this* question we will have eliminated the greatest danger to the peace and unity of the party and the self-confident work of its cadres in preparation for their great future.

I was well pleased to see *The Militant's* treatment of the German events again in this current issue. But again I was disappointed to find no reference to the position of the American Stalinist press. I haven't been able to get these papers out here, but I strongly suspect that they have laid themselves wide open for a devastating attack in defense of the German workers. By the way, if these German manifestations signify the beginning of the political revolution against Stalinism, and the Stalinists are answering with armed force and firing squads, what becomes of the precious theory that these scoundrels can no longer betray?

Or, are we going to sponsor the possible variant, as Clarke seems to intimate in the end of his article in the latest magazine, that the Stalinist bureaucracy will right itself without a political revolution? Under this head I would like to know the name and address of any pre-

vious privileged social groupings in history which have voluntarily overthrown their own privileges.

Fraternally,  
J.P. Cannon

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11. Letter from Sam Gordon to James P. Cannon

London, 17 July 1953

Dear Walter:

Received yours of July 9, post-marked N.Y. July 14, as well as Barr report of June 22 and Manuel circular of June 17. While I am at it, I might also acknowledge a letter from Smith, on other matters, dated June 26, and on which I have nothing to comment that I have not said already.

It is unfortunate that my letter was lying around so long, since a good deal of time has been lost. I will try, for my part, to make up for the time lost.

Regarding the IS, I sent no report for the following reasons: The main business was two big preparatory documents, on "Stalinism" and on "Our Integration into the Real Mass Movement"—the lines of which and the import for your struggle is probably as clear to you as to me, I expect that you received copies, although I am disturbed to see no mention of them in your letter. Burns wrote Barr, I believe, of the importance of urging postponement of consideration and decision on these, as well as for your comment. Secondly, on your struggle, there was officially only the letter welcoming the Plenum settlement and no further attempt at intervention. Thirdly, the rest was a series of impressions Burns conveyed to me—he had taken no notes—which it is difficult to relay second-hand. I had hoped he would write himself. He did write, and his letters should be in your hands by now. But, just to make sure you get as much information on this as I have, I will give you everything I have from notes at hand. This is all the more necessary now because of the apparent flare-up of your struggle.

I did not want to rush with Burns' impressions regarding the attitude displayed to him, and indirectly to you, because of the unity sentiment prevailing, and on which you were quite definite. I did not want to be a disturbing influence, so to speak. I looked upon your settlement as really part and parcel of a settlement with Jerome, because to me Livingstone is closely associated with the latter, as I explained in my last letter. Here are the impressions:

Burns was received with hostility, put on the carpet for "Trying to line up" his group behind you. All except Ernest engaged in this. Frank went so far in attacking your group that Jerome had to restrain him. Formally, however, they decided to go no further than the letter they sent you. In Burns' opinion, and of course in mine all along, his open break with them in May stopped them from intervening then; and this, coupled with your firm majority at the Plenum, accounts for the retreat Jerome and Livingstone have beaten.

In this connection, there are indications that Jerome has shifted his ground and is now intervening in Burns' group

in order to remedy his previously weak position on this side, so to speak. He is attempting to act through J. L. [John Lawrence]. The latter has raised big objections to an article on Stalin written by Burton (along the same lines politically as in page 8 of Barr's June 22 report) as "against the general line" and proposed to keep it out of the review, substituting for it the Clarke effort in your magazine. In Burns' opinion this is but part of a campaign that is being attempted here by Jerome. There are any number of other, minor indications, among them a headline smuggled into the weekly without consultation. Needless to say, Burns and his friends are on the alert and confident that they can handle the situation.

The flare-up on your side may quite possibly coincide with this development over here.

Further on the meeting: There is a first rate crisis in L. Roy's group [Ceylon], danger of large defection to Stalinism. They propose to send one of the two central people. Jerome himself proposes to go to handle the major opportunity which has arisen after April 1952 [Bolivian revolution]. Burns and I both have our misgivings about such trips, and in our opinion they indicate a state of mind which certainly is not very sober, to say the least.

On the two documents mentioned there was no full discussion but a tendency to bring pressure to get them passed speedily.

That is about all, on impressions. Next time, I hope, Burns will note things more carefully. The next session is July 22-23, but may be postponed again.

The important thing, however, are the documents. Each contains concessions meant for you, that is obvious. In a certain sense, there is a reversion to the X Plenum here. But the basic line remains the same one-sided affair, which sees only favorable developments and no dangers. Our pre-congress contribution to the discussion, which Livingstone burned but which has since been published by him, is taken little notice of. In my opinion, the line is much closer to the "revelations" of Isaac Deutscher than to what Clarke fulminates against the "Old Testament" of Trotskyism. (This new remark of Clarke's is not surprising to me—I remember fighting against a phrase of his in a draft resolution I fought, to the effect that "Titoism is the hope of humanity." Both reveal a trend. I am afraid it is not confined to him alone.)

Naturally, there are a lot of good ideas in both documents that we can agree with. We can even agree "in general" with the conception of the "Stalinism" draft. But there are a few specific ideas which I cannot accept. I call your attention to Par. 15, which notes frankly a departure from our traditional concept of the struggle to come in the USSR. This poses the question as to which of two basic concepts we have to give up: Either that

Stalinism (the bureaucracy) is an obsolescent, reactionary social force, or that obsolescent forces before they leave the historical scene make common cause with all that is reactionary in society? Par. 20—which reiterates the impossibility of a compromise with imperialism. Par. 21, which says "the socialist regeneration of the USSR almost as much as the socialist revolution in the USA will decide the world victory of socialism—what does that mean, in what sense does that hold? Par. 23, which is quite correct, but looks at the process as automatic. The wave of pacifism and its relation to the agitation for four-power talks is simply ignored, etc., etc.

In the other document, aside from ambiguity about secondary tactics which can at times become primary, there are the same old attempts at specific directives here, there and everywhere. Super-centralization shows its head here unmistakably. Burns has suggested that perhaps a section on the role and limitations of the leadership would be more appropriate.

I am writing this hastily and perhaps leaning more in impressions than I should. But I do not want to delay sending this off for a more thought-out comment. I have a reply to Frankel, which I have not sent on to you because I wanted to see first the tone of the literary discussion and adjust that to it. Perhaps I shall try to bring it up to date and send it now.

I had hoped that the development of events would bring

us closer again. But up to now this is not the case. Neither the great, stirring rising in East Germany nor the crack in the bureaucracy revealed by the Beria disgrace has so far done so. But events show that our traditional concepts are absolutely correct and indispensable in judging the new developments—which, of course, we must not fail to recognize. We have every right to remain firm.

Practically, it is necessary to develop a common line in closest cooperation, both politically and organizationally. I am anxious to hear your views on this.

I may be out of town for two weeks after next week, so write to Burns directly in that time.

Best regards, Tom

P.S. You can forget my remark about Burns' reaction to your caucus speech. It was merely a matter of looking for recognition that his group has grown. It may interest you to know that just the other day he said that he regards his group as part and parcel of yours, historically as well as politically. Also, there is no question but that the attitude to Stalinism is the same for them as for you. No one has expressed any difference on your resolution on this here.

P. P. S. There was also some talk at the meeting about the Bleibtreu group coming back, negotiations, etc.

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## 12. Letter from Gerry Healy to James P. Cannon

July 21, 1953

Dear Jim:

To provide a report on the last I. S. meeting, it is necessary to retrace in brief some of the events at the meeting of the I. E. C. which was held just prior to your May Plenum. After that, I propose to set forth some opinions on the present situation in the international.

At the I. E. C. a conflict developed between myself and Pablo on the way to approach the new events in Russia. This was not so much around the contents of the resolution (although some points required more elaboration) but on the way it was presented by the spokesmen for the I. S. In my opinion, an all too optimistic coloration was introduced. No one can doubt, of course, the significance of the events, but to generalize these into language which implies a new millennium immediately for our sections can cause disappointment and disillusionment later. I said that we should remember the mistakes of the French section on Yugoslavia (which in my view now had some roots in the I. S.) Here everyone was hopped up to the point where the Party was unprepared for the sharp turn that became necessary in August 1950 (the Kardelj speech to the U. N. O.) The subsequent unfortunate events were in no small way related to this.

On the new stage of events in the U. S. S. R. I said that we must avoid this in order to arm our people on a realistic approach, and warn them about the constant changes of Stalinist treachery in a situation which was getting ever

more desperate for Malenkov & Co. The French and Pablo attacked me with great heat, even going so far at times as to interrupt me when I was speaking. Germain the reporter was much more considerate, and in reply went out of his way to answer satisfactorily my points. However, I have been long enough around to judge incidents, and in the course of an I. S. bureau meeting the next day, whilst informally discussing the dispute in the S. W. P. Pablo made his statement of support for Frankel and "against the articles of Wright." Immediately following the I. E. C. Pablo made his way across the room to J. Lawrence, my fellow delegate, and took him away for a two-hour discussion. The contents of this are just beginning to emerge now.

On returning I reported my contribution to our E. C. Lawrence gave what he terms a "factual" account. I reported that following the dissolution of the old I. S. we were called upon to elect a representative on the new I. S. In doing this I expressed the opinion that our E. C. should know that I felt a little unhappy about things, especially Pablo's remark on the Frankel document. Lawrence got annoyed and heated, claiming that this was directed against him. His outburst took me aback, and I replied that I wanted the committee to be aware of my opinions before voting on my nomination. I explained that in point of fact, the I. E. C. wanted to elect me at its session, but I avoided this by requesting time to report this at its session, but I avoided this by requesting time to report this back so that the committee could make a choice. This was also necessary out of courtesy to

Lawrence who was the previous representative. After this, I was elected unanimously with Emmet abstaining. I cite these events to give a little background to the last I. S. My informal reception from Pablo was decidedly cool. He told me that he had a letter from someone in your minority who told him that the agreement came about this way, "At some point in the debate you [Cannon] asked Clarke if he was an agent of Pablo, when assured that this was so, you brightened up and after that agreement was reached." He asked me to explain this, and I declined, stating that it was not my job to explain such things.

At the meeting we had the two documents now in your hands before us. Germain and Frank gave me a verbal translation before the meeting, but it was impossible to make a contribution on this basis. After a little discussion we agreed to send them out to all members of the I.E.C. The next item was a report from Pablo on the situation in Ceylon, where it appears that the Stalinist wing of the L.S.S.P. were making some progress. The I.S. bureau recommended that Germain should be sent. I did not feel happy about this, but as I had no concrete alternative I let the decision go. Pablo reported on Bolivia and stated that he was going there. He said that Sal Santen from Holland (who is in S. America and who was in Bolivia) was now in Uruguay, in a demoralized position with little money. He was sent there on Pablo's insistence last year.

We then came to your question. Frank opened up by emphasizing the political cohesion of the minority, stating his support for Frankel's document. He said that we must stress with the Americans the need for a very full discussion on the new documents for the Fourth Congress. This was necessary because of the "American way of life" outlook prevalent in the S.W.P. This remark implied some lack of interest in international matters by the S.W.P. majority. Pablo, Germain, and myself opposed him on this. I made a statement supporting the S.W.P. majority. Pablo interrupted me with a violent attack. He said that I had maneuvered Lawrence from being our representative on the I.S., that I was maneuvering my section to support the S.W.P. majority, etc. etc. He had a factional report of our E.C. from either Lawrence or Hilda Lane (who is in touch with Pablo's wife). I fancy it was the latter. I let fly at him in reply and told him bluntly that this sort of nonsense made no impression, and that it was half-truths from beginning to end. I told him that he was not dealing with "little boys" and that in a Bolshevik organization there were procedures for dealing with this sort of misunderstanding—all he had to do was write for an explanation, and not confront me in an atmosphere of intimidation on the I.S. The matter closed without anything concrete emerging except an agreement on the statement now in your hands. Germain seemed neutral on the questions, but seemed friendly. Frank is the Frank he always was on such matters. Livio the Italian inclined toward the Frankel document. Afterwards, Pablo became more friendly, and we parted in a comradely way, but obviously under a cloud for the future. He is in touch with some elements here, and from that meeting onwards I have proceeded accordingly.

The next incident was last Wednesday at an editorial Board meeting of our Review. Tom had written an article on Stalin's death which up to the time of the meeting had only been read by Lawrence, and myself. Lawrence

moved that we refuse to publish the article because it was contrary to the line of the I.S. He did this with great force, which is not generally a characteristic trait of his. I replied that such an attitude was absolutely intolerable, and that we must have a discussion with Tom present when all the members could read his article. Lawrence then told me that I supported Tom politically, and should get down to amendments to the new documents. This was news to me, but the method quite old, and since I am not used to "hoop-jumping" I replied that I must read all sides of the case, and make up my mind. I told Lawrence that we must not poison the international discussion before we got started, and that any impatient tendency to stampede people was absolutely at variance with our traditional methods. I cannot honestly say that I agree with Tom, but it was not the question of "agreement" or "disagreement" that worried me, but the type of thing which ties up with a whole series of impatient experiences at the hands of Pablo. He is in touch obviously with people here, and the tactic seems to be to settle with Tom and push me into some line. These "amateurs" like so many others before them, think we are a lot of ignorant peasants who do not understand politics from a bull's foot, but we shall see.

Before this we had a letter at our E.C. from Ceylon asking us to send one of our boys as a press reporter of the "Samasamajist" to Bucharest Youth Peace Conference. They had received an invitation from the Stalinists. We took a decision outlined in the following letter:

Dear Leslie:

Mike [Banda] received your telegram and letter enclosing the cablegram about a press representative at Bucharest for the Youth Festival. We discussed this at our last Executive and I was asked to write you as follows.

1. We would be in agreement if any delegation we sent was representative of a worker's organization, which would in turn be able to protect the delegation. This would be very useful like your delegation in China.

2. A press representative, consisting of one young man alone in an atmosphere of picked Stalinists and their stooges, is something we could not risk at this time, even though we agree wholeheartedly with the desirability of getting closer to these countries.

In the present atmosphere of impending trials, there is an element of chance which we could not take. Even bourgeois correspondents representing powerful papers have been picked up from time to time, and Mike is fairly well known as a Trotskyist. It would be different if he were part of a representative delegation.

I am sure you will appreciate our point of view in this matter.

Fraternal greetings  
Burns

We sent a copy of this letter to Pablo, and this is his reply:

"On the matter of Mike: Tilak has just written us also on this. Your precautions on the subject of sending Mike seem to us a little exaggerated. It is scarcely probable that the Stalinists could attempt the abduction of people

invited officially by themselves, journalists, and who are not in any case Trotskyist leaders, who are not known nationally or internationally. It is scarcely probable that they could risk a campaign against their congress (which they would wish to be a complete success) by entering into actions of so little profit for themselves. In any case, we hope that Mike has already replied by telegram to Tilak, so that they can consider sending someone else there."

More rush, more impatience, apart from the fact that we have absolutely no news from inside these countries about the exact position.

You will, I know, excuse all these details. In the normal course of events, this would not be necessary, but what we are grappling with here is two very different methods in building an international. From experience, we have learned that the strength of a national section lies in the maturity of its cadre. Maturity flows from the collective way in which a cadre works. This, as you know, does not arise from the brilliance of this or that individual in a particular field. It arises from the historical selection of devoted people who supplement each other's talents by learning to work as a team. Like the development of the class struggle itself the development of those who comprise the cadre is an uneven one. You find people who have many weaknesses in some directions, playing a powerful positive role inside the cadre. This is, in fact, not only the great strength of the cadre, but also its weakness. A responsible, mature leader has these things fixed in his mind at all times.

Another factor which plays a role, is the receptiveness of the cadre towards changes in the political situation. Some people have quite a flair for this, and make useful contributions in assisting the cadre forward. Yet, it is possible to find on occasions, in comrades who make turns easily, a certain feverishness which can flow from a basic instability rooted in class questions. An experienced cadre checks from time to time these manifestations, and enables the comrade or comrades concerned, to go forward toward a new, more advanced, stage of development. On the other hand, a cadre will *always* contain such people because they are an essential reflection of the development of the class itself.

Experience has taught us that the construction of a cadre takes time and many experiences. In spite of the inflammable international situation you cannot short-cut cadre building. In fact, the two things are dialectically related. The more explosive the situation, the more experienced a cadre must be in order to deal with it. The long time taken in developing a cadre then begins to pay off big dividends. What appears previously to be a long difficult process now changes into its opposite.

Those of us who have gone through this process in national sections are familiar with its intricacies. Because of its enormous collective power, a cadre is also an intricate instrument. The wise leader must attune himself to the need for sharp changes, and what is all important, the way to prepare the cadre for such changes. He must know his people, and how sometimes to help the "lame ones" over the stile. Leadership is not a question of theoretical ability only, one must know the cadre.

Our present international leadership came together after the war, but in spite of the important progress in knitting its work together, it has been impossible as yet to construct

an experienced cadre, and the reason is not hard to find. If it takes a long time in national sections, with many experiences and difficulties, then it is considerably more complicated on the international arena. A national leadership must learn to know its country and itself, an international leadership must know the world, and embody the collective experience of the national sections.

Pablo does not understand this, and we now begin to see the trouble more clearly. Here is a man with many great theoretical qualifications, who is a powerful thinker. He gets out in front with the line, but fails to understand the strength and experience of our cadre who have to apply this. Here he gets terrible impatient, and the one-sidedness of his positive gifts begin to emerge. Not understanding (because he has never experienced it) the problem of a cadre, he proceeds like a "talent scout." The leadership of the S.W.P. is sluggish, conservative, etc. so Clarke's the boy. Burns is "awkward" and follows the S.W.P. majority, so Lawrence is the man, etc. Then comes the trouble. The people picked up superficially seemed to jump into a line faster, but in their own sections play specific roles. Pablo, in failing to understand the decisive cadre fiddles around like a man with a hatchet in the operating theater. He ignores the past history (which in some cases he has not understood) and proceeds to "allocate" "authority" to men who, as part of a cadre, are certainly important people, but as "inspired guides" are shouldering impossible tasks. Pablo sends them on the road to destruction. Their weak sides are built up, and they get involved in struggles of self-distinction.

Take our section, for example. We educated ourselves from your history. This not only served us well in the big fight with Haston, but continues to assist us all the time. Lawrence is well known internationally both for his strength and for his weaknesses. In the decisive fight with Haston he played practically no role, but in the L.P. work he has played an important one for some time. One of the reasons for this is the character of the man himself. Working in a team he evinces fine qualities, but as an individual fighter, he will be cut to pieces. During the six years since we parted with Haston, I have never lost an occasion to help him. In the dispute over Stalinism, where he made some serious and bad mistakes, I confined the issues to the Secretariat, and kept it from the E.C. so as to preserve his authority and prestige. Manuel can tell you this. We placed a whole department under his guidance, and I would no more think of interfering with his work than cutting off my right hand. He has weaknesses which crop up from time to time, but we let them pass. To pick him out for a specific role in Britain is a crime against the man and our movement. I tell you that I shall do everything humanly possible to protect Lawrence. We are not going to permit a factional situation to develop here if it can be avoided.

A few more points in conclusion. Our international has been badly administered for some time now. I should perhaps take some blame, but I did not want to go off on a wrong issue that would be misunderstood. . . .

Yugoslavia comes, and the French almost move there en masse. It's the "golden gate" for a few months. Now of course we were all for taking the fullest advantage of the situation, but only if everyone knew the strength and weakness of this problem. We did a lot of work here, but we kept our powder very dry. A few days after Kardelj made his speech, we had a brigade of ours return from Belgrade.

The Yugoslav ambassador booked a big hall here for our boys to tell what they saw. It was a "big do" with the ambassador present, as well as a lot of young Stalinists. Under our instructions, we utilized part of the time to criticize Kardelj. The Stalinists, who thought they would have a great time at our expense over Korea, were taken aback. I well remember the angry way the Yugoslav contact man assailed "my treachery." All I could say was "sorry, but there has been a misunderstanding—we are not a Stalinist party, and you are not the Cominform." We were plenty flexible on Yugoslavia, but our line was applied on the basis of traditional Bolshevik experience. The French were not so fortunate. In a desperate "all or nothing" impatient way they intervened, and laid the founda-

tion for their crisis a few months later.

I think these events (whilst the lessons are well known to you) should help in looking at our present problem. We must save this man Pablo. It is a big responsibility but it will require some plain speaking. Before anything is done I would like your views. We should work as close as we can together. I am attending another I.S. this Friday and a report will be sent. Your "Peace Agreement" helps, but I fear a stormy time ahead. However, I am confident that we can turn it, like so many others, into profit in the long run.

Warmest regards,  
Gerry

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13. Letter from Gerry Healy to James P. Cannon

July 28, 1953

Dear Jim:

Your letter and enclosures dated July 15th have been received. By now you should have another letter from me, which was dispatched from here on July 21.

The enclosure from Pab. is typical and bears out a point I have discussed here many times with Tom. This man does not understand the procedure of our movement. I never for one moment believed that he got together in a faction with Clarke to prepare the fight in the SWP in a conscious way. The trouble is that he dabbled in business at first and then was gradually dragged into the thing. Such methods, contrary to what he claims, could only prepare the way for the danger of split. On the other hand, the SWP majority avoided split precisely because it proceeded firmly politically and organizationally.

For quite a time here, whilst I was at one with you politically, I did my best to prevent P. from making serious errors by avoiding an open clash with him, but I was not too successful. It was only when I put the cards on the table that everybody steadied up, because they knew a fight was coming. The bad thing then and now, is the way P. took my intervention, and when I saw him last week was decidedly cool. He does not try to learn collectively with us. He proceeds in a haughty, impatient way. I have many memories of this sort of thing in the old fights, and all of them are unpleasant. The intellectual who jumps around (no matter how brilliant he may be) usually gets into serious trouble.

Beneath the impatience is of course, the politics. P. supported the minority on two counts: a) the Frankel document, b) a more flexible attitude towards the U.S.C.P. He was against turning away from the main orientation, but he continually referred to Trotsky's conversation (published by the Minority) and used it to suggest that the SWP majority were conservative on this question. After the news of the Plenum agreement came through, he wrote me saying:

"The Plenum has just finished with an understanding and a reciprocal promise of prolonged peace. This solution has intervened after three days of debates which made one fear the worst. The result is due, in my opinion, to the combined effect of wisdom of Jim and the other cadres of the

majority, of the importance and ideological cohesion of the minority, and to the intervention, certainly till now discreet, but no less clear and firm (for those who understand) which were made from here to both sides."

I have always been extremely suspicious of people who approach the serious internal conflicts which have engaged our movement with suggestions which tend to minimize the seriousness of these developments. During the height of the fight with Haston we had many of these fellows here and their "neutrality" always turned out to be support of the wrong camps. P. and Lawrence tend to blame the majority for the bad atmosphere and support Frankel's document. This "impartial" air is a reflection of political instability and it lies at the root of P.'s failure to understand the basis of your plenum agreement. It would be useless to blind ourselves to the dangers that can arise as a result of this.

Here, I feel sure that we can prevent Lawrence from becoming involved, without any factional heat. Of course, it is possible to be mistaken. At the moment he is in France at P.'s request and maybe they will "try something," but we shall hold it. We will not have our movement pushed around by experiments.

As I see the situation, we must introduce some sort of balance into the present international leadership. The trouble with P. is his impatience and haughtiness. In spite of great theoretical abilities, these are bad traits and have to be watched. The problem is to help the man retain and develop his leadership capabilities whilst at the same time establishing more collectivity in taking decisions and responsibilities in relation to the internal affairs of our sections.

Concretely, I believe our section must work in the closest collaboration, politically and organizationally with the SWP. We should discuss the new documents for the Congress between ourselves before making any decisions on any amendments that might be necessary. Tom and I collaborate most closely here. We shall let you have all the news in regular letters.

When it is understood in the international that we stand together as one solid unit, then it should tend to steady people all around. I await your remarks.

Warmest regards,  
J.