

# Fourth International

## **RESOLUTIONS**

**of the**

**Second World Congress**

**of the**

**FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

# World Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International

*Resolution Adopted by the Second Congress of the Fourth International — Paris, April 1948*

The April 1946 Conference correctly analyzed the changes brought about by the second imperialist war, changes brought about by the second imperialist war, opened up and defined the tasks of the Fourth International for the ensuing period. These remain generally valid at the present time.

The total defeat of Germany and Japan, the breakdown of France, the enfeeblement of Great Britain, completely destroyed the old balance between the imperialist powers, and opened the road to the predominant antagonism between the USA and the USSR. America emerged from the war as the main imperialist power embarked on a course of complete world domination. It finds its chief antagonist in the USSR which, despite its internal weakening, controls a vast part of Europe and Asia.

On the basis of the fundamental crisis of capitalism in the imperialist epoch, the war opened up for the world bourgeoisie a new and long period of unstable equilibrium. This means a period of economic and political difficulties, convulsions and crises, in one country after another, which inevitably set in motion great struggles of the proletarian and colonial masses. As these struggles

develop and sharpen, they threaten the capitalist system as a whole.

In this period, the principal task of the Fourth International, armed with its Transitional Program, consists in transforming its sections from propaganda groups into mass parties actively participating in the daily struggles of the proletarian and colonial masses, organizing them and leading them to the conquest of power.

But in the absence of a revolutionary solution, the sharpened crisis of capitalism threatens to lead once more to fascism and to war which, this time, would imperil the existence and the future of all mankind.

Since the April Conference a number of developments have taken place, in both the economic and the political field, which enable us to render more precise our characterization of the present period, as well as the perspectives and tasks of the near future. The developments unfold within the framework of the new period of unstable equilibrium opened by the war, a period which is far from closed.

## I. The Economic Situation

### 1. Western Europe and the United States

The immense destruction, impoverishment and inflation caused by the war in Europe, as well as in some of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, and the resulting dislocation of the world market, have been responsible for the extremely irregular nature of the economic revival in these countries, as generally foreseen by the documents of the April Conference. This irregularity of the economic revival has been further aggravated by the unbalanced economic relations between all these countries and the United States, resulting from the war.

The effort made during the year 1945 to revive the economy in Western Europe and in the colonial and semi-colonial countries affected by the war, brought only slow and meager results. Production rose, in varying degrees from one country to another, especially during the first

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Managing Editor: E. R. FRANK

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### Full Coverage of the Second World Congress

With this issue of our magazine we begin the publication of the documents and resolutions adopted by the recently held Second World Congress of the Fourth International. It is our plan to carry other material in subsequent issues until the entire documentation of this highly important Congress is made available to our readers.—Ed.

part of 1946. But only in exceptional cases, in certain countries, were the already low 1938 production levels exceeded. The development of production in all these countries, especially the European and including Great Britain, was largely due to American food shipments and the supply of industrial equipment financed by American credits.

Since the last quarter of 1946, production has shown a tendency to level off in most of these countries. In the following year, as the last dollar reserves were being exhausted, the economic situation threatened to become catastrophic, in France and Italy as well as in Great Britain.

Furthermore, Anglo-American efforts to revive the economy in Germany and accelerate its reconstruction have so far brought no appreciable results.

The Marshall Plan, that is, the plan for new US financial aid to the Western European countries extending over a number of years, aims at delaying catastrophe and developing European economy under American control, within limits compatible with US economic interests. However, to continue for some years to subsidize essential exports to the European countries does not in any case mean that it will be possible to restore even the pre-war economic equilibrium.

Between the two world wars, the deficit in the trade balance of decadent European capitalism was made up by returns on capital invested abroad and by receipts for services rendered: freight, commissions, etc. The war has largely eliminated these sources of revenue.

Only a sizable increase in production and the opening of new markets could enable European capitalism to make up these losses and restore a favorable balance of payments, which would save it from the necessity of constant recourse to ever increasing US loans.

The Marshall Plan does not stop the one-way traffic of goods and services to Europe and the accumulation of debts to the US. This is at the root of the complete dislocation of postwar world economy.

In the immediate period, however, the Marshall Plan will help to alleviate the critical nature of the economic situation in Europe, to postpone the catastrophe that would threaten the Western European countries should American credits be halted, and to enable these countries to meet their most immediate industrial needs and the feeding of their populations.

The US for its part must continue, if not increase, the export of goods and services, in order to maintain production at its present level and to postpone the outbreak of the economic crisis.

But the maintaining of American exports at present levels by grants of additional credits, even though depriving the other capitalist countries of the markets they need for their own development, will not play a decisive role in forestalling the crisis in the US. As a matter of fact, total US exports represent only a very small part of the country's total production. The principal market of the US is largely internal.

For some time, American economy has been showing

signs pointing to the coming depression. US production, after reaching a very high level by the second quarter of 1947, has since been stagnating, while prices continue to rise. The downward curve of the purchasing power of the home market is becoming more pronounced, while there is no appreciable increase in exports.

## 2. The Asiatic Countries

The economy of the Asiatic countries, which had a powerful share in world trade before the war, continues to suffer from the consequences of the war and from their troubled internal situation.

*Japan*, which before the war was the chief industrial and commercial country in the Far East and whose economic position was analogous to that of Germany in Central and South Eastern Europe before the outbreak of the world war, has almost disappeared from the world market. Her economy depends almost entirely on American imports, subsidized by credits.

*India* is endeavoring, but with little success, to fill the place of Japan, which was the only great Asiatic country that experienced any considerable development of its industrial and financial apparatus during the war.

*China*, exhausted by its long resistance against Japanese domination, continues to be the battlefield of a bitter civil war, which is draining its resources and preventing its economic rehabilitation. The result is astronomical inflation and increased misery for all the exploited layers of the population; and this is seriously undermining the stability of the Chiang Kai-shek dictatorship.

The troubled situation in Indonesia, Burma, Viet Nam, retards the economic reconstruction of these countries, which are producers of important raw materials, and restricts their participation in world trade.

An analysis of the world economic situation shows that a real revival of capitalist production faces numerous obstacles of an economic and political nature. The war not only intensified the death agony of capitalism, but rendered capitalism incapable of restoring the world market and a balanced development of world trade.

American economy, on which the rest of the capitalist world leans heavily, is itself menaced by an economic depression in the near future, which in turn threatens to upset world economy before it has reached relative stability.

## 3. The USSR and Its Satellites

Soviet economy enjoyed a favorable harvest of wheat and other agricultural products in 1947, which enabled the bureaucracy to improve the supply of bread and other foods for the population.

The results reportedly achieved by the Five-Year Plan seem to indicate that industrial production in general is proceeding according to schedule, but that certain key industries—for example, timber, agricultural machinery, building materials, smelting, paper, rubber, certain coal mines—are lagging considerably. However, this production effort is due primarily to the intensification of control over

the workers by the bureaucracy, while the productivity of labor continues to decline.

To combat the downward trend of the productivity of labor, the Soviet bureaucracy has proceeded to a general revision of the production norms that determine wages. This revision, which establishes piece rates in both industry and agriculture, proceeds from an increase in the required minimum of compulsory production in relation to the established wage, and signifies an intensification in the exploitation of the labor power of the Soviet workers. Thus the progress in reconstruction benefits only the Soviet bureaucracy and the privileged layers of the Russian proletariat, while the great mass of workers is forced to work and live under worsened economic and political conditions.

In the European countries controlled by the USSR, tangible economic progress has been realized due to the application of the various "plans" worked out by the Stalinist-dominated governments, and particularly due to the "social peace" maintained by the Stalinist parties in these countries.

To counteract the Marshall Plan in Western Europe, the Soviet bureaucracy tries to develop trade relations between the USSR and the different countries under its control and to create a sort of closed economic circuit centered around the USSR. But these countries retain their fundamentally capitalist structure. They are burdened, moreover, with the reparations taken by the USSR and by the fact that, through the Soviet-owned enterprises established locally, the USSR diverts another part of their production. Consequently, their economic situation, far from encouraging an orientation toward the USSR, on the contrary emphasizes the need of trade with the West and imports of American capital and industrial products.

The interests of the Soviet bureaucracy compel them to hasten the integration of the economies of these countries into the USSR, and to speed up their industrialization.

Wherever this process of industrialization is carried out bureaucratically, wherever American capital and industrial goods are kept out and the USSR is itself incapable of supplying such assistance, the development of these economies will proceed through the imposition of the Russian system of piecework, sharp wage differences and drafted labor.

These factors, along with the increasing burden of war preparations, indicate that these countries will suffer from the same pressures and the same contradictions as Soviet economy, and that they will develop industrially only at the expense of the living standard of the workers.

A truly progressive development of these countries requires, not the creation of a closed economy, but the unification and socialist planning of their economies, and the extension of their economic ties with the most advanced countries of the West, as well as the rehabilitation and unification of German economy.

## II. The Development of International Relations

The antagonism between US imperialism and the Soviet Union, which dominates world relations, has led to an increasingly stiffened attitude in both Washington and Moscow. US imperialism has succeeded in tightening its encirclement of the USSR and of the countries controlled by the latter, and has continued its offensive against the USSR in all fields, diplomatic, economic, political, military and propagandistic.

The UN has gradually become an open agency of US diplomacy, frustrating all the attempts of the Stalinist diplomats to push through their policies. The setting up of the "Little Assembly" has to all intents and purposes neutralized the operation of the veto, which had been the last-ditch defense stand for Stalinist diplomacy. Economic aid to the capitalist countries of Western Europe, systematized in the Marshall Plan, gives powerful support to Wall Street's policy which aims at placing these countries under exclusive American control while eliminating the Communist parties from the governments.

The reconstruction of Western Germany under the aegis of the US would create, in the heart of Europe, the most powerful lever for the future economic and political disintegration of the countries of the Soviet "buffer zone." Meanwhile Japan, Germany's counterpart in the Far East, is already under exclusive US control.

At the most exposed points of the US-Russian front—in Greece, Turkey, Iran, China, Korea—American diplomatic, economic and political pressure is combined with the use of purely military means.

An anti-Soviet and anti-Communist propaganda campaign, set in motion with all the enormous means at the disposal of US imperialism, is in full swing in America as well as in the countries under its influence. The object of the campaign is to win public approval for the "cold war" America is now waging against the Soviet Union and at the same time to prepare for the shooting war, when and if Wall Street finds it necessary.

US policy is becoming more aggressive as the expansionist needs of US imperialism on the world market grow and as military production acquires greater importance for American economy.

At the present time, by the use of increased pressure in every field, Washington aims to sharply change in its favor the relationship of forces between the US and the USSR established at the end of the war, and to induce the Soviet Union to negotiate as favorable as possible a compromise. US imperialism would naturally prefer to attain its objectives by peaceful means. It has not exhausted all the possibilities for peaceful world expansion and will feel itself in an economic impasse only after the deepening of the crisis, the outbreak of which, in any case, does not yet seem to be immediately ahead.

There are additional reasons why US imperialism would like to postpone a military showdown. In spite

of its superiority in atomic armament, the strategic US positions on the world front are still very weak. The instability prevailing in Western Europe and the Asiatic countries makes unlikely any immediate effective aid from these countries against the powerful Soviet armies. These armies are stationed at their very borders and are reinforced by the virtually intact forces of the Communist parties in all these countries.

The outbreak of a war under present conditions would mean its rapid transformation into an international civil war, the outcome of which would be hazardous.

Before plunging into war, US imperialism would have to feel itself in a real economic impasse and would have to have established, in both Europe and Asia, solid strongpoints that would lead it to believe it could deal swiftly and effectively with the world "chaos" inevitably resulting from such a war.

Like fascism, war is in the last analysis the final phase in the cycle of capitalist economic and political development. However rapidly this cycle may come to a close, we are at present witnessing only its first stage.

The time when the economic crisis will break out in the US, and the extent of the crisis, will largely determine the development of that country's policy and will in any case step up the race between war and revolution.

In the face of the aggressive US policy, the Soviet bureaucracy has reacted by consolidating its control over the countries in its zone and by stiffening the opposition of the Communist parties in the capitalist countries which are slipping into the American orbit.

The intimidations and purges of recalcitrant or hostile political groups and leaders, which took place in 1947 in most of the countries in the Soviet zone, as well as the events of February 1948 in Czechoslovakia, aimed at neutralizing and atomizing any opposition from the right and the left. The outcome was domination of these governments by the Communist parties. Parallel with this political action, the Soviet bureaucracy, directly or through its agents, the Communist parties, intensified the application of economic measures in all these countries. They imposed various production "plans" and trade agreements with the aim of tying these countries economically closer together and of binding them to the USSR. Thus the Stalinist bureaucracy sought to keep them as an autonomous zone, away from the attraction of the orbit of the Marshall Plan countries.

In answer to the heightened pressure of US imperialism, and faced with the fact that the Communist parties were forced out of the governments in the capitalist countries and became isolated in relation to the other bourgeois and "socialist" parties — faced, that is, with the manifest failure of their policy since the "liberation" — the Stalinist bureaucracy decided on a turn, which was proclaimed with the establishment of the Cominform in September 1947.

The antagonism between the US and the USSR, while thoroughly dominating the international scene, does not

completely eclipse secondary conflicts between the powers nor does it eliminate other important factors in the political developments in other countries.

## 1. Europe

*Germany* remains the focal point in the relations not only between the USSR and the US but also between the other imperialist powers. The dependence of Great Britain and France upon American imperialism — which has increased greatly in the past year — is demonstrated, among other ways, in the case of Germany. The policy envisaged by these two countries at the end of the war, aiming to take advantage of the US-Soviet conflict in order to maintain an intermediate position in the form of an independent Western European bloc, has suffered complete failure. On the other hand, the fear of a new Soviet drive — an increasing fear since the February 1948 events in Czechoslovakia — has precipitated the negotiation of alliances between the Western European countries (Five-Power Pact, French-Italian talks). Far from promoting the independent position of these countries such alliances increase their dependence on the US, which is the animating and guiding spirit behind these arrangements and which alone can make them effective.

*Great Britain*, whose enfeeblement necessitated a series of retreats in India, the Middle East and Europe as well as the partial abandonment of the Imperial Preference System, to the advantage of its overpowering partner, the United States, has also reluctantly had to relinquish to the latter the economic and political control of "Bizonia" in Germany.

*France*, compelled to rely increasingly on American aid, had to confine herself to verbal protests against American policy in Germany, and to give up practically all hope of replacing Germany as Europe's pivot of reconstruction under US control. France has had to be content with economic annexation of the Saar, and with continuing to claim a share in the "international control" of the Ruhr.

## 2. America

In the *Western Hemisphere*, US economic, political, and military pressure on the other countries of the two continents has succeeded in cementing the reactionary bloc of these countries against the USSR under the aegis of the US. It has succeeded in unifying the military organizations of these countries, reinforcing the offensive of the Latin-American bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

But the world policy of US imperialism, far from promoting the advance of Latin-American capitalism, actually constitutes its main obstacle, since this policy stands opposed to the industrialization and autonomous economic development of these countries.

Further evidence of this can be found in the role that US imperialism assigns to the Latin-American countries in connection with the Marshall Plan. They are to put off their projects for industrialization in order to supplement the needs of European economy in the matter

of raw materials and food supplies — and thus they must continue to depend exclusively on the US for what they need in industrial products. Certain sections, however, of the Latin-American bourgeoisie (Argentina, Uruguay, Venezuela) have taken advantage of the conflict between the US and the USSR, and have derived therefrom a few limited economic advantages.

### 3. Asia

Different situations are developing in Asia, under the general sign of persisting political and economic instability.

*Japan* is under strict economic and political control by the US. American policy aims at transforming this country into the chief economic and strategic base of Yankee imperialism in the Far East.

In *India*, the partition into Pakistan and Hindustan, instigated by Great Britain, far from hastening the day of independence from the imperialist yoke, has plunged the country into confusion and even greater powerlessness — to the advantage of British imperialism and the native reactionary forces.

The Indian bourgeoisie has proved incapable of conducting a consistent and effective struggle against foreign imperialism and of solving the problems of the democratic and national revolution.

Only the proletariat, which has considerably increased in numbers and social importance since the last war and which has resolutely taken up the struggle against the native bourgeoisie, is capable of becoming the motive force of the Indian revolution, and directing it on the road to establishment of the Socialist Federated Republic of India.

In *China*, the struggle between the Moscow-supported "Communist" armies and the Washington-supported armies of Chiang Kai-shek has assumed the proportions of full-scale warfare, into which both sides are throwing more and more new forces, both material and human. The stake in this struggle between the two opposing camps is control of the key economic and strategic positions in this important part of the Asiatic continent.

Up to now the pro-Soviet armies have made considerable gains, winning control of almost all of Manchuria. In this they have been greatly aided by their policy of introducing agrarian reforms in the territories they occupy.

But there can be no solution for the Chinese masses unless the struggle of the peasant armies is linked up with the struggle of the workers in the big cities of the south, and the joint struggle conducted within the framework of the objectives and the perspectives of the proletarian socialist revolution. Such a solution presupposes the forming of a new revolutionary leadership which, in action, will wrest the leadership of the movement from the Stalinists, who are fighting in the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy's world strategy and not for the national and social liberation of the Chinese masses.

Chiang Kai-shek, facing increased pressures from the Yen-an armies in the North and the proletarian mass

movements that have revived in the big southern centers since 1946, has put an end to the "democratization" measures with which he tried to win a social basis for his shaky dictatorship. With the constant help of American imperialism, he tries to retain power by resorting more and more to brutal force — but with less chance of success than ever.

All the efforts so far made by US imperialism to stabilize the regime in China and to open this immense market to intensive exploitation, have failed. This failure partly accounts for the special attention that Washington has recently centered on Japan.

In *Indonesia* and *Viet Nam*, neither Dutch nor French imperialism has achieved any decisive result by force of arms. The present situation is one of unstable equilibrium between the opposing forces.

In the *Middle East*, despite the growth of the proletariat and the development of the trade union movement, despite the latent unrest which from time to time breaks out in strikes and demonstrations, the present feudal leadership of the national Arab movement remains unshaken.

The Arab League, set up by great Britain against the USSR and as a stabilizing factor against internal convulsions, has served to back up the demands of the Arab states and to strengthen their bargaining power in the negotiating of more favorable treaties with British imperialism (Egypt, Iraq).

For thirty years the policy of imperialism has been to create a Jewish minority in Palestine. The outcome of this policy is that imperialism has succeeded momentarily in diverting the national struggle from an anti-imperialist to an anti-Jewish struggle.

It is possible that when the struggle in Palestine assumes the form of full-scale civil war, US imperialism — which cannot allow its "defense belt" to be broken by a war within it — will send troops to subdue the warring parties. Under such circumstances, the Arab masses will once again face the prospect of direct imperialist domination, and the national struggle will be carried to a higher plane.

In all the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the upsurge of the masses has not succeeded in solving any of the tasks of the national democratic revolution, primarily because of the lack of a revolutionary proletarian leadership. But neither has imperialism so far been able to reestablish stable relations for exploitation.

## III. The Social Conflicts

The polarization, in world relations, between the USSR and its satellites on the one hand, and the camp of the capitalist countries under the aegis of US imperialism on the other, is developing parallel with a sharpening of the class antagonisms and an increased polarization within many of the capitalist countries.

US imperialism, embarked on its course of world domination, must seek to become undisputed master at home. At the end of the war, however, it was challenged

by a tremendous strike wave that showed the entire world the latent revolutionary power of the American working class. Wall Street had to yield temporarily and to circumvent this challenge instead of meeting it head-on.

But the powerful upsurge of US labor remained confined to the economic field. The top trade union bureaucracy, allied with the old capitalist parties, prevented it from gaining political expression. This permitted the bourgeoisie to organize without hindrance its counter-offensive, which culminated in the vicious anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act. Combined with the anti-union drive, the capitalists launched a vicious red-baiting campaign. Both served as domestic counterparts of its anti-Soviet and anti-Communist foreign policy.

Although the counter-offensive of the American ruling class has been largely successful in all its aspects, thanks to the reactionary and cowardly role of the labor bureaucracy, its effect upon the working class has not been that of a crushing defeat. Resistance to the repressive regulations of the Taft-Hartley Act has been relatively weak. The bulk of the AFL and CIO, including the formerly very progressive United Auto Workers, comply with its provisions. Only the miners, the steel workers and the railroad trainmen, etc., have taken a clear decision to challenge the law. These groups are not a negligible force; they represent important numbers in key industries. The relatively young American working class has not been fully aware of the implications of the counter-offensive of capitalism. The revolutionary party is still too small for effective intervention. But the interconnection between Wall Street's reactionary role abroad and its anti-labor drive at home is becoming increasingly clear. Rather than benefiting from imperialist expansion—as was the case in nineteenth century Britain—the workers in America have to pay for it from the first and are its first victims.

This dawning realization, and the inflationary process eating into the living standards of the American workers, are preparing the ground for new social explosions in the United States. The approach of the economic crisis can only accelerate their outbreak. That this time the upsurge of labor will take on political form is indicated by the general trend toward independent political action in the trade unions. At present this is strongest on a local scale, and still isolated. But the fact that the last national convention of the conservative American Federation of Labor gave up its tradition of "hands-off" politics and, following the more advanced CIO, organized its own "Labor Political and Educational League" — is a significant sign of the times. The success which the Wallace movement is enjoying at present is another similar indication. This movement is a bourgeois attempt to channel the broadening current of politicalization of the American working class, and to divert the latter away from the building of an independent labor party and toward the road of a "liberal" and "pacifist" third capitalist party. The next period in the US may well see a tremendous politicalization of the working class, and repeat on the political field the stormy rise of the CIO in the 1930's.

In *Western Europe*, American imperialism has not as yet found a solid base of support in the existing regimes, in spite of the considerably improved position of the bourgeoisie since the "liberation." The coalition governments that followed one another after the "liberation" with the participation of the CP and SP, proved impotent. The persistence and, frequently, the aggravation of inflation, of food shortages and, in certain countries (Italy), even of unemployment, are responsible for growing discontent, especially among the petty-bourgeois masses, who are turning away from the left in order to look elsewhere for a stable regime. This holds true, within certain limits, also for Great Britain. There, the radicalization of the masses expressed itself in a landslide that swept the Labour Party to power in 1945. The policy of the Labour Government has featured a "socialism" which permitted the capitalists to hang on to their profits while "equalizing" an austerity that has meant increasing restrictions on the living standards of the broad masses. Under these circumstances, a rightward swing of the petty-bourgeois masses was inevitable. As the last municipal elections show, the Tory party of Churchill has been able to profit from this. But, at the same time, these conditions produce a greater polarization within the Labour Party—which retains its monopoly over working-class politics. A conflict between the left wing representing the socialist aspirations of the workers, and the right wing that constitutes the government, is in the offing.

In *France* and *Italy*, the polarization is taking place at a quicker pace than anywhere else. In France, the reactionary regroupment around de Gaulle, the *Rassemblement du Peuple Francais*; in Italy, the various neo-fascist movements and the strengthening of the Catholic center — all these express the new reactionary orientation taken by the petty-bourgeois masses disappointed by the failures of the traditional workers' parties. But nowhere in Europe, not even in Greece, has the bourgeoisie as yet been able to inflict a decisive defeat on the proletariat and set up a strong regime with any stability. The working class retains its strength and fighting spirit. This was shown in the great workers' struggles during 1947 in France and Italy, and to a lesser extent in Belgium, Holland and Great Britain.

These struggles opened a new stage in class relationships and particularly in the relations of the proletariat with its traditional leadership. For the first time since the "liberation," broad layers of workers entered the struggle to defend the living standards against the galloping rise in prices and against food shortages. They drove their leadership into action and even went over their heads when the leaders refused to act.

The experience acquired by the masses in the course of these struggles, and the clearer character of the reactionary menace in France and, to some extent, in Italy also, led to an increased politicalization of the workers' struggles.

The bourgeoisie, aware of its precarious economic situation and the fighting power of the proletariat, is advancing cautiously in its economic and political offen-

sive. It will endeavor, as long as it can, to prolong the existence of the "right-center" cabinets, which, on the parliamentary field, replaced the "left-center" cabinets in France and Italy after the exclusion of the Stalinists from the governments. It looks for an improvement of its economic situation in the near future through the application of the Marshall Plan, and for a possible compromise being worked out with the USSR after a period, which would soften the opposition of the Communist parties.

However, only the broadening and the coordination of the workers' struggles, on the basis of a revolutionary program, combining the elementary economic and political demands of the masses with those leading to the establishment of workers' and peasants' power, can effectively stop reaction. Only a bold struggle for power can lead the petty bourgeoisie back into the orbit of the working class.

In any case, should there be a continued sharpening of relations between the US and the USSR, and an increasing polarization of social antagonisms, and should the traditional working-class parties continue powerless, it is probable that the reactionary menace will take on concrete form in France and Italy. Under such conditions, it is also probable that these two countries will become the theater of a bitter civil war between the forces of bourgeois dictatorship and the masses. In such an event the Stalinist parties, with their very existence threatened should there be no immediate likelihood of a compromise between the USSR and American imperialism, would have no alternative but to fight, even with arms, as in Greece; the same would be true even if, in France for example, de Gaulle should come to power by "constitutional" means.

In the *colonial* and *semi-colonial countries* also, the social antagonisms are developing sharply.

In *Latin America*, the passing prosperity of the war gave way to an acute economic crisis, revealed in the spread of inflation and, in part, of unemployment.

The first revolutionary wave in Latin America was a reflection of the worldwide upsurge of the proletariat in 1945. Because of the economic situation, because of the condition of the trade union and political movement of the working class, and the greater specific weight of the national bourgeoisie today, the latter—and together with them, the petty bourgeoisie—were able, in a number of countries (Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, Bolivia, Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, etc.), to capitalize on the revolutionary movement. The petty-bourgeoisie in these countries began to concentrate on opposition to imperialism. Since the economic and political weakness of the colonial bourgeoisie derives essentially from its fear of revolutionary movement of the masses, the petty bourgeoisie is compelled—because of its powerlessness and its contradictions, and the lack of any historical perspectives for capitalism—to curb the mass movements, to turn them away from their historic road and their revolutionary aspirations. Incapable of confronting imperialism in a revolutionary way, the petty bourgeoisie paralyzes the revolutionary movement of the masses.

Further capitulations, various diplomatic maneuverings, political and financial speculations—all these have brought profits to the petty bourgeoisie in the form of concessions (primarily Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Cuba). At the same time, the tremendous economic, political and military pressure of Yankee imperialism drags all the national bourgeoisies along in the US anti-Soviet campaign of preparation for a third world war.

Although the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie have capitalized, to their own advantage, on the revolutionary wave of the proletariat, the latter has been able to make a number of economic and political gains, which the bourgeoisie is now constantly trying to wrest from it. The proletariat was curbed and deceived in its revolutionary political upsurge by the demagogy of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, by the Stalinists' reformist and bureaucratic and bourgeois policy of class collaboration, by the pro-imperialist policy of the SP and the organizations of the "democratic" petty bourgeoisie.

But this first revolutionary wave has left a profound impress. It was the first political experience in which the masses demonstrated their revolutionary desire to intervene as a class in resolving the national problems. The national bourgeoisies are trying, both in their own interests and because of the constant pressure of imperialism, to liquidate every trace of political experience in the working class, so that the latter will be unable to use this experience for its own class interests. The bourgeoisie is trying to prevent any independent class activity of the proletariat, and to constantly rob the latter of all the democratic, economic and political rights already won. They are trying to load on to the working class the entire burden of the inflation and all the consequences of the high-tariff policy, etc.

Throughout Latin America the bourgeoisie is trying to liquidate, slowly but steadily, every movement of the working class. The proletariat is still disoriented, and subject to the combined pressures and deceptions of the Stalinists and the national bourgeoisies, as well as of imperialism and its SP and petty-bourgeois agents in the camp of labor. But despite the lack of a revolutionary leadership—in view of the weakness of the Fourth International there—the working class is showing its force in the strikes occurring in the principal countries (Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Mexico, Uruguay, Chile).

In the *African colonies* of French imperialism, as well as in Egypt, and in the Arab Middle East, the young workers' movement is distinguished, since the war, by its first appearance as an independent political factor, fighting not only foreign imperialism but its own possessing classes.

In *Japan*, despite American occupation, the workers' movement is developing as a serious force. Particularly notable is the rapid growth of the trade unions, the scope of the great strike struggles and the political success of the Socialists in the elections. All this constitutes the first stage in the radicalization of the Japanese masses.

In *India*, with the ostensible retreat of British imperialism from the political scene and with the native bourgeoisie coming to the fore, the class struggle has been sharpened.

Faced with innumerable problems and demands that are agitating the great masses of exploited workers and peasants, the native bourgeoisie, incapable of offering a solution, hardens its reactionary attitudes toward the masses while at the same time it finds its own internal disagreements increasing. The crisis in the Congress Party (the split of the Socialists, etc.) has grown rapidly since the assassination of Gandhi, and indicates the Indian bourgeoisie has entered a long period of increasing political difficulties.

These difficulties cannot fail to help the development of the revolutionary party. Mass strikes in all the big industrial centers of the country—often led by Trotskyist militants—mark the powerful awakening of the working class against the Indian bourgeoisie and their feudal and imperialist allies.

In *China*, the new wave of reactionary measures undertaken by the Chiang Kai-shek dictatorship have far from crushed the will to struggle of the proletariat of the big cities of South China, who are fighting for their democratic rights and to maintain their living standards against the ravages of fantastic inflation.

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In general, the workers' movement throughout the world continues to give proof of its vitality and of the determination of the masses to throw off the yoke of the exploiters. In certain European countries, notably Greece and Italy; in some of the countries of the Soviet "buffer zone" (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria); in Latin America (Chile, Brazil, Bolivia); and in Asia (Japan, Korea, India, Viet Nam, Indonesia)—in all these countries the workers' movement has developed far beyond anything it had achieved previously.

## ***IV. The Situation in the Labor Movement***

The labor movement emerged from the last war grouped mainly behind the Stalinist organizations. This was true throughout the world. However, an unceasing differentiation within its ranks has been in progress.

The proletariat originally turned toward the Communist parties in the hope that they would play a revolutionary role. In this sense, the gigantic growth of Stalinism at the termination of the imperialist war once again showed the determination of the proletariat to have done with the bloody chaos of the capitalist system. However, nowhere have the Stalinist parties justified the hopes of the exploited masses. On the contrary, their opportunist policy of class collaboration in the face of a situation demanding radical solutions has gradually sown discontent and confusion among the proletariat, while the petty-bourgeois masses, who at first had placed their trust in the Communist party, are turning toward the right.

### ***1. The Socialist Parties***

The Socialist parties have retained their base mainly in the European countries, although they have lost a

large part of their worker elements to the Stalinists. This is proof that the masses cannot complete their experience with reformism in the absence of a genuine revolutionary party. The conservative role of tradition and the existence of an apparatus have also been contributing factors. An additional reason for the survival of the Socialist parties is this, that their principal social base, in the imperialist epoch, consists of petty-bourgeois elements who, because of their social position and their mentality, are constantly wavering between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. They can be attracted to the latter only at decisive moments of the class struggle and provided there is a strong revolutionary party which is able, because of its power, to overcome their hesitations and draw them toward the revolution, or else neutralize them.

The loss by the Socialists of part of their working-class support to the Communist parties at the end of the war was a general phenomenon varying only in degree in most of Europe and the world. In the Scandinavian countries, in England and Australia, that is, wherever the traditions of the Socialist parties were strongest and the objective situation of capitalism relatively better—the radicalization of the masses found its main expression in the growth of these parties. But throughout the rest of Europe and the world, the radicalization of the working class expressed itself in the growth of the Communist parties at the expense of the Socialist parties.

In France, in Italy and certain countries of the Soviet "buffer zone," the Socialist parties suffered their greatest losses to the Communist parties. Subsequent developments considerably altered this situation. In the countries under Soviet control, where the masses went through a more decisive experience with Stalinist policy, there was a new shift of the workers toward the Socialist parties, which polarized the workers' discontent with the nationalist, bureaucratic and police regime of Stalinism.

In forcing the unification of the Socialist and Communist parties into a single party, the Stalinists are trying to put a halt to this development, and to preserve their exclusive control over the working class.

In all these countries, as well as in Germany and Austria, it is the task of the organizations of the Fourth International to pay special attention to the Socialist organizations and to consider concretely the opportunities for a partial entrust tactic in these organizations, or even total entry in certain cases.

In the other countries of Western Europe and elsewhere, the Socialist parties, even though they have lost part—and sometimes a large part—of their working class base (as is particularly true in France), still constitute an important field of work for the growth of our international movement. Examples of this can be seen in France, Italy, Australia, and India. Until there emerges and is consolidated within the working-class movement another pole of attraction, opposed to the traditional parties, there will be constant shifts of the confused working masses between the Socialist and Communist parties.

Moreover, the present policy of Stalinism, far from being able to increasingly isolate the Social Democracy, helps it to maintain its base and even to increase it at

the expense of the Communist parties. Conversely, the same holds true for the policy of the Social Democracy.

The real disintegration of the Socialist parties can take place only as a result of the attractive power of the Fourth International. It alone can polarize the left-centrist currents developing inevitably within the Social Democracy.

## 2. *The Communist Parties*

The establishment of the Belgrade Cominform in September 1947 marked a change in the policy of the Communist parties.

The Stalinist bureaucracy decided upon a "left turn" for a number of reasons: because of the increased aggressiveness of US imperialism against the USSR and its satellites, as well as against the Communist parties in other capitalist countries; because the Communist parties were thrown out of the governments; and because of the pressure of the masses, who had shown signs of growing discontent with these parties.

Within the framework of their class collaborationist policy, the Stalinists are now laying stress on the mobilization of the proletarian masses. They use the workers' elementary demands as pressure to blackmail US imperialism and the native bourgeoisie, in order to counteract their anti-Soviet orientation and induce them to negotiate a compromise with the USSR.

The extent of this turn will depend on the development of Soviet-US relations. If the present world tension persists, if the different national bourgeoisies, at the instigation of US imperialism, continue to sharpen their anti-Stalinist policy and to threaten the very existence of the Communist parties, it is not excluded that the latter will adopt more and more an attitude of implacable opposition. They may even resort to civil war, following the example of Greece. This "turn" does not mean that the Communist parties can in any way return to a class policy, even of the kind of the "Third Period" of 1928-33. That is possible only in the case of outbreak of war.

Nevertheless, the experiences of Greece as well as the recent events in France, Italy and elsewhere show that, within the framework of a general policy of class collaboration, the Stalinist bureaucracy is capable of undertaking sharp turns in its policy. They may even go so far as to prepare for general strikes and armed struggles. But the latter is a possibility only in the event of a relationship of forces which is unfavorable to the proletariat and would allow the bureaucracy to control the movement without any risk. Nevertheless, the fact that the Stalinist bureaucracy would use such weapons, not in order to overthrow the capitalist system but only to exert pressure on the bourgeoisie for limited objectives, means that in the last analysis it conducts the struggle in an opportunist and defeatist spirit and is ready at any moment to halt and betray it.

The other aspect of the Stalinist "left turn" is its adventurist and sectarian character. On the one hand, it substitutes for the class division of society, a division into two camps, one "pro"-US, and the other "anti"-US, both of which indiscriminately include the exploited as well as

the exploiters. On the other hand, it lumps under the same "pro"-US label the entire range of bourgeois parties, including the Social Democracy. This leads to rejection of the united front with the Socialist parties and to a sharpening of the split in the trade unions. And in the event that bourgeois reaction engages in a new deployment of its forces, as for example de Gaulle in France, the Stalinist policy threatens to sabotage the imperatively-needed formation of a Workers United Front, and to lead to disasters such as those which the analogous "Third Period" policy brought about in Germany between 1928 and 1933.

To the extent that it seems to take up the defense of the workers' demands and to stand opposed to all other parliamentary parties, the new policy of the Communist parties contributes, at first, to strengthen the loosened ties between the Stalinists and the workers.

From this point of view, the conditions under which our organizations function among the workers who follow the Stalinists would seem to be less favorable than was the case before the "turn." But at the same time the opportunist and maneuverist spirit which animates the new Stalinist policy will become more evident to the masses once they have plunged into battle. The Stalinists' fear of genuine revolutionary action makes their leadership of the present struggles hesitant and indecisive.

Moreover, the adventurist and sectarian character of the "turn" impels the Stalinist leaders to premature, isolated and irrational actions. Under such circumstances, the workers tend to become hesitant to follow Stalinist leadership, often even when the struggle revolves around their own legitimate demands. In countries like France, workers tend to become suspicious of Stalinist motives, particularly when they recall the treacherous CP policies of the past years ("production first," "the strike is the weapon of the trusts," etc.). In this situation the Stalinist domination over the workers' movement begins to show cleavages, through which a new leadership can emerge. The policy of the sections of the Fourth International must be worked out, on the one hand, in relation to the nature and the consequences of the Stalinist "left turn"; and on the other hand, in relation to the fact that the workers are compelled to resort to struggle in defense of their living conditions.

The sections of the Fourth International must combine unity of action and the united front tactic—applied mainly on a local scale, in the factories and the trade unions—with a clear political line which shows the workers the fundamental differences between our political character and that of the Stalinists, and which educates the workers in our whole revolutionary program. And all this must be combined with a sharp and firm criticism of the various Stalinist leaderships.

## 3. *The Centrist Formations*

The remnants of the pre-war centrist organizations, once grouped around the London Bureau, have largely degenerated and disintegrated.

In Great Britain the ILP after the desertion of its

former leading nucleus to the Labour Party bureaucracy, is vegetating.

In France, following upon the complete dissolution of the PSOP, Marceau Pivert joined Leon Blum in adopting for the decrepit Socialist Party the role of the "Third Force."

Theoretically, this "Third Force" is supposed to be equally opposed to de Gaulle and to the Communist Party; practically, however, it has allied itself with the de Gaullist candidates against the Stalinists in the municipal elections.

In Greece, the Archeo-Marxist organization, denouncing the civil war, is collaborating in the official trade union leaderships with the agents appointed by the reactionary monarchist government. "Having to choose" between Stalinism and bourgeois democracy — "made in USA" and applied in Greece—it has in fact cast its lot with the latter.

The POUM is torn by a deep and unending internal crisis. After the first split with a right wing, the political and organizational independence of the POUM is imperiled by Maurin, its principal leader, who advocates an alignment with Western "democratic Socialism" and dissolution into the Spanish Socialist Party.

The current anti-Stalinism of all these organizations, which has replaced their former pro-Stalinist policy, does not at all mean a progressive development toward the revolutionary positions of Marxism-Leninism. On the contrary, it is a sign of their retrogression and merely increases their traditional opposition to the principles of Bolshevism, as well as their political confusion.

No other pre-1939 centrist organization has survived the war and retained any appreciable importance.

On the other hand, the aggravation of the crisis of capitalism and the sharpened social antagonisms in the new postwar period—coupled with the more and more manifest bankruptcy and treachery of the traditional workers' parties—are creating strong progressive centrist currents, mainly within the Socialist parties but also even in certain Communist parties. It is possible that these new currents may, in the near future broaden considerably; and, in their development toward the revolutionary position of the Fourth International, they may greatly accelerate the transformation of our sections.

## V. The Fourth International

Since the war period, the sections of the Fourth International have in general considerably increased in membership, as well as in influence among the working class.

Today, the Trotskyist movement, on an international scale, exerts an influence considerably greater than before the war. But the progress achieved is not proportionate to the objective possibilities and even less to the historic necessities. Everywhere the sections of the Fourth International face the problem of transforming themselves into genuine mass parties.

A number of sections are fulfilling this task with growing success and, by their experience, are showing our whole

international movement the road to the masses. Our sections in North and South America, in India and in France, are going through their own experiences of penetrating the mass movement. Several other sections are following them on this road.

It is probable, moreover, that the gains we shall make in some countries from progressive centrist currents in the Socialist and Communist parties will transform the physiognomy of our movement in these countries and, correspondingly, of our whole International.

Objective conditions remain favorable for the growth of our sections and their more or less rapid transformation into mass parties. The main obstacles in the present period derive from our subjective weaknesses. These are due, on the one hand, to the limited number of cadres capable of effectively intervening in the workers' struggles; and, on the other hand, to the sectarian or opportunist conceptions which have influenced the policy of certain sections.

The lack of cadres and, above all, of qualified leaderships, is an obstacle which retards the growth of our sections and which sometimes, under the pressure of temporary adverse conditions, leads to serious crises and losses. The experience of the International since the end of World War II demonstrates that certain sections have been unable to take full advantage of objective conditions favorable for their growth, while others have even destroyed what opportunities they previously had.

To develop homogeneous and capable leaderships, to educate the cadres, to constantly raise the theoretical and political level of all the party members — this is the necessary basis for guaranteeing the growth of our sections and our successful penetration into the mass movement.

The accomplishment of this task must fall within the general framework of transformation of our sections into real mass parties — and not another retrenchment into propaganda group activities.

If we are to consolidate the gains already won and make new progress, our movement must have political cadres deeply rooted in the mass movement. To form these cadres, we must supply a theoretical and political education directly applicable to the problems of leadership and of action which confront the revolutionary party today. The experience of the International, moreover, demonstrates that the struggle against sectarianism is as necessary as the struggle against opportunism. To fight against sectarianism means to break resolutely with any form of thought or organization method which, while paying lip-service to the safeguarding of our Marxist-Leninist principles, turns its back on the real mass movement. To fight against sectarianism means to resolutely break with the circle habits of the past, when the objective situation compelled us to confine our activities largely to the elaboration of our program and to criticism of the treacherous currents in the labor movement. Under the present favorable conditions, we must *demonstrate* our program *in action*. Otherwise we are faced with the danger of stagnation and decline.

To fight against sectarianism means to fight against sterile, abstract propaganda. It means to fight against the

concept that our movement can be built only by gradual recruitment of individuals and routine education. A mass revolutionary party can be built only in action. That requires, first and foremost, penetration into the labor movement as it exists.

*A specific field of work must be chosen where opportunities for the growth of our movement are most favorable.*

Our general program must be concretized. The concrete slogans must take into account the elementary economic and political demands of the masses. Our revolutionary cadres must take an active part in the workers' lives and struggles, in the factories and unions, and there develop a broad revolutionary tendency that will be capable of challenging the traditional bureaucracy at every step.

In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, our sections must make the boldest kind of fight for all the democratic and national demands of the masses. They must organize and lead the struggles for these objectives. They must penetrate all popular national organizations and establish solid fractions within them, working there with a long-term perspective when necessary.

But the struggle against sectarianism does not mean, under any circumstances, to yield to opportunist pressures. The problem is one of leading the masses in revolutionary struggle and not adapting ourselves to centrist positions. The members of the parties of the Fourth International have the duty to be in every real movement of the masses and in every organization which musters and mobilizes these masses; and they are not obliged to defend on a local scale, in daily action, at every moment, the whole program and complete political line of their party. But, irrespective of the more or less advanced political situation, the party permanently defends before the working class a *combined* program, in which the full socialist slogans are tied in with the transitional slogans appropriate to the given situation and to the elementary economic and political demands of the masses. The party never reduces its policy to the level of a minimum program, of a merely trade-unionist or democratic order.

The constant concern of all our sections must be to connect their agitation around immediate slogans, with propaganda for our complete combined program. In determining our central slogans for a certain period we must start, not from what seems to be the momentary political consciousness of the masses, under the influence of the traditional leaderships, but from the character of the period, the living conditions and needs of the masses. We must have the firm conviction that the masses, through their own experience in struggles, will inevitably arrive at an understanding of the correctness of our slogans. Our task is to move ahead swiftly and audaciously to ever higher transitional slogans as the workers' struggles grow and deepen and to heighten the political content of the party's propaganda and agitation. This has particularly been demonstrated by our recent experience in France and Italy.

In their effort to seek the road to the real mass movement, our sections are inevitably subject to deviations —

both sectarian, which express the inertia of the past, and opportunist, reflecting the mass pressure and the ideological weakness of the cadres.

Only democratic discussion and criticism of the experience of each section by the whole of our international movement, and the well-considered intervention of the International, can offset the dangers of such deviations. Only this will make it possible for us to win the masses, not on a centrist program, but on the program of Marxism-Leninism, enriched by the new developments of the workers' movement.

Following the end of the war, it was necessary to reconstitute the organizational unity of the Trotskyist movement and to resume connections with all organizations claiming to adhere to the Fourth International and complying with its discipline.

At the present stage it is necessary for the International, in planning its activities, to take into account the conditions which may permit a more rapid and effective growth of our movement in some countries than in others. This means assisting primarily those sections which are in process, or have the best opportunities, of becoming mass parties. Other sections will be aided in their development by the living example and the experience of those sections of the International which will have succeeded in finding a road to the masses.

## VI. Political Perspectives and Tasks

The whole strategy of the International continues to be centered around the preparation of the world socialist revolution, which can and must prevent a relapse, of the proletariat and all humanity, into fascism and war. The last imperialist war opened a period of unstable equilibrium during which great struggles of the proletariat and the colonial peoples, threatening the capitalist system itself, are not only probable but inevitable. This period has not yet come to a close. The polarization of social forces is accentuated under the pressure of US-Soviet antagonism and the persistent crisis in most of the capitalist and colonial countries. This crisis, which the traditional parties show themselves incapable of solving, leads to ever greater class struggles. The outcome of these struggles in a number of key countries in the present international situation will determine the possibility of a relative stability of capitalism, or will accelerate revolutionary developments.

In spite of the tension in US-Soviet relations and the economic and ideological preparations for another war, formidable obstacles stand in the way of its immediate outbreak. A new compromise between these two powers always remains possible. The race between war and revolution will most probably accelerate when the economic crisis in the US breaks out and unfolds. But even before then, the world bourgeoisie will undergo great economic and political difficulties, convulsions and crises, which will unleash great working-class struggles. In the course of these

struggles, new revolutionary forces will be emancipated from the domination of the traditional leaderships and thus enabled to regroup themselves around the program of the Fourth International.

In the USSR, the regime set up by the bureaucracy is developing in a direction which, instead of leading to its consolidation, accumulates and sharpens all its contradictions.

The capitalist world as a whole develops under the sign of an increased fundamental disequilibrium, which narrows the basis for periods of relative stability and extends the periods of convulsions and crises.

The policy of the Fourth International in the period ahead must proceed from these considerations and lay stress on the necessary and possible mobilization of the workers and the colonial masses for a revolutionary solution.

In general, the practical tasks formulated in the resolution of the April 1946 Conference, which flowed from the concrete application of the Transitional Program, are still valid, since the character of the period remains fundamentally the same.

The Fourth International in its propaganda constantly denounces the imperialist plans for a third world war, and shows that only victorious socialist revolutions can prevent this catastrophe with its incalculable consequences for humanity and for the future of socialism.

At the same time, it constantly combats the reactionary propaganda of the imperialists designed to create among the masses a fatalistic acceptance of another war. The Fourth International bases its policy on every struggle and every victory of the proletariat and the colonial peoples, and places its confidence in the revolutionary action of the masses to counteract the plans of the imperialists.

In the countries of Western Europe, particularly in France and Italy, where the polarization is the most advanced and the reactionary threat the most immediate, our sections must insist on the necessity of united action and the united front of all working-class forces, on the basis of a program which links the economic and political demands of the masses to the slogans of workers' control, workers' militia and a workers' and farmers' government.

They must tirelessly call for the formation of united front committees in the plants, in the trade unions, in the workers' districts and the villages. These committees will become the organs for preparation and leadership of the struggles of the entire working class and other exploited layers, in defense against the economic and political offensive of the bourgeoisie, and in preparation for a counter-offensive aimed at the taking of power by a united front government.

They must constantly advocate the necessity of broadening and coordinating the struggles, and must expose the traditional leaderships opposing this. They must expose particularly the opportunist and adventurist spirit of the new Stalinist policy, with its incoherent social agitation, its lack of a program and perspectives which can lead ultimately only to the demoralization of the masses and the victory of reaction.

Our sections will denounce the capitalist nature of the nationalizations carried out by the governments under SP or SP-CP leadership — nationalizations which burden the already shattered economy of these countries with exorbitant sums for compensation and indemnities and which are completely without workers' control.

They will denounce the bureaucratic "planning" of these governments, which aggravates the already heavy privations imposed on the masses. To the increasing disorder of capitalist management of production and distribution, they will counterpose propaganda for socialist planning, by the masses and for the masses, beginning with mass control over production, food distribution and prices.

In opposition to control by American imperialism of European economy through the Marshall Plan — which aims to make European economy a mere supplement to US economy, at the cost of the free development of the productive forces and the masses' living standards — our sections will put forth unceasing propaganda for the Socialist United States of Europe.

Against the continued occupation of Germany, Austria and the countries of the Soviet "buffer zone" by the imperialist forces and those of the Stalinist bureaucracy, our sections will fight for the withdrawal of all occupation troops and for all the democratic demands of the oppressed masses consistent with their right of self-determination and national independence.

In the European countries controlled by the Soviet bureaucracy, members of the Fourth International will choose to group themselves within the Social-Democratic organizations, and will aid every movement of the masses which aims at defending their living standards and their liberties against the bureaucratic police regimes dominated by the Stalinists.

In the United States the task is to accelerate the penetration into the trade union organizations and to intensify the political campaign for a labor party based on the trade unions. It is necessary to expose the reactionary maneuvers of Yankee imperialism throughout the world and to denounce its plans for a third imperialist war. It is necessary to prepare politically and organizationally for the outbreak of the depression and the crisis in the US which will carry the Trotskyists to the head of the great mass struggles that lie ahead.

In the semi-colonial countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia, the sections and members of the Fourth International will resolutely defend the democratic and national demands of the masses against imperialism, as well as their economic and political demands against the native bourgeoisie.

In general, the main task facing the Fourth International as a world party in the present period, is that of entering the mass movements in the capitalist and colonial countries with greater determination than in the past, in order to advance the socialist and revolutionary solutions, which are more necessary than ever.

The capitalist system, in decline and decay, and the regime established by the Soviet bureaucracy in the USSR, accumulate and sharpen their inherent contradictions. They

paralyze the development of the productive forces; steadily lower the living standards of millions of people in the world; increase the pressure of the bureaucratic and police state on social and private life, stifling creative activity in all fields; reduce highly industrialized countries like Germany and Japan to the level of colonies; and increase national oppression.

In the light of all historic experience, the revolutionary proletariat shows itself as the only social force capable of incorporating in its leadership the common struggle of all the oppressed and the exploited who are crushed by im-

perialism by the bourgeoisie and the Soviet bureaucracy, and of leading the struggle to its socialist and revolutionary outcome.

In this sense, the Fourth International can and must fulfill its role as the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat. With the cadres it has acquired, with its experience and increasing influence, the Fourth International can go to the masses with greater resolution, greater firmness, greater political clarity than ever.

Forward with the fighting masses, to win them for the Revolution and for Socialism!

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# The USSR and Stalinism

*Theses Adopted by the Second World Congress of the Fourth International — Paris, April 1948*

## ***The Historical Significance of the Developments in Russia.***

1. Thirty years ago the Russian workers and poor peasants, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, overthrew the power of the capitalists and landowners, expropriated the exploiters and laid the basis for an unprecedented overturn in all social relations of old Russia. For the workers' vanguard of the whole world, and particularly for the Bolshevik leaders of the October Revolution, this was only the starting point for the world revolution. Only a link-up with the advanced proletariat of Central and Western Europe, with their modern technique and superior culture, could enable the Russian workers to overcome the difficulties arising from their conquest of power in a country so backward in its development of the productive forces, in the specific weight of the proletariat with the general population, and in the cultural level of its working class.

The Bolshevik leaders considered that in the long run the historical alternative to this international victory of the revolution could be only the restoration of capitalism in Russia and the transformation of the country into a colony of world imperialism.

The history of the last thirty years has shown clearly that building a classless society within a backward national framework is only an illusion. In Russia today there are more obstacles to the victory of socialism than at any time since 1917. But at the same time, the classes expropriated in 1917 have not been restored to power. Instead of becoming a powerless colony of imperialism, Russia has become the second military and economic power in the world. This historical variant was not foreseen by the Bolsheviks or by any other tendency in the workers' movement. This is where the main difficulty lies for a Marxist understanding of the Russian question.

2. It is equally difficult either to express in a single formula the tendency of the Soviet Union's evolution during these thirty years or to apply to it abstract norms like "progress" or "regression." The monstrous growth of the state, the most totalitarian police dictatorship in history; the pitiless crushing of the proletariat; the choking off of all intellectual freedom; the renewal of national oppression; the new rise of the Orthodox Church; the restoration of the slavery of woman, "equal" to man only in order to sweat in the mines or the yards; the introduction of compulsory labor on a gigantic scale—all this certainly constitutes an enormous regression from the Soviet democracy of the first years of the revolution.

But the uprooting of all semi-feudal vestiges, the complete elimination of economic domination by world imperialism, the extraordinary upswing of industry, the transformation of millions of backward illiterate peasants into industrial proletarians who have thus become conscious of modern wants, the rapid development of old towns and the accelerated appearance of new ones, the penetration of electricity and the tractor into the countryside—all this undoubtedly constitutes progress in relation to the semi-barbarous Russia inherited by the revolution from Czarism. This *contradictory process* requires careful avoidance of schematic judgments, in order to analyze precisely present-day Soviet society and to determine its internal tendencies of development.

3. History has not yet pronounced its final verdict on the USSR. Its economy, its state, its culture are undergoing constant change, which is far from having reached a definite conclusion. The composition of its social strata is subject to continuous and rapid variation. The proletariat, which emerged from the Czarist regime with the stirring memories of the October Revolution and entered upon the road of industrialization twenty years ago with enthusiasm, has given way to a working class newly drawn from the

peasantry, whose immense creative energies are crippled by the Stalinist dictatorship. The peasantry of today, transformed by the tractor, the *kolkhoz* (collective farm) and the terror of deportations, only resembles superficially the old Russian peasantry. The workers' bureaucracy, composed of upstart revolutionaries, has changed into a more or less closed caste, desirous of reviving the customs and nationalist traditions of the former ruling classes.

In spite of its complexity two striking features emerge from this picture. The sum total of the production relations inherited from the October Revolution has proved to possess an infinitely higher capacity of resistance than the Marxists had foreseen. The decisive *historic* significance of the revolution is thus borne out in full measure. But at the same time, the possibilities of reaction and regression in all fields, including the economic, within the *framework of these production relations*, have been shown to be infinitely vaster and more dangerous than anyone could have thought. These two factors must stand out clearly from our analysis.

The same complexity likewise appears in the present situation of the USSR, as it has emerged from the war and the first years of imperialist "peace." Although the Soviet Union has come out of the war as the first military power on the European continent, it has not improved either its internal or international situation, relative to capitalism. Internationally, the policy of pillage and bureaucratic expansionism has in no way succeeded in altering the relationship of forces, which has deteriorated as a result of the constitution of a single imperialist bloc. Internally, the reconversion of economy was carried out through a series of violent collisions which assumed the form of a real crisis. The bureaucracy has only maintained itself because the unstable equilibrium between the proletariat and the restorationist tendencies in Russia itself, and between the world proletariat and the world bourgeoisie, has not yet been upset in one direction or another. But the bureaucracy has proved more than ever incapable of eliminating any of the contradictions undermining its power. More than ever before, the fate of the USSR depends on the fate of the class struggle on a world scale, and for the degenerated workers' state the fundamental alternative remains: *Forward toward socialism, or back toward capitalism.*

### **The Social Nature of the USSR**

4. It was the proletarian revolution, i.e., the conscious action of the proletariat, which, in 1917, swept away the power of the capitalists and landowners. The production relations resulting therefrom—nationalization of the land, sub-soil, and of all the means of production, monopoly of foreign trade, expropriation of foreign capital, the beginning of conscious planning of economy—did not correspond to the level of development of the productive forces and could not, therefore, depend upon the automatic functioning of the economy. Historically, such production relations can only be definitively maintained and developed on the basis of *workers' control* of production, the ever deeper transformation of the proletariat from the *object* into the *subject* of economy. The abolition of this workers' control, the complete exclusion of the proletariat from any participa-

tion in planning, can only widen the gap between the given production relations and those that guarantee the abolition of exploitation of man by man. In this sense, historic development has clearly changed direction in Russia. What remains of the conquests of October is more and more losing its value as a motive force for socialist development. If these production relations have not yet collapsed, this does not mean, however, that we are witnessing their economic "stabilization." On the contrary, as in 1927 and 1937, the automatic economic process in Russia — abstracting therefrom the factor of the political dictatorship — would even today rapidly lead to the predominance of small handicraft and peasant production, which would effect a complete link-up with the capitalist world market. That not all of the October conquests have been overturned, is due to the fact that the political expropriation of the proletariat was brought about, not by the old possessing classes or the new peasant bourgeoisie, but by the bureaucracy, whose social privileges rest on the production relations established by the revolution. The political dictatorship, today as twenty years ago, is decisive in preventing the complete collapse of planning, the breakthrough of the petty capitalist market and the penetration of foreign capital into Russia. However, in its bureaucratic form, this very dictatorship undermines more and more the production relations on the basis of which it keeps alive.

5. Thanks to the dynamism of the production relations bequeathed by the October Revolution, the bureaucracy was in a position to crush peasant and neo-bourgeois pressure in 1927. As a result of the world retreat of the revolution and the exhaustion and discouragement which it meant for the Russian proletariat, the bureaucracy was able to politically expropriate the working class. By applying the advanced technique of the capitalist countries to the conquests of October, it could ensure a tentative development of the productive forces in Russia. This fact has given the country an overwhelming superiority of development-potency, compared to Czarist Russia, the Japan of the Mikado and Hitler's Germany. Any attempt at simplification which tries to confuse the economic basis on which Stalinist Russia is built, with the monstrous degeneracy of its social superstructure can, in view of these facts, only arrive at an idealization either of a "last stage" of capitalism, or of a "new exploiting class."

However, at the same time, the bureaucracy has been incapable of ensuring a harmonious development of production, a diminution of the contradiction between town and country, an easing of the sharpness of social contradictions. To attain these ends, economy would have had to be oriented first and foremost toward a satisfaction of the needs of the masses; the aims of the plan would have had to be calculated and controlled by the intervention of millions of producers, economic progress would have had to be measured in terms of the progressive rise of the masses' level of consumption and education. However, the bureaucracy defends the essence of the production relations inherited from October only as a basis for its privileges, and not as a basis for socialist development. Under these conditions, the preservation of the

regime which collides more and more with the immediate and historic interests of the masses, could only be accomplished through the imposition of the most totalitarian police dictatorship in history. The development of productive forces, while developing the *needs* of the whole population, has only assured the *satisfaction* of these needs for a privileged layer and has tremendously accentuated social inequality instead of reducing it. The bureaucratic regime, substituting a spirit of lucre, coercion, arbitrariness and terror for revolutionary devotion, creative energy, the critical spirit and free initiative of the masses as the motive power of planning, has corrupted the latter at its roots and has more and more robbed it of the possibility of guaranteeing itself a new upswing of the productive forces.

6. The fundamental contradictions of present Russian economy are the following:

a) Contradiction between the production relations on the one hand ("collective ownership of the means of production"), the maintenance of which imperiously demands the restoration of *workers' control*, the progressive introduction of *workers' management* of production; and on the other hand, the bureaucratic management of the State and economy, which increasingly endangers the maintenance of this collective ownership, threatened by the pillage of the bureaucracy ("the bureaucracy digs into collective property as into its own pockets") and by the more and more pronounced tendency toward stagnation in the development of productive forces. This is concretely expressed by a more and more manifest diminution in the rate of accumulation.

b) Contradiction between the tendency toward centralization, coordination and conscious planning of economy inherent in the production relations and the tendency toward primitive accumulation, the crystallization of a "parallel" economy of simple commodities and toward anarchy, resulting from the failure to satisfy the masses' needs by the bureaucratically managed economy. "The tendency toward primitive accumulation, created by want, breaks out through innumerable pores of planned economy" (Trotsky). The more the bureaucracy tries to embrace in its plan all of the country's productive forces, the more the latter escape its hold. Theft on a gigantic scale, migration of millions of workers, peasants and even technicians, the development of the free market, both peasant and handicraft, are the clearest signs of this tendency. To counteract these, the bureaucracy can no longer appeal to material interest. It must resort primarily to terror. Large-scale compulsory labor camps, the regimentation of the whole of social life, the arbitrary imposition of all living and working norms, give more and more of a caste character. In this trait is summed up the reactionary role of the bureaucracy and its incapacity really to keep in check the disintegrating forces which it has itself unleashed. Under these conditions, the progressive character of the production relations means nothing else but that a change in property relations is not necessary for the overthrow of the bureaucracy. The production relations and bureaucratic management are more and more inextricably bound up. Consequently,

the progressive character of the *Russian economy*, which is determined by its capacity to develop the productive forces, tends to become eliminated by the bureaucracy. The greatest attention must be devoted to the study of this development.

7. In 1936, Trotsky defined the social character of Russia as follows:

**"The Soviet Union is a contradictory society halfway between capitalism and socialism, in which:**

a) the productive forces are still far from adequate to give the State property a socialist character;

b) the tendency towards primitive accumulation created by want breaks out through innumerable pores of the planned economy;

c) norms of distribution preserving a bourgeois character lie at the basis of a new differentiation of society;

d) the economic growth, while slowly bettering the situation of the toilers, promotes a swift formation of privileged strata;

e) exploiting the social antagonisms, a bureaucracy has converted itself into an uncontrolled caste alien to socialism;

f) the social revolution, betrayed by the ruling party, still exists in property relations and in the consciousness of the toiling masses;

g) a further development of the accumulating contradictions can as well lead to socialism as back to capitalism;

h) on the road to capitalism, the counter-revolution would have to break the resistance of the workers;

i) on the road to socialism, the workers would have to overthrow the bureaucracy. In the last analysis, the question will be decided by a struggle of living forces both on the national and the world arena." (The Revolution Betrayed.)

8. What alterations have to be made in this analysis following the development of the past eleven years?

As before, the social differentiation is the result of bourgeois norms of *distribution*; it has not yet entered the domain of ownership of the means of production. But the bureaucracy has more and more tried to stabilize and maintain all of its privileges within the framework of a closed caste. This can clearly be seen from the new inheritance laws, the new family legislation and the efforts to exclude once and for all workers' and peasants' children from higher education. The introduction of the system of government bonds increases and stabilizes the privileges of the bureaucracy but does not in any way indicate a tendency toward the "sharing" of a profit realized on real capital, corresponding to the fictitious capital represented by these bonds.

The tendency toward primitive accumulation has strongly developed in the peasantry and has again openly penetrated the towns by means of cooperative industry and trade. The *private* employment of wage earners is extending both in the towns and in the country, but remains restricted to the private satisfaction of needs of consumption by the privileged elements and to artisan production for the market. The introduction of a system of forced labor on a vast scale appears to be the only means whereby the state can get the workers to use all their labor force in the framework of the state sector of economy. The economic development no longer improves, but aggravates the living conditions of the broad masses

of workers and is incapable of maintaining anything beyond the privileges of the bureaucracy. Not only does collective ownership in Russia today not have a socialist character, but it is becoming more and more inadequate to guarantee, by itself, that is, without the political overthrow of the bureaucracy, any further economic progress. The fall of productive forces resulting from the war only emphasizes the tendency inherent in bureaucratic management, of becoming more and more an absolute brake on economic progress.

The social revolution still lives in what remains of the conquests of October and in the vanguard layers of the working class. But the bureaucracy has in great part succeeded in extirpating the memories of the real revolution by physically liquidating almost the whole revolutionary generation of October and the civil war. The new proletariat, which has developed from a peasant milieu under the conditions of the ferocious Stalinist dictatorship, must gain consciousness of its immediate interests instinctively, through its hatred of the bureaucratic usurpers. A new revolutionary selection, carried by a new mass upsurge, which can only be the result of a powerful revolutionary wave outside of Russia, will alone be able to restore to the proletariat a clear consciousness of its historic mission.

If we continue to apply the term "degenerated workers' state" to this social organism, we are perfectly aware of the necessity to constantly bring up to date the complete and precise meaning of this definition. In reality, it is impossible to give any exact definition of present Russian society without a lengthy description. The relative superiority of this formula in comparison with all the others proposed up till now lies in this, that it takes into account the historic origin of the USSR and at the same time emphasizes its non-capitalist character and the instability of its social relations, which have not yet acquired their final historic physiognomy, and are not likely to in the next few years.

### ***The Politics of the Stalinist Regime***

9. From an uncontrolled caste, alien to socialism, the bureaucracy has become an uncontrollable caste, mortally hostile to socialism both in Russia and on a world scale. It possesses all the reactionary traits of the old owning classes—parasitism, waste of the surplus social product, cruelty toward the oppressed, exploitation of the producers. But it does not possess any of their progressive features, connected with a necessary historic function of introducing and defending an economic system that is superior from the standpoint of the division of labor and the ownership of the means of production.

If its regime seems to be "more stable" than the decadent capitalist regime, this is exclusively due to the fact that it has succeeded in using to its own advantage production relations which are infinitely superior to those of capitalism. In reality, the bureaucracy has, during the past twenty years, occupied a much less stable position in Russian society than even the most decadent bourgeoisie occupies in its society. It has no juridical or economic safeguards of its privileges. It is in constant

fear, not only of losing its privileges but also of losing its individual freedom and life; terror weighs on its privileged layers just as heavily as on the masses. The success of every bureaucrat does not depend on his birth, wealth, personal capabilities or on the success of his work, but on the arbitrariness of the hierarchy. Not only has the bureaucracy not worked out a distinct ideology, not only does it not have the instinct or characteristic of every social class, but in the course of the unceasing transformations which it has undergone, and as a result of the terrible blood-letting entailed by the consecutive purges, it has become demoralized even before it could attain an understanding of its own role.

The Stalinist dictatorship appears as a Bonapartist political regime, the function of which consists in defending the privileges of the bureaucracy in the framework of the given production relations. The tendency toward private appropriation of production and of the collective means of production, which again and again makes itself felt in the most favorably placed layers of the bureaucracy, has been systematically fought and restricted by the dictatorship. Under the weight of the dictatorship, under the permanent fear of foreign intervention which would rob it of all its privileges, constantly shaken up in its structure, demoralized and atomized by terror, the bureaucracy has been incapable of setting up conscious political tendencies, of orienting itself toward the restoration of the private ownership of the means of production for its own benefit. The most powerful centrifugal tendencies have been shown particularly in the lower and medium strata of the bureaucracy, intimately bound up with the peasant and artisan tendencies toward primitive accumulation.

The threat of the destruction of what has remained of the conquests of October does not in the first place originate from the striving of the upper bureaucrats to transform themselves into a "state capitalist class" but from the *disintegrating* tendencies resulting from bureaucratic management. These threaten to remove more and more sectors of the population and their activities from the state control and domination which the bureaucracy is vainly endeavoring to make omnipotent.

In the given historic conditions of the present period of fierce social and international contradictions, the relative stability of the political dictatorship, therefore, reflects:

- a) The disorientation and prostration of the working class following the defeats of the international revolution and the Stalinist victory;
- b) The inability of the peasantry to put up an effective political opposition;
- c) The incapacity of the restorationist tendencies of the bureaucracy to oppose to Stalin an organized expression of its caste interests.

10. The *economic* policy of the Stalinist regime has been entirely dominated, for the last ten years, by the necessity of overcoming the crisis resulting from the tendency toward a lowering of the rate of accumulation and the growing difficulties in maintaining or increasing the average output. This means a long series of coercive measures by means of which the worker is to be tied to his place of work as the serf was tied to the land. The least

breach of "discipline" must be severely punished, the length of the working day must be practically extended to the maximum physical limit, the minimum real wage must be pressed below the minimum living wage in order to stimulate an increase in individual output. The war, with its dislocation of economy, the loosening of the ties between all sectors of industry, the growth of inflation, the development of the free market, the appearance of millionaire kolkhozniks, has largely weakened the bureaucracy's control over the whole of economic life and removed more and more sectors from its direction.

The struggle for increased production in the framework of bureaucratic management is beginning directly to undermine collective ownership. In small handicraft and light industry, this struggle is at present being carried out on the basis of strengthening the tendencies toward private appropriation in the cooperatives. In agriculture, the introduction of piecework has been accompanied by the actual division of the kolkhozes into parcels of land on which the same families continue working, thus strengthening the trend toward the restoration of the bond between the agricultural producer and the land on which he works. Crowning all these empirical efforts there is the policy of plunder followed by the Stalinist regime in the Soviet "buffer zone" which clearly shows the incapacity of the bureaucracy to further develop the productive forces on the basis of the mechanism inherent in Russian economy, and corrodes at the same time what is left of the conquests of October by an attempt at the cohabitation of Russian collectivized economy with the capitalist economy in these countries. The bureaucratic regime is today in Russia enemy No. 1 of all that remains of the conquests of October, and threatens in the years to come to lead Russia to a total decomposition of collectivized economy. A revolution is necessary not only for fresh progress toward socialism, but also to save the production relations inherited from October.

11. The *foreign* policy of the bureaucracy has undergone an essential and definite change following the Second World War. Before this war, that policy was based on the possibility of *neutralizing* the pressure of the capitalist environment of the USSR by setting off against one another the antagonistic imperialist blocs, and to a lesser extent, by manipulating "national" Stalinist parties. The subjective reflection of this policy was the theory of "socialism in one country" which was based on the conception of a more or less gradual development of productive forces in Russia, independently of the development of the capitalist world.

The disappearance of German, Japanese, Italian and French imperialisms as first-rate powers and the extreme weakening of British imperialism, have placed the Soviet bureaucracy face to face with American imperialism. The latter has more or less succeeded in setting up a "capitalist united front" against the USSR. The united front is not based on the "fear" of the "revolutionary" nature of Stalin, but on the necessity of reconquering one-sixth of the world market for capitalist exploitation.

The bureaucracy at first tried to meet this new situation with a policy of *compromise* with imperialism, by

offering its services in suppressing the revolutionary movements and aspirations of the masses in most countries of Europe and the world. In exchange, it was given a "free hand" for its expansion in Eastern Europe (policy of Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam). It has endeavored to consolidate its sphere of influence through the establishment of governments with Stalinist allegiance and an ever greater hold over the economic resources of these countries. The stiffening of the attitude of American imperialism, profiting from a favorable relationship of forces, has rapidly put an end to Soviet expansionism, while at the same time the attempt at "neutralizing" the bourgeoisie in certain countries (France) outside the "buffer zone" proved bankrupt. This forces the bureaucracy to seek security ever more in a policy of armaments and of military preparations while counting upon the unceasing economic and political crises—the outbreak of which the Stalinist parties must aid as far as possible—to paralyze world imperialism for a time, and make a compromise possible.

It can already be said that military intervention is unavoidable unless the world proletariat succeeds in winning decisive victories and thus really paralyzes imperialism. Stalinism is obstacle No. 1 for the world proletariat on its road of revolutionary mobilization. In this sense, too, the struggle against Stalinism comes to the forefront for the defense of what remains of the conquests of October.

### ***For the New Russian Revolution!***

12. "Defend what remains of the conquests of October" is a *strategic* line for the revolutionary party, and not alone a "slogan." This strategic line has its historic justification; it must also be seen, in each concrete situation, in what tactical form it is to be applied within the framework of the Fourth International's *general strategy* of world revolution.

The historic justification of this strategy derives from four fundamental considerations:

a) The historic superiority of the Russian production relations vis-a-vis those of the capitalist world;

b) The objective weakening of world imperialism resulting from the exclusion from its market of the Russian sphere;

c) The crushing of the USSR by imperialism, would historically signify an enormous step backward; for the great mass of the workers, this would not signify a defeat of Stalinism as such, but of Communism itself.

d) The necessity of preserving what is left of the conquests of October, as a condition—not sufficient, but necessary—for a socialist development of economy.

By defending the remnants of the conquests of October, we do not in any way consider the USSR as a whole. On the contrary, we believe that the policy and the very existence of the Stalinist bureaucracy constitute a permanent threat to all that is, in our opinion, still worth defending. The struggle against Stalinism and all its monstrous manifestations, including the fields of foreign and military policies, was already before the war one of the essential elements of our defense of what remains of

the conquests of October. Beyond the frontiers of the Soviet Union, this strategy found its essential expression in the struggle for the world revolution, the only practical means for preventing in the long run a breakdown of the productive relations bequeathed by the Russian Revolution.

The German-Russian war broke out — and not accidentally at a moment when the working class movement in Europe had reached the lowest point of its regression and prostration. Under these conditions, the *military* defense of the USSR, in spite of Stalin's reactionary war policy, remained the only means of preventing the immediate reintroduction of capitalism in the USSR and the country's transformation into a colony crushed by imperialism. Any other policy would have meant, in practice, to abandon to Hitler the historic mission of the proletariat, of overthrowing Stalin.

The cynicism with which German imperialism exterminated broad layers of the working population and took over the factories, the mines and the best collectivized land, aroused the unparalleled resistance of the Russian working class. This resistance became the decisive turning point stimulating a large-scale flare-up of the revolutionary class struggle in Europe. In this sense, the policy of the defense of the remains of October in fact proved to be an integral and indispensable element of revolutionary strategy of the world proletariat.

With the beginning of the revolutionary upswing in Europe, the importance of *military* action to defend the remnants of October rapidly declined. The reactionary and bankrupt policy of the bureaucracy in Russia itself, immediately upon the liberation of the territory, and its openly counter-revolutionary role in the "buffer zone," became threat No. 1 to the remains of October. As from this moment, the struggle against Stalinism became the primary task within the framework of the strategy of defense of the Soviet Union. This struggle is even more necessary in view of the subordination of this defense to the struggle for the world revolution, where Stalinism constitutes the main obstacle.

A third world war, in the form of an attack of world imperialism — under American leadership — against the USSR, is inevitable if successful socialist revolutions do not materialize in the interim. If the contest between the USSR and world imperialism is confined, however, to military means, the defeat and destruction of the USSR is certain.

Therefore, in the event of a new war, the fate of the USSR is tied in a more immediate sense than ever before, with the fate of the socialist revolution.

Furthermore, in the present situation, Stalinism is a mortal foe of the socialist revolution, not only through the counter-revolutionary activity of the Stalinist parties, but also through the use of military force by the Kremlin to stamp out all revolutionary manifestations in Eastern Europe, which would be repeated tomorrow on an even larger scale in Europe and Asia. This necessitates the greatest preparations and efforts to protect the future revolutionary uprisings from the Stalinist counter-revolutionary violence.

It follows from all these considerations that even in

case of war, we continue vigorously to pursue the struggle for the political revolution inside the USSR and everything it implies: Overthrow of the Stalinist regime. Struggle for the independence of Soviet Ukraine, the Soviet Baltic countries, etc. This does not mean that we alter in any way whatsoever our *strategy* of unconditional defense of what remains of the conquests of October. But it means for the Russian proletariat that the struggle to protect these conquests against imperialist attack will necessitate with ever greater urgency the elimination of the Soviet bureaucracy with its reactionary policy. It also means for the world proletariat that the task of defending the conquests of October will be completely identified, so to speak, with the task of intensifying the revolutionary class struggle in all countries, and that the question of the use of military means behind the imperialist lines to aid the Russian armies will completely recede to the background.

It will be necessary to continue this revolutionary class struggle consistently and uninterruptedly in the case of the occupation of any given country by the Russian army, even though the revolutionary forces clash with the Russian army, and also in spite of the military consequences which this might entail for the Russian army in its operations against the imperialist military forces. In any case, the use of military means remains subordinated to the necessities of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat in whatever countries it may be. Thus, our defense of the USSR remains identical in all cases with the continuation of the revolutionary class struggle.

13. This turn, necessary since 1944, was not effected by the whole International with the same ability and tactical flexibility. Serious self-criticism on this subject is necessary. It is particularly important to stress the following points:

a) It would be the gravest mistake to apply the strategy of the "defense of the USSR against imperialism" to the different tactical diplomatic or military maneuvers of the bureaucracy, to its temporary retreats, to the concessions which it is forced to make to imperialism within the framework of international power politics. "Defend what is left of the conquests of October" means, in the face of these problems, to denounce the reactionary character of the Stalinist policy which lays the most solid bases for a concentration of petty bourgeois, peasant, etc. forces in the camp of imperialism and fundamentally discredits the very notion of communism in the eyes of the proletariat. This means, under all circumstances, not to remain silent on a single crime of the bureaucracy, not to offer an apology for a single one of the monstrous manifestations of its policy, which constitutes the main brake on a revolutionary development of the workers' struggles.

b) All formulas along the line of "last bastion of the revolution," "socialist economy," "factories belonging to the workers," "workers' and peasants' power," which constitute gross deformations of a Marxist definition and tend to create illusions regarding the nature of the Stalinist dictatorship thus discrediting the Fourth International, must be expunged from our vocabulary.

Even more harmful are mistaken and vulgar formulas such as "red fascism," "Russian imperialism," etc., created by petty-bourgeois journalists, which sow as much confusion and do not help advanced workers in any way toward a better understanding of Soviet *reality*. Particularly reprehensible are those formulas placing the policy of the bureaucracy on the same level as that of imperialism, ascribing to it "a striving for world domination" which comes straight from the vocabulary of propagandists of the Truman Doctrine. Even when our explanation is complicated and demands great efforts to be correctly placed before the workers, we must speak in exact terms rather than use "simpler" formulas, which are scientifically false and facilitate the propaganda of the Stalinists or the imperialists.

14. The premise for the power of the bureaucracy was the passivity of the proletariat. The discouraged masses "tolerated" the bureaucracy because they saw no other way out. The war itself has even emphasized this attitude of the masses who consider Stalin as the "lesser evil." A radical change in this attitude could only take place following decisive victories of the world revolution, which have not so far occurred. With the end of the war, profoundly different tendencies have come to light. The dissatisfaction of the masses with their extremely low standard of living has exerted strong pressure on the bureaucracy. Contact with the more "prosperous" life of the capitalist countries has deeply shaken the attachment to the regime of hundreds of thousands of soldiers.

New workers' generations are appearing, which feel less the weight of demoralization and discouragement of the past. Important middle layers of the bureaucracy are trying, at all costs, to escape the nightmare of terror and police suspicion. US imperialism offers to these layers a much more powerful source of attraction than German imperialism did previously. Thus, a third Russian emigration has rapidly taken shape, consisting of deported workers and peasants who refuse to return to Russia, of soldiers and officers who have deserted, and of refugee bureaucrats and diplomats. The existence of this emigration is a signal which clearly shows that there has been a rapid decline in the masses' attachment to the regime. In the face of these most recent phenomena and of the tightening of the police dictatorship in all fields, to speak of a "stabilization" of the regime is to operate with the most vulgar impressionistic notions and to abandon the class criterion which indicates, precisely, that the weight of the dictatorship is in direct proportion to the sharpening of the contradictions which it must hold down.

15. In view of the historically unique power of the repressive apparatus, the gradual development of a working-class opposition or the political coordination of the restorationist petty-bourgeois tendencies, which is refuted by the entire development of the last decades, is extremely improbable. The forces which can bring about an explosion in the Stalinist totalitarian system are, on the one hand, the internal contradictions in the apparatus itself—which may suddenly erupt to the surface following a grave economic crisis, or a possible withdrawal from the "buffer zone," etc.; and, on the other hand, a violent

outbreak of the masses' hatred at any moment of crisis, encouraged by an abrupt change in the international situation. History will probably show a combination of these processes. It is, however, more than likely that the fourth Russian revolution will not assume at the outset a clearly Bolshevik-Leninist character, but that it will start with a general uprising against the vile dictatorship by the workers and peasants, who will be joined by various privileged strata. The task of the Bolshevik-Leninists will be to introduce a political differentiation into this uprising, so that the overthrow of Stalin benefits Soviet democracy and not the restorationist tendencies.

"Defend what remains of the conquests of October" means, in the face of the inevitable downfall of the present regime, patiently to prepare the cadres who will be able, at the next stage, to play a decisive role in the mass struggle; who will be able to gain the confidence of the masses and thus prevent the overthrow of the bureaucracy from serving to open up the road to imperialist intervention and the restoration of capitalism. This is why, today as yesterday, we remain for the unconditional support of all workers' struggles, of all manifestations of workers' opposition against the Stalinist dictatorship, by means of which the new generations will be able to rediscover the road of Leninism and prepare the long, underground struggle based on dissatisfaction with the regime, which has already started.

16. The tasks of the Russian Bolshevik-Leninists were defined as follows in the *Transitional Program*:

**A fresh upsurge of the revolution in the USSR will undoubtedly begin under the banner of the struggle against social inequality and political oppression. Down with the privileges of the bureaucracy! Down with Stakhanovism! Down with the Soviet aristocracy and its ranks and orders! Greater equality of wages for all forms of labor!**

**The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of Soviet democracy.**

**The bureaucracy replaced the Soviets as class organs with the fiction of universal electoral rights—in the style of Hitler-Goebbels. It is necessary to return to the Soviets not only their free democratic form but also their class content. As once the bourgeoisie and kulaks were not permitted to enter the Soviets, so now it is necessary to drive the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the Soviets. In the Soviets there is room only for the representatives of the workers, rank-and-file collective farmers, peasants and Red Army men.**

**Democratization of the Soviets is impossible without legalization of Soviet parties. The workers and peasants themselves by their own free vote will indicate what parties they recognize as Soviet parties.**

**A revision of planned economy from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers! Factory committees should be returned the right to control production. A democratically organized consumers' cooperative should control the quality and price of products.**

**Reorganization of the collective farms in accordance with the will and in the interests of the workers there engaged!**

**The reactionary international policy of the bureaucracy should be replaced by the policy of proletarian internationalism. The complete diplomatic correspondence of the Kremlin to be published. Down with secret diplomacy!**

All political trials, staged by the Thermidorian bureaucracy, to be reviewed in the light of complete publicity and controversial openness and integrity. Only the victorious revolutionary uprising of the oppressed masses can revive the Soviet regime and guarantee its further development toward socialism. There is but one party capable of leading the Soviet masses to insurrection—the party of the Fourth International!

**Down with the bureaucratic gang of Cain-Stalin! Long live Soviet democracy! Long live the international socialist revolution!**

This program of struggle in the USSR remains in the main valid for Russia today. The Bolshevik-Leninists will on this basis work out specific slogans corresponding to the concrete development of the situation.

They will demand above all the immediate withdrawal of the Russian occupation troops and the application of the democratic right of self-determination, including that of complete secession for the national minorities living in the USSR, fighting for independent socialist republics of the Ukraine, Byelo-Russia, Esthonia, Lithuania, etc.

## II. Stalinism Outside Russia

### *The Nature of the "Buffer" Countries*

17. The contradictory character of this bureaucracy is most clearly disclosed in those countries which have been incorporated into its strategic "buffer zone." In these countries it becomes most obvious to what extent the increasingly reactionary traits of Stalin's regime come into permanent collision with the needs of planned economy and an effective defense of the conquests of October.

In order to make a new leap forward Soviet economy requires more urgently than ever, after the terrible destruction of the war, peaceful integration into a planned socialist European economy. The encirclement of the USSR by a single imperialist bloc requires more urgently than ever the revolutionary mobilization of the European and world masses for the overthrow of international imperialism. The special interests of the bureaucracy have driven it to act against these fundamental interests of the USSR. Instead of permitting the economy of Central and Eastern Europe to expand on a large scale, the bureaucracy began by ruining these countries with its various forms of extortions. Then it clamped upon them a vise of exploitation in which any serious development of the productive forces is doomed to suffocate (preferential tariffs, unilateral flow of trade, reparations, cutting off of traditional markets, impossibility of supplying industrial equipment, etc.). In most of these countries, where the revolutionary upsurge developed in one form or another, the Kremlin—instead of encouraging a broad revolutionary mobilization of the masses which could have swept away the crumbling bourgeoisie without any great efforts — began by allying itself with the worst reactionaries and by crushing this revolutionary upsurge through the policy of its parties coupled with the action of its army and its diplomacy.

However, just as in Russia the Soviet bureaucracy rests on the basis of ownership of the means of production, despite the fact that its own privileges and its reactionary policy undermine these property relations more and more,

its conduct in the "buffer zone" countries also bears the marks of its social nature, despite the reactionary character of its policy there.

After striving in the beginning to maintain its exploitation of these countries and to get gradual control of the state apparatus within the framework of collaboration with the remnants of the national bourgeoisies, the bureaucracy has collided more and more with the privately-owned sectors in the economy and with the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties in the government coalitions — which remained as obstacles to the realization of its own economic and political aims. The struggle against these obstacles assumes the form of an ever more complete elimination of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois organizations from political life, as well as an ever more rigid limitation of the privately-owned sector of industry—with this peculiar characteristic, that the bourgeois structure of the state and the bourgeois character of property are left standing. This contradictory character of the Stalinist conduct expresses in its most fully developed form the contradiction inherent in the very nature of the Soviet bureaucracy. While incapable of leading the USSR forward toward socialism, it is at the same time unable to transform itself into a capitalist class in the historic sense of the term. The hybrid forms of its power and pillage in the "buffer zone" merely parallel, under different objective circumstances, the hybrid forms of its power and pillage in the USSR.

18. The bourgeoisie in these countries sought and eagerly accepted a compromise with the Soviet bureaucracy, which was imposed upon it by the international balance of forces. This was a "lesser evil" compared to a revolutionary overthrow. In Finland, Rumania and Hungary, it succeeded in effecting a transfer of power from one bourgeois combination to another, more acceptable to the bureaucracy. The bourgeoisie had to pay the following price for the maintenance of its essential social privileges:

a) Armistice terms and peace treaties, allowing the bureaucracy to seize German property in these countries, and imposing onerous, long-term reparation payments.

b) The establishment of mixed companies for the exploitation of the sources of raw material of vital importance, etc.

c) A purge of its state apparatus of all elements hostile to the USSR, as well as the handing over to native Stalinist agents of the Moscow bureaucracy of a series of key positions in the army, police, administration, etc.

19. The bourgeoisie of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, or rather, what remained of it at the time of the Russian occupation, had to give in to the combined pressure of the revolutionary tide and of the Soviet occupation, and accepted, without resistance, a series of economic reforms. In part, these corresponded to the needs of capitalist economy (necessity of making good the capital shortage; necessity of replacing the German owners, etc.). In part, they were due to the pressure of the Soviet bureaucracy. This acceptance assumed the form of a conscious compromise (Czechoslovakia) or an outright imposition (Yugoslavia), depending on the relative strength left to the bourgeoisie at that moment. Based on the same

factor as well as on the degree of independence of the mass movement, the Stalinists were able to take over more or less rapidly all the key positions of the bourgeois state apparatus.

20. During the whole of this first stage, Stalinist politics were predominantly *counter-revolutionary* in character. This was essentially shown in three ways:

a) By the policies of nationalism and "national unity" carried out by the Stalinist parties, endeavoring to prevent, brake or stop any independent mass actions. They concluded alliances with the most reactionary forces (Rumanian Court, Finnish big bourgeoisie, semi-fascist Bulgarian Zveno, Grabski's National Democrats in Poland). They broke all the nuclei of dual power built up by the workers. They tried to repress more and more any manifestation of working-class opposition, of organizational independence, etc.

b) By the regime of terror and military dictatorship by means of which the Russian army crushed revolutionary initiative, especially in Germany, Austria and Hungary.

c) By the pillage which constitutes the economic policy of the Soviet bureaucracy in these countries (reparations, mixed corporations, trade agreements, etc.) and by the national and police oppression which it established in different degrees in several of these countries.

This whole stage may be characterized as an attempt to exploit the resources of the "buffer zone" and to ensure its strategic control, while at the same time maintaining capitalist production relations and a bourgeois state structure in its traditional form.

21. The resistance of the bourgeoisie and the better-off layers of the petty bourgeoisie of these countries to the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy stiffened in direct proportion to the recession of the mass movement (resulting from the demoralization of the proletariat by the Stalinist policy and reactionary role of the Russian occupation), and in direct proportion to the growth of Soviet-US contradictions. The bourgeoisie of the "buffer zone" knows very well that without direct aid from American imperialism it will never succeed in getting rid of Russian overlordship.

The Soviet bureaucracy, on the other hand, cannot under any circumstances tie this bourgeoisie to itself economically — in the same way as the imperialist bourgeoisie has succeeded in allying the colonial bourgeoisie to itself. It cannot supply the "buffer-zone" countries with either capital or industrial equipment which these countries need to carry out their economic reconstruction. To the extent that these reconstruction needs make themselves felt more urgently, the bourgeoisie considers Russian exactions more and more odious. Its resistance to these exactions likewise grows on the political field. At the same time, the growing difficulties of "nationalized" industry, the inflation and financial disorder, the rapid concentration of agricultural production in the hands of well-to-do peasants (in whose favor the agrarian reform has worked), the spread of speculation, the accumulation of foreign exchange by the commercial bourgeoisie, the famine, etc., multiply the difficulties facing the Soviet bureaucracy and its native Stalin-

ist agents. They have no way of attaining, within the framework of capitalist production relations, the economic aims they are pursuing (reparation deliveries at fixed rates, increase of trade, increased production in the mixed corporations, etc.).

22. In view of these difficulties, the bureaucracy has been forced to take increasingly energetic measures against the economic and political centers of bourgeois resistance. These measures could be limited to police action or purely external pressure only in those cases where the bourgeoisie was too weak to offer any kind of organized resistance. Wherever this was not the case, the Stalinist bureaucracy has been forced to supplement its political action with a limited mobilization of the masses (Czechoslovakia), while making every effort to restrain the masses within the rigid framework of its control, and while turning immediately against all "excesses" on the part of the masses.

This intervention has had the following results:

a) The elimination, step by step, of all centers of bourgeois and petty bourgeois opposition from political life.

b) The imposition on the economic life of these countries of a gradual control by the Stalinist bureaucracy, utilizing different methods in different sectors — the setting apart from the national economy of these countries of "Soviet-owned" and mixed stock companies and the attempt to integrate them directly with Soviet planning; control over nationalized sectors by the "national" Stalinists; indirect control over the privately-owned sector through the allocation of raw materials, price regulations, extension of bank credits, etc.

23. By its social nature the Soviet bureaucracy is incapable of integrating the "buffer" countries with the Soviet economy, failing the complete destruction of capitalism in these countries. A destruction of this sort did take place in the Baltic countries, Eastern Poland, Bessarabia, Karelia, owing to the existing relationship of forces in these countries. This was possible owing to the relationship of forces inside the labor movement and the degree of control exercised by the Stalinists over the mass movement. The bourgeoisie here was, moreover, extremely enfeebled and found itself caught between the pressure of world imperialism, on the one hand, and of the bureaucracy on the other.

On so large a scale as half of Europe, structural assimilation of the "buffer" countries was impossible both because of the international relation of forces as well as because of the relations between the Soviet bureaucracy and the working class of these countries. To the extent that the bureaucracy was compelled to restrict more and more rigidly the privately-owned sectors of industry, to that extent it has acted in a purely empirical manner in accordance with the conditions existing at the given time in each of these countries. It acted without destroying root and branch capitalist production relations in these countries. Ideologically this process finds its expression in the theory of the "new democracies" and in the totality of the positions held by the Stalinist parties of the "buffer zone," all of which affirms the continued existence of capitalism there. It is not excluded that a certain relation

of forces may necessitate a real structural assimilation of one or another country in the "buffer zone." But it is necessary to indicate clearly that the policy of the step-by-step limitation of the privately-owned sectors of industry has not been oriented in this direction up to now. And the specific forms of exploitation introduced by the Soviet bureaucracy constitute entirely new and powerful obstacles to structural assimilation.

The capitalist nature of the economy of the "buffer zone" countries is apparent from the following factors:

a) Nowhere has the bourgeoisie as such been destroyed or expropriated (with the exception of certain groups, placed in the category of collaborators).

b) In all these countries the bureaucracy has introduced special forms of exploitation (mixed corporations, Soviet-owned stock companies, preferential trade treaties, etc.). All these, while assuming peculiar forms owing to the social nature of the bureaucracy, nevertheless appear within the framework of the economy of these countries as forms of capitalist exploitation.

c) Extensive bourgeois layers continue to exist in auxiliary light industry and in the field of distribution, employing approximately half of the country's manpower. The privately-owned sector continues to participate in the division of the surplus value extracted from labor in the nationalized sector through the medium of manifold trade relations, bank credits, etc.

d) The nationalized sector itself continues to retain a capitalist structure (individual profit balance, role of money, individual management and accounting, and so on.).

e) Anarchy in production has been increased by the fact that the German property seized by the USSR has been placed outside the control of even the "native" Stalinist agents and operates independently of all the other sectors of economy. This fact, coupled with the retention of narrow and outlived national boundaries of the "buffer" countries, renders planning impossible, even apart from the question of the class nature of property relations.

f) Nowhere have foreign debts been canceled. Foreign capital has not been expropriated; compensation agreements either have been or are being concluded wherever foreign-owned property has been nationalized.

g) The land has not been nationalized. Agriculture, which is preponderant in the economy of most of these countries, retains its capitalist structure.

The peculiarity of "buffer-zone" countries consists in this, that the Soviet bureaucracy has succeeded, for the time being, in orienting the capitalist economy in a sense corresponding, in the first instance, to its own interests. This situation can only be *transitional*. It must end either in the bureaucracy's withdrawal from its position, under the pressure of imperialism, or in the real destruction of capitalism, which can take place only as a result of the revolutionary mobilization of the masses, and the elimination of the special forms of exploitation, introduced by the bureaucracy in their countries.

24. In the "buffer" countries the state remains bourgeois:

a) Because the state structure remains bourgeois;

nowhere has the old bureaucratic state machine been destroyed. The Stalinists have merely taken the place of the decisive layers in the bourgeois state apparatus.

b) Because the *function* of the state remains bourgeois. Whereas the workers' state defends the collective ownership of the means of production, arising from a victorious socialist revolution, the state of the "buffer" countries defends property which, despite its diverse and hybrid forms, remains fundamentally bourgeois in character.

The Soviet bureaucracy has been and remains compelled to maintain the bourgeois function and structure of the state not only because its destruction is impossible without a revolutionary mobilization of the masses, but also in order to defend its own particular exploitation of the workers of these countries. Wherever it is forced to undertake a limited mobilization of the masses in potential organs of dual power (e.g., Action Committees in Czechoslovakia), it insists both in action and propaganda that these organs are not intended to replace the state organs but merely to supplement them.

Thus, while maintaining bourgeois function and structure, the state of the "buffer" countries represents at the same time an *extreme form of Bonapartism*. The Stalinist state apparatus has acquired a great degree of independence in relation to the bourgeoisie and proletariat, not alone owing to the balance between and the growing prostration of both these classes; but, above all, owing to its intimate ties with the Soviet state apparatus and the overwhelming weight of the latter in Eastern Europe, amid the existing world relation of forces.

### ***The Revolutionary Strategy in the "Buffer-Zone" Countries***

The political situation in the "buffer-zone" countries, for which the Fourth International must elaborate its revolutionary strategy, is determined by the following three factors:

a) The existence, in different degrees, of a Stalinist police dictatorship in these countries (except Finland).

b) The extraordinary weakening of capitalism at the end of the war, which has everywhere thrown the conservative elements back upon intermediary formations (peasant parties).

c) The demoralization of the proletariat, as a result of the reactionary policy of Stalinism, which has brought about the retreat of the working-class masses from the political arena. This has profoundly upset the social balance of forces, has again inspired the bourgeois layers, who had in 1944 lost confidence in their "historic task," and has reoriented the petty bourgeoisie toward organizations on the extreme right.

It follows that the real balance of forces is completely misrepresented in the field of parliamentarism or of legal parties. The main support of the present government coalitions is the power and influence of the Soviet bureaucracy. Only in Finland, Czechoslovakia and to a certain extent in Hungary, have the collaborationist sections of the bourgeoisie been able to stay in power under more favorable conditions. In the other countries, these

sections—mostly represented by the peasant parties—have been crushed between the hammer of Stalinist terror and the anvil of conservative forces fighting openly to restore the pre-war regimes.

26. The mood of the masses is dominated by two preoccupations which are, to a certain extent, contradictory:

a) The mass of workers and poor peasants are deeply opposed to any return of the pre-war situation. In general, they enthusiastically welcomed the reforms of 1945 and had great illusions about the possibility of rebuilding these countries on "socialist" bases as a result of these reforms. It is precisely the masses' fear that a victory of the anti-Stalinist opposition would mean a return to the former situation, that largely paralyzes their efforts and enhances their passivity. Misery and concentration on purely economic problems are working in the same direction.

b) The growing hostility toward the dictatorial tendencies of the pro-Stalinist governments and toward the reactionary role of the Soviet bureaucracy. The most active resentment has been expressed by the more advanced workers' strata (in Poland, Finland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria) against measures that forbid free expressions of the class struggle in private as well as nationalized industry. The absence of a revolutionary party to support these justified aspirations of the masses within the framework of a revolutionary policy threatens to throw broad layers of workers into demoralization and prostration and impels the most confused "activist" elements toward the conservative camp of the national bourgeoisie.

27. The revolutionary vanguard must formulate a policy which corresponds to these two basic aspirations of the masses.

a) The Bolshevik-Leninist militants must resolutely place themselves at the head of all mass actions in defense of living standards and democratic freedoms. They must be in the forefront of strikes, demonstrations, actions for improving the workers' living and working conditions, protests against any restriction of the freedom of organization, assembly, speech, press, etc. They must pose the necessity of a struggle for the evacuation of these countries by Russian troops, and place this struggle within the framework of the revolutionary program for the whole of Europe, making possible the rebuilding of these countries by means of the free cooperation between free socialist republics.

They must link this struggle with constant efforts calling upon the soldiers of the Russian army to fraternize with the workers of the occupied countries and explaining to them that the free development of the class struggle in these countries is a far more powerful barrier against American imperialism than the Russian military occupation which only arouses hatred against the USSR.

b) The Bolshevik-Leninist militants must at the same time declare themselves the firmest opponents of any return to the old conditions. They must constantly warn the masses against the manifestation and growth of the reactionary forces and clearly point out Stalinist responsibility for this situation. In the case of any reactionary restorationist *coups d'etat*, led by imperialist agents, they must

mobilize the proletariat in order to resort to action and crush the forces which can only establish a bloody fascist dictatorship in the country (as in Greece). In such a case, a proletariat victorious against its own bourgeoisie, through its own revolutionary mobilization, would easily eliminate what remains of the Stalinist apparatus. Only the abstention of the proletariat and the lack of a revolutionary party could strengthen the Stalinist dictatorship after the defeat of the reactionary bourgeois forces.

This position has nothing in common with that of the "third front," since it is a position of active intervention. In the struggle between the workers and poor peasants on the one side, and the Stalinist apparatus on the other, it would actively intervene on the workers' side. In this struggle, the sympathy and support of the bourgeoisie will be completely on the side of the regime. In the event of an armed attack of bourgeois reaction against the present regime, it will mobilize the working class against the bourgeoisie. This will be the surest way of liquidating both capitalism and the Stalinist dictatorship. It defends the historic interests of the masses and strives, here as everywhere else, to transform every partial fight into a struggle for the socialist revolution. This does not in any way contradict our analysis of the USSR. It only applies in practice (a) the fact that the reactionary features of the Russian occupation by far outweigh its progressive features; (b) the subordination of the defense of the remnants of the October conquests to the interests of the world revolution.

28. However, these two combined political tasks cannot enter the field of action before the next stage. At the present time—that of retreat and disorientation of the masses in the "buffer-zone"—the tasks of the vanguard are twofold: to prepare, by propaganda and education, cadres for effective intervention in the coming tide, and to link these cadres more closely with the advanced strata of the proletariat by active intervention in all their struggles. The workers' political life is today concentrated in these countries in the Social Democratic parties. The differentiation, which has taken place there, has up till now been distorted by the absence of a revolutionary tendency. The most active anti-Stalinist working-class elements have thus been canalized by the right-wing Social Democrats, seeking an alliance with the bourgeois "left" and imperialism. It is the duty of the Bolshevik-Leninists in the "buffer-zone" countries to build up, inside the Social Democratic parties, a revolutionary tendency opposed to the capitulators to both the bourgeoisie and to Stalinism. Insofar as this tendency will retain its own physiognomy, as described above, it will become the pole of attraction for all advanced workers disgusted with Stalinism.

The advanced layers of the proletariat are at the present time concerned with the economic problems in the nationalized sector. The fundamental line of the Bolshevik-Leninists in these questions must consist of defending the immediate interests of the masses against the state-boss. But at the same time, it is necessary to advance, if only in a propagandist form, the historic perspectives bound up with a final solution of the problems posed by the present situation, that is, a program of transitional

demands, mobilizing the masses for the proletarian revolution in these countries. The Bolshevik-Leninists will propose the following:

- Abolition of the peace treaties, reparations, etc.
- Seizure of all "Soviet property" by the workers of the occupied countries.
- Workers' control of production.
- Expropriation of the big and middle bourgeoisie.
- Real planning through the centralization of the industries and bank in trusts and in a state Bank.
- Expropriation of foreign capital.
- Election of factory managers by the workers.
- Reduction of their salaries to those of skilled workers.
- Right of the workers to dismiss their managers.

Elaboration of a plan for harmonious economic development between city and country, in the interest of the masses, with the active participation of workers' and poor peasants' committees.

29. The question of the democratization of economic life and the national question arise in the "buffer-zone" countries in a definite social environment which is neither that of the "colonial countries" nor that of a bureaucratized Soviet society. The fact that capitalism still exists in these countries side by side with exploitation by the Stalinist bureaucracy must fundamentally determine our strategy. The capitalist nature of these countries imposes the necessity of the strictest revolutionary defeatism in war time. It also follows therefrom that we do not assign to the reactionary bourgeoisie of these countries any "progressive" mission, nor any possibility of independent action by petty-bourgeois peasant organizations. While unreservedly supporting every concrete step of the masses on the road of their struggle against the police regime, the pillaging, the suppression of workers' liberties, the increased exploitation of the workers, we do not cease for one moment our uncompromising political opposition to all bourgeois or petty-bourgeois organizations, which constitute imperialist agencies and which are far from being an—even confused—"expression of this will to struggle of the masses." They are in fact nothing but instruments to canalize and break up a fresh working-class rising.

Likewise, from the Russian occupation forces or from pro-Stalinist governments, which are completely reactionary, we do not demand the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, the setting up of a real foreign trade monopoly, an effective struggle against speculation and the black market. We call upon the Russian worker-soldiers not to permit themselves to be used as strike-breakers or anti-labor police by the bureaucracy. We count on revolutionary mass action to sweep away all that remains of the power of the capitalists, while at the same time sweeping away the forms and instruments of exploitation and oppression of the Soviet bureaucracy in these countries. This is why, while supporting every forward step by the working masses, who put forward their demands and enter the anti-capitalist road, we constantly warn them against the counter-revolutionary and anti-working-class nature of the policy of the Stalinist organizations, and we unceasingly defend the necessity of building a new revo-

lutionary party. Special stress must be laid on the international character of the socialist revolution.

To the capitalists and petty bourgeois who count on American intervention, and to the Stalinists counting on Russian power, we oppose the independent strategy of defending the masses' interests, whose essential support must lie in the world forces of the socialist revolution. The fundamental aim of our strategy thus remains the establishment of Independent Socialist Republics of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, etc., within the framework of the Socialist United States of Europe. But the tactical application of this strategic line will depend on concrete circumstances.

30. Stalinist policies in Eastern Germany and Austria are the clearest demonstration of the reactionary role of the bureaucracy in the "buffer-zone." This reactionary role is likewise the best indication of the increasing neutralization of the remnants of the conquests of October by the parasitic nature of the bureaucracy. Of all the occupying powers, Stalinist Russia has been the most barbarous toward the German and Austrian populations. The pitiless deportation of industrial equipment and manpower, the pillage, rape and abductions of civilians, the cynical subordination of German and Austrian life to the interests of the bureaucracy, the arbitrary anti-democratic acts which are constantly taking place in Austria as well as the rapid establishment of a virtual dictatorship in the Eastern zone of Germany have opened the eyes of the working masses to the real character of the bureaucracy and caused a rising tide of anti-Sovietism of unequalled proportions which affects not only the Stalinist movement but the very idea of communism. The strictest delimitation of the Fourth International from Stalinism, an energetic and persistent campaign against the Stalinist crimes against the German and Austrian masses, an unequivocal statement of position for the immediate cessation of all dismantling operations, for the retention in Germany and Austria of total current production, for the abolition of all reparations agreements, for the transfer into the hands of the German and Austrian workers of all "Soviet property"—these are the preconditions for the building of a revolutionary party which alone will be able to prevent US imperialism from thoroughly exploiting the mass anti-Stalinist feeling.

### ***The Nature of the Stalinist Parties***

31. The character of the Stalinist parties has been completely changed by the development of the bureaucracy in these parties, following the degeneration of the Comintern, by the suppression of the freedom of different currents within the movement, by the crushing of critical spirit and the elimination of the most educated, conscious and independent elements.

From revolutionary parties, following a more or less mistaken—"centrist"—line, reflecting the zigzags in the orientation of the Russian Bolshevik Party under Stalinist leadership, they have turned into organizations whose only function is to serve the diplomatic maneuvers of the Soviet bureaucracy. The Stalinist leadership is, by virtue of this fact, "counter-revolutionary" in the same sense as

the reformist leadership of the Social Democracy: it wishes to prevent by all means the outbreak or the victorious development of revolutionary mass movements. However, the Stalinist parties, in the same way as the Social Democratic parties, remain workers' parties — profoundly degenerated. This becomes clear the moment one applies the following criteria:

a) The workers belonging to these parties consider them as workers' organizations and join them because they are aware of the necessity for a proletarian class organization.

b) The bourgeoisie considers these parties as parties of the "class enemy" representing the proletariat, although it is aware of their subordination to the Kremlin.

c) The bureaucracy of the Stalinist parties itself is aware that in order to play its role efficaciously, it must rely on and keep the confidence of the working masses.

32. The extraordinary upswing experienced by the Stalinist parties at the end of the war cannot be understood unless one considers this phenomenon within the framework of the developing labor movement. For the great majority of the proletariat and small peasants in most countries of the world, their passing from Social Democracy, petty-bourgeois organizations or political passivity toward the Stalinist parties, was the expression of their first stage of radicalization:

a) The Stalinist parties still appear in their eyes as representatives of a revolutionary tradition.

b) The masses had experienced for two decades the devotion and the courage of the lower ranks of the Stalinist cadres with whom they were in constant contact during all class struggles.

c) The masses had not yet passed through their own experiences with the class treachery of the Stalinist leaders (long government experience).

d) The dominant role played by Stalinist militants in the mass resistance movements—which was above all due to the solid power and dynamism of their apparatus—as well as the victorious resistance of the USSR to imperialist aggression, had created new illusions among the masses concerning the possibilities of a social upheaval under the leadership of the Communist parties.

33. Nevertheless, the outbreak of the German-Russian war constituted for all Stalinist parties in the world a fundamental and definitive political turning point. From that moment, these parties became the most ardent proponents of "class truce" and of the "war effort." Their propaganda lost all outward signs of a class language. The most abject chauvinism constituted the "line." In the colonies (India, etc.), the Communist parties became the most energetic agents of imperialism. In the Eastern European countries, they became completely conservative government organs, whose function consisted both in throttling the impulse to independent proletarian action and in maintaining the bourgeoisie within the framework of its "*modus vivendi*" with the bureaucracy. In the countries of Western Europe and several Latin-American countries, the Communist parties became the main grave-diggers of the rising proletarian revolution and repeated, on a world

scale, the role of super-Noske which they had filled in the Spanish Revolution.

From the point of view of the bourgeoisie, CP participation in the government expressed the clear recognition of the fact that Stalinism had become the most powerful counter-revolutionary factor in the workers' movement. For the Stalinists, this participation reflected the fundamental needs of the Soviet bureaucracy, i.e., (a) to prevent the outbreak of the proletarian revolution; (b) to use the role of "savior of capitalism" in order to force upon the bourgeoisie economic and especially diplomatic concessions advantageous to the Kremlin; (c) to penetrate the bourgeois state apparatus and thus prepare "strategic" positions for its neutralization in the event of an anti-Soviet imperialist war.

This turn is the logical outcome of the political evolution of Stalinism. From that moment, the aim pursued by the Communist parties has consisted more and more exclusively in blackmailing the bourgeoisie so as to obtain its neutral or favorable orientation toward the Kremlin and so as to preserve the Stalinist positions "conquered" in the bourgeois state apparatus. The Stalinist parties have become neo-reformist parties which are distinct from the reformist parties by their connection with the Soviet bureaucracy. Just as the old reformist parties endeavor to reconcile the existence of the labor bureaucracy with that of the national bourgeoisie, so the Stalinist parties attempt to reconcile the existence of the Soviet bureaucracy with that of the world bourgeoisie. Owing to fluctuations in the situation, temporary turns may be carried out to the right or to the left, within the framework of this fundamental orientation. A real return to a pseudo-revolutionary orientation comparable to that of 1939-41 is no longer possible, except in the case of outbreak of the US-Soviet war and the crushing of the mass movement. The Stalinists can take up arms only insofar as such action does not involve the risk of arousing a real workers' uprising. They can once more employ "revolutionary language" only insofar as this language does not actually incur the risk of starting the proletarian revolution.

34. This fundamental transformation of the Stalinist parties, as a factor in the new foreign policy of the Soviet bureaucracy, is also explained by the change in the social composition and the new membership recruitment of the Stalinist parties and finds its expression in an entirely new ideological basis of these parties:

a) Beginning with 1944, the Stalinist parties for the first time penetrated the bourgeois state apparatus; bourgeois ideology also penetrated for the first time organically into their ranks. To the extent that the Stalinist bureaucracy starts having "private" interests to defend in each capitalist country, the reformist character of its policy must inevitably become more pronounced. While the Stalinist apparatus remained almost completely faithful to the Kremlin in 1939-40 because all its interests bound it to the Soviet bureaucracy, at present it is certainly more independent than at that time. In view of the increasingly sharp contradictions between the Stalinist bureaucracy and American imperialism, a more direct control by the Kremlin over the leadership of the various "national" Stalinist

parties has become necessary. Nevertheless, one should not expect large cracks in the apparatus in the eventuality of war, because all the leading strata of the Communist parties are entirely aware that only their link with the USSR allows them to play a political role "independent" of other reformist currents inside the labor movement.

b) Starting in 1941, and up till 1945, the Communist parties recruited a great many petty-bourgeois, intellectual, peasant elements. They endeavored — as soon as they had the majority of the working class behind them—to concentrate their recruiting efforts on these layers (course toward well-to-do peasants in the "buffer-zone," "defense of property against the trusts" in France, and so on). Inevitably, a change in the relation of forces producing a turn of the petty bourgeoisie back to the right will weaken the Communist parties in their petty-bourgeois wing and will bring about the typically reformist tendency to "win back" these lost strata by placing stress on rightist propaganda (chauvinism, defense of national sovereignty, defense of the middle classes, etc.).

c) The sum total of these transformations in the composition and policy of the Communist parties finds expression in their new ideological basis. They now start out from the conception that the class struggle has been transferred to the field of struggle between the world powers, or essentially between the USSR and the "new democracies" on the one side, and the Anglo-American bloc, on the other. It suffices for a country to come into the Soviet sphere of influence for it to begin marching on a progressive, peaceful road to socialism. The proletarian revolution is, therefore, "outmoded" as the best way of destroying capitalism. In the countries belonging to the zone under American influence, the proletarian revolution is, furthermore, "impracticable" in view of the international relation of forces. The Communist parties there must endeavor to strengthen the independence movements of these countries against American imperialism, a movement which must embrace all classes and must, logically, end in their neutralization and then in their inclusion in the Soviet sphere of influence. This new reformist ideology of Stalinism is the most self-evident and cynical confession of the abandonment of the revolutionary class struggle by these parties and of their complete submission to the aims of the Kremlin's foreign politics.

### ***The Struggle Against Stalinism***

35. Leon Trotsky correctly described Hitler and Stalin as "twin stars." The main power of Stalinism and the essential chance of survival of world imperialism lie precisely in their interaction, their mutual relations in the consciousness of the masses. To the extent that US imperialism shows increased hostility toward the Soviet bureaucracy and the national bourgeoisies intensify their campaign against the respective "national" Stalinist parties, the masses will inevitably tend to consider the Soviet bureaucracy and the Stalinist parties as anti-imperialist and revolutionary forces; and the masses will continue to give them more or less passive support, even in cases where they

have already had their first experience with the treacherous class collaborationist policy of the Stalinist leaders.

On the other hand, to the extent that the masses — wherever Stalinism is in power — will tend to consider the imperialist "democratic" camp as the only real alternative to the hated Stalinist dictatorship, they will flow back to the "democratic" and Social-Democratic organizations in the service of imperialism and will provide them with a new mass base in countries where they had been completely deprived of popular support, by the end of the war.

But Hitler and Stalin were "twin stars" only because the historic epoch of their appearance was an epoch of retreat and stagnation of the working-class movement. The period of upswing we are now experiencing possesses, by its own logic of development, the mechanism for the abolition of the vicious circle wherein humanity runs the risk of losing all chances for survival. In the course of their struggles, their amplification and generalization, the masses will at the same time gain the necessary experience and revolutionary dynamism to free themselves from Stalinist influence, while clarifying their anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist orientation. Our whole perspective is based on this consideration: *that the class struggle will finally triumph over Stalinism.*

But already today it is clear that the subjective factor, the existence of a revolutionary party anchored in the masses and taken seriously by them, plays a decisive rôle in this process of emancipation of the working-class movement from putrefying Stalinism, the necessary condition for the revolutionary emancipation of the proletariat from decadent capitalism.

36. Recent examples, in the colonial countries as well as in France, have clearly shown the possibility of a limited break-through of the Stalinist apparatus by the struggling workers at the present stage. However, this process is still necessarily limited by the following factors:

a) The Stalinist parties have not yet been sufficiently "used up" by their participation in the government.

b) They have a larger field for maneuvers as a result of the increased hostility of the bourgeoisie toward them.

c) They have managed to "rejuvenate" reformism by combining it with a series of slogans of the post-revolutionary period in Russia.

d) There is, as yet, no revolutionary party considered by the masses as sufficiently capable in action to represent a real alternative to the Communist party.

e) The advanced layers of the proletariat have felt Stalinist betrayal only in the economic field (wage freeze, "production first," strikebreaking, etc.).

Under these conditions, a large-scale movement breaking away from the Stalinist organizations will be a long and painful process which is essentially simultaneous with that of building the revolutionary party. By constant, intelligent and patient intervention in all workers' struggles, in all mass movements of protest and revolt, the revolutionary militants must gradually gain the confidence of the most advanced workers' strata in order to constitute a real new leadership for the next revolutionary wave. They will only be able to play this rôle to the extent that they appear

under their true colors, which the masses will in no way be able to confuse with "left Stalinism."

37. Outside the "buffer-zone" countries, the struggle against Stalinism will thus, in the main, have to go through the following stages:

a) Against Stalinism as an ideological current poisoning the working class, we must wage an unceasing struggle, tearing down all the illusions of the masses about the "non-capitalist" nature of the "buffer-zone" countries. At the same time, patient reiteration, educational and non-dogmatic, understandable to the masses, of the essentials of Marxism (class struggle, class character of the state, necessity for the proletarian revolution, principles of workers' democracy, internationalism, etc.) is one of the most essential means of combatting Stalinism.

b) Against Stalinism as the predominant organization of the working class — the gradual penetration of the revolutionary party into all the mass organizations and, above all, into the factories and the trade unions. The struggle against Stalinism is essentially a struggle to wrest from the Stalinists their predominant influence over the working masses.

c) Against Stalinism as a political party claiming to represent the working class — *constant exposure*, not dogmatic, but educational and understandable to the masses, of the anti-working class policy of the Stalinist leaders; *revolutionary propaganda* enabling the masses to go through their own experience with the treacherous character of the Stalinist leadership; *untiring agitation* for proletarian unity of action for all class objectives; *propaganda for a united front* under appropriate conditions and given a certain relationship of forces.

d) Against the GPU, the Stalinist murder machine, the Fourth International wages unceasing warfare by all the means at their disposal. The Stalinists have taken advantage of every social upheaval to kill off numerous Trotskyist and other anti-Stalinist militants in order to eliminate physically all cadres who could give revolutionary leadership to the working class (Spain, Greece, Viet Nam). The whole criminal record of the GPU must be constantly exposed. The greatest alertness must be shown to all new GPU crimes in preparation. The broadest sections of public opinion must be mobilized against them. The fullest and most careful measures of self-defense must be undertaken. Against the calculated cold-blooded murder methods of the GPU, the Fourth International must utilize every means at its command.

38. Historically, the fate of the world proletariat depends on its capacity to throw off in time Stalinist leadership and to prevent the crushing of the working class together with the Soviet bureaucracy by imperialism. The consciousness of this inevitable historic necessity is embodied in the Fourth International. Its analysis is based on the understanding of the parallel decomposition of the capitalist world and of Soviet Russia in the absence of a victorious socialist revolution.

Its course, which is toward world revolution, cannot, at the present stage of development of the mass strug-

gles, contain any trace of favoring either Anglo-American imperialism or the Soviet bureaucracy. On both sides of the "iron curtain," our political line, determined by the immediate and historic interests of the oppressed masses, is that of their proletarian class struggle. This is why, essentially, the struggle between the Greek partisans and the Sophoulis-Tsaldaris government does not constitute, in our eyes, a struggle between the "two blocs" but a battle between workers and bourgeois. This is why in the "buffer-zone" we are on the side of the working masses — against the Stalinist regimes and against possible reactionary conspiracies of the imperialists. Everywhere, we take as our starting point the predominance of the class struggle as the decisive factor in the political development.

### ***The Historical Significance of This Discussion***

39. The exceptional importance which the Russian discussion has assumed, first in the Trotskyist movement, and now in the whole world, both in working-class and bourgeois public opinion, is due to the absolutely unforeseen development of Russian society since the October Revolution, and to the first-rate position Russia occupies in world relations today. The importance of the "Russian Question" in ideological discussions is only a reflection of the historic importance of the October Revolution and of the political weight of the Stalinist dictatorship in world affairs.

However, inside the revolutionary workers' movement, the historic significance of the Russian question goes far beyond an explanation of the Russian and Stalinist phenomena themselves. As was the case from the start of the Left Opposition's fight against the theory of "socialism in one country," what is at stake in this discussion is nothing less than the maintenance of Marxism against revisionist and disintegrating tendencies appearing in the labor movement, under the pressure of bourgeois or petty-bourgeois ideology.

40. Nineteenth Century revisionism was deeply impregnated with petty-bourgeois optimism, a reflection of the relatively "peaceful" development of capitalism. As long as "the movement" seemed able to constantly win new positions for the proletariat — and above all, new benefits for the labor bureaucracy — the illusion that "the movement is everything, the final goal nothing" could find a wide response among the most satisfied layers of the labor bureaucracy and the radical petty-bourgeoisie.

Present-day revisionism is deeply impregnated with petty-bourgeois pessimism which reflects the catastrophic developments of the past three decades, the unceasing defeats of the workers, the monstrous degeneration of the Soviet Union and the development of barbaric tendencies in the contemporary world. As long as a decisive revolutionary victory has not taken place in an advanced country — and the petty-bourgeoisie is only attracted by the power of real ideas insofar as they are coupled with the idea of real power — the illusion that the degeneration of the USSR is not due to relative factors of the world situation and that the retardation of the labor movement

is a "final historic phenomenon" will necessarily be largely echoed among the most discouraged and disappointed layers of the radical petty-bourgeoisie and the older generations of workers.

It is not by accident that present-day revisionism has most frequently crystallized around the discussion of the "Russian Question." Revolutionary Marxism gathers enormous strength from the practical example of the victory of October, the first decisive demonstration of the possibility for the proletariat to conquer power under the leadership of a resolute revolutionary party. Similarly, those who question this possibility are able to counterpose to the October experience the fact of the degeneration of the workers' state and of the Communist International.

41. Present-day revisionism which has found parallel expression at the two extreme poles of the revolutionary Marxist movement is, on the whole, characterized by the following conceptions:

a) The degeneration of the workers' state is not the product of conditional factors (isolation of the revolution, backwardness of the country, interaction between the bureaucratization in Russia and the bureaucratization of the Communist International, etc.), but is inherent either in the nature of Bolshevism (the revolutionary party) or in the proletariat itself, or in a combination of both.

b) The bureaucratic dictatorship in Russia does not constitute a historic "accident" which will merely prove to be a passing stage on humanity's road to socialism. On the contrary, it is a necessary phase in the historic development of mankind (or its fall into barbarism).

c) The retreat of the working class movement in the interval from 1923 to 1939 is not due to the problem of revolutionary leadership, that is, the still inadequate development of the revolutionary vanguard at this stage, determined by a whole number of historic factors; but reflects either the incapacity of the proletariat to fulfill its historic mission, or its incapacity to select a revolutionary leadership, or a combination of the two.

42. The most finished "anti-Stalinist" expression of this revisionism has been worked out — under the pressure of imperialism in the United States! — by Burnham in his *Managerial Revolution*, and by Dwight Macdonald. Applying the above-cited conceptions, they arrived at the following conclusions:

a) The Soviet bureaucracy is a new class whose domination will mark a necessary stage in the historic development toward which the whole capitalist world is heading (similarity of state enterprises in the USSR, Germany, Japan, USA, etc.).

b) Marxism, which proved incapable of foreseeing this new development and which is based entirely on the revolutionary potential of the proletariat, has turned out to be utopian and bankrupt. A "new" maximum program of social perfection must be drawn up. Up till now these "new programs" (in Macdonald's case quite openly) have amounted to a retreat to pre-Marxist socialist conceptions.

The most finished "pro-Stalinist" expression of this revisionism — under the pressure of Stalinism in France!

— has been supplied by Bettelheim, Martinet and Co. in the *Revue Internationale*. By likewise applying the above-listed ideas, they come to 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.

The parallelism of these two revisionist tendencies strikes the eye. There is no room for them 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. Secondly, one must carefully distinguish between a revisionist position on the Russian question, which endeavors to remain within the framework of the Marxist conception of our epoch, and one which carries with it the danger of branching out more and more into a complete revision of Marxism.

### "State Capitalism"

43. The adherents of the theory of the existence of "state capitalism" try on the whole to maintain their views within the framework of the general Marxist conception of our epoch. They maintain in its entirety the Leninist strategy of the proletarian revolution. They doubt neither the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat nor the possibility of building a revolutionary party by relying, first and foremost, on the class struggle and the experience of the workers' struggles. Their revisionism appears when, by characterizing the USSR as a capitalist country, they must logically consider the present Soviet society as a sort of "future picture" of capitalist society in general, and must, as much as Burnham, point out the "statification" tendencies inside and outside Russia. This is based on superficial and formal analogies, which completely distort the understanding of the profound tendencies of contemporary capitalism and of the fundamental overturn constituted by the October Revolution.

44. These analogies are, in the main, the following:

a) The analogy between the nationalization of the means of production in the USSR and the tendency toward

the stratification of the means of production in the capitalist world.

This is the most obvious example of the formal character of all these analogies. As a matter of fact, in Russia it was a question of expropriating and destroying the bourgeoisie as a class through the revolutionary action of the proletariat and the workers' state. In capitalist countries what we have is the nationalization — with compensation — of certain unprofitable sectors of bourgeois economy for the benefit of the big monopolies. The "fusion between the state and economy" in Russia meant the destruction of the bourgeoisie as a class. The fusion between the state and economy in the capitalist countries — particularly Germany and the USA — meant the destruction of the independence of certain capitalist sectors and their complete subjection to monopoly capital. The fundamental difference between these two processes lies in this, that only the proletarian revolution shows the "striving to expropriate the monopolists," whereas the capitalist countries not only do not show this "striving" but on the contrary, show a tendency to strengthen and enrich the monopolists who subject the whole social life to their direct control.

b) The analogy between the tendency toward the fragmentation of the world market, inherent in decaying capitalist economy, and the monopoly of foreign trade established by the October Revolution.

In reality, the protectionist and "autarchic" tendencies, which are elements of war economy and palliative measures against crises resorted to by the decadent bourgeoisie, do not save these countries from exploitation by foreign capital, but rather increase the latter's profits to the degree that these countries attempt to become "self-sufficient." At their highest level of "autarchy," capitalist Germany and Japan returned the highest profits to American capital. In the case of the USSR, there has been a drastic elimination of the country's exploitation by foreign capital. The pressure of the world market continues, but only indirectly.

c) The analogy between "planning" tendencies inherent in monopoly capital and the Soviet planning. The national "planning" of monopoly capital, Trotsky said, consists in "artificially restricting production in certain sectors and building up, just as artificially, other sectors at colossal expenditures." It results in "an unstable regularization, bought at the price of a lowering of national economy taken as a whole, an increase in the world chaos, and a complete shattering of the financial system, absolutely indispensable for socialist planning." Soviet planning, on the contrary, while far from being harmonious, has nevertheless succeeded in realizing enormous and real economic progress, developing the productive forces in all sectors, raising — at least until the inception of the Third Five-Year Plan — the living standards and wants of tens of millions of ordinary men and women.

There is a qualitative difference between these two tendencies. The one maintains profits as the regulator of economy and subordinates "plans" together with the whole of economic life not to the interests of an abstract "capitalism" but to the interests, quite tangible, concrete and definite, of the monopolists. Soviet planning, on the con-

trary, derives its profound impetus from the fact that private appropriation of surplus value has been radically suppressed, and that consciousness is beginning to replace profit — although in a distorted form — as the decisive element in the regulation of economic development.

d) The analogy between "production for production's sake" in the capitalist system and the development of productive forces in the USSR (in the first place, the growth of the sector of the means of production); the analogy between the operation of the law of value in the capitalist countries and in the USSR, and so on.

What is really involved here is a question of starting from unproved premises. Proceeding from the assumption that Russia is a capitalist country, the proponents of this theory interpret the development of Soviet productive forces in terms of the capitalist form of the law of value. But a stupendous development of the productive forces, especially of heavy industry, characterizes not only capitalism but also the transitional society after the conquest of power by the proletariat. The "law of value" applies not alone to capitalist society but to all pre- and post-capitalist societies where the production of commodities continues to exist. In Russia, the "law of value" is certainly valid, and has not ceased operating since 1917, but it no longer applies in the same way as in capitalist society. Prices are not dependent upon the average rate of profit. Money does not possess the quality of transforming itself into capital.

This whole theory is based on a total absence of any attempt to analyze the specific forms of transitional economy such as will exist in every workers' state until the complete disappearance of classes and the final advent of Communism.

45. The reproach leveled against us by the adherents of the "state capitalism" theory, that we are "Economists" or that we base our analysis on a "fetishism of nationalized property" is absurd. In reality, our analysis starts from the fundamental difference between bourgeois nationalizations (England, France, the "buffer-zone" countries) and all of the upheavals that have taken place in Russia as a result of the proletarian revolution, culminating in the expropriation and destruction of the bourgeoisie as a class and the transfer of the means of production into collective ownership.

It is up to the adherents of the theory of "state capitalism" to explain how the bureaucracy constitutes a "state capitalist" class, while at the same time preserving property relations that resulted from the destruction of capitalism and while itself destroying the new rural bourgeoisie in the USSR. It is up to them to explain how the annihilation of the conquests of October has been possible without a change in property relations and without a new social overturn. It is up to them to explain how they can reconcile the "capitalist" nature of the USSR with the total overturn in production and property relations which German imperialism was obliged to institute in the occupied areas of the USSR, as well as those changes which the Soviet bureaucracy found itself obliged to institute in the reoccupied areas and the provinces annexed to the USSR. On all these

points, this theory clearly shows its incapacity to interpret the reality of Soviet life in a Marxist manner.

46. However, the most obvious internal contradiction of this theory appears in its conception of the Stalinist parties. Here it attempts to reconcile the needs of revolutionary strategy — which necessitate the conception of Stalinist parties as degenerated workers' parties — with the conclusions of this theory, according to which the Stalinist parties must be considered as agents of a capitalist-fascist power. The absurd results achieved by this reconciliation — which involves a *transformation* of Stalinist parties from workers' parties into bourgeois parties the moment they conquer power — together with the impossibility of explaining the self-evident phenomenon that the influx of the radicalized masses into the parties which are agents of a "capitalist" power is a sign of the revolutionary tide — this itself is the most striking refutation of this theory.

### **"Bureaucratic Collectivism"**

47. The adherents of the theory of "bureaucratic collectivism" have an advantage over those who consider the USSR as "state capitalist" to the extent that they clearly understand the non-capitalist nature of the USSR and are capable of understanding the changes in production and property relations brought about by the capitalist invasion of the USSR and those effected after their withdrawal. But, on the other hand, their revision of Marxism does not stop with the Russian question itself.

Not only are they obliged completely to revise the Marxist conception of the development of capitalist society, but they also question a series of the fundamental concepts of historical materialism. This is, of course, their full right. One must only ask them to be more consistent. As Trotsky has already stated and as only the thorough-going revisionists (Macdonald, Burnham and Co.) have clearly expressed, the logical outcome of the theory of bureaucratic collectivism is the conception that the proletariat is incapable of fulfilling its historic mission and the rejection of Marxism as utopian.

48. The term "class" is not an accidental notion in Marxist sociology. It is the basic concept in the application or negation of the whole Marxist conception of history. For this reason, it has well defined and distinct limits. The application of these delimitations to the bureaucracy leads to the absurd conclusion that the bureaucracy is a "class" which possesses none of the characteristic traits of other classes in history.

a) Every class in history is characterized by an independent and fundamental role in the process of production — at a definite stage in the historic process — and by its own roots in the economic structure of society.

b) Every class in history represents a definite stage of historic progress, including the classes that arise in periods of historic recession whose task is to safeguard the technical conquests, etc. Each represents a definite stage in the social division of labor, a definite stage in the evolution of the ownership of the means of production.

c) Every class in history is a historically necessary organ fulfilling a necessary function from the standpoint of the development of the productive forces.

d) Every class in history, advancing its candidacy to power—and all the more so, every ruling class!—is conscious of its role, possesses its own specific ideology and features; and attains a minimum of stability in its composition, a stability which it endeavors to transmit to the succeeding generations.

e) Explicitly according to Marx, no social formation can become a class solely on the basis of its higher income, its political privileges or its monopolies (of education and so on).

It is evident that the Soviet bureaucracy only possesses features which, from a Marxist standpoint, do not make of it a class. It is in no way "a historically necessary organ" but a malignant growth upon the proletariat. It has no roots whatsoever in the process of production, but owes its position exclusively to privileges in distribution. It does not represent any historic "progress" but corrodes and undermines the progress made possible by production relations inherited from the October Revolution. It does not represent any phase in the evolution of property but maintains the property relations established by the proletarian revolution. In no way does it have its own ideology or composition. The best indication that Russia is not a new class society but a society corrupted by the appearance of a parasitic growth is this fact: Contrary to what happens in every exploiting society, the solidity of Russian economy stands not in direct but inverse proportion to the privileges of the bureaucracy.

49. Any conscientious and consistent application of class characteristics to the bureaucracy can result only in a justification of its historic role and in a historic condemnation of the proletariat. If the bureaucracy is really a class, it follows that the bureaucratic stage of society's development is a historic necessity and that the proletariat is not yet capable of ruling the world. This was Burnham's conclusion which the adherents of the theory of "bureaucratic collectivism" in the revolutionary movement have not dared to draw.

They have tried to escape this fundamental contradiction of their position by emphasizing the "unique" character of the bureaucracy, born of exceptional Russian conditions. For the same reason they have put forward the anti-Marxist theory that in an epoch of "collective" ownership—as if such an epoch exists outside the epoch of the proletarian revolution!—class domination no longer alters property relations, but alters only the domination of the state. However, the expansion of the bureaucracy beyond the Soviet frontiers has impelled these theoreticians toward a new revisionist extension of their theory. The Communist parties throughout the world are now considered as "nuclei" of a new class. With this definition the whole Marxist definition of class is invalidated.

For it is evident that the Communist parties and their members do not play any independent role in the process of production and would become a "class" solely on the strength of political privileges. And it is evident that they can obtain these privileges only to the extent that the

proletariat proves incapable of overthrowing decaying capitalism. A new stage would open up in the history of mankind, that of bureaucratic collectivism on a continental (or even world) scale, more or less identified with barbarism.

The proponents of this theory have never tried to analyze the laws of the development of this new society and to show through what operation of social contradictions it would ever cease existing. By insisting on the "decay" of the proletariat and its reduction to the "slave" status, they can only underline the conclusion, flowing from this theory, that the proletariat is incapable of fulfilling its historic mission. Its proponents, if they were consistent, would have to abandon the program of the socialist revolution—at least in those countries where bureaucratic collectivism has, according to them, been victorious; and replace it with a "new minimum program" for the defense of the slaves' interests. By its implications, this theory would liquidate the Fourth International in these countries; and its logical application would completely paralyze the activities in capitalist countries in face of the problem of the Stalinist parties.

50. Every exploited class which takes over power in a society where the development of the productive forces does not yet guarantee the satisfaction of all social needs, must necessarily pave the way to a class exploitation. For the building of a classless society a high level of social wealth is required. The Russian experience only confirms the second aspect of this Marxist law. For, while Russia's level of development of the productive forces does not allow a gradual progress toward a classless society, world economy as a whole is over-ripe for the building of socialism. Just as Stalin did not understand the interdependence between the development of the capitalist world and Russian development, so this interdependence is ignored by all those who believe they discern new social forces in Russia, by abstracting the latter from the decisive active forces on the world arena, which have far from spoken their last word. We start from the assertion that the proletariat has preserved intact its revolutionary potential; we do not think that the historic phase of the October Revolution is already dead and buried, or that Russia is a demonstration—either as an isolated or a world symptom—of the proletariat's incapacity to hold power, as well as a demonstration of the instability of the production relations established by the proletarian revolution. The theory of "socialism in one country" combines the myopia of successful, satisfied bureaucrats with their profound distrust of the revolutionary potential of the world proletariat. The practice of Soviet expansionism, which appears to deny the "theoretical" postulates of this theory, is in reality its inescapable logical conclusion. The theories which picture the USSR as a new class society are bound to place at least a question mark over the relative capacity of the proletariat to defend socially the productive relations resulting from its victorious revolution; they consider possible the triumph of the counter-revolution without an open and prolonged civil war. Our theory of the permanent revolution affirms at one and the same time that the proletariat is unable to build socialism in one country,

while the bourgeoisie is unable to overthrow the workers' state without a violent revolution. Our theory embraces in these terms the entire dynamics of the world class struggle; and far from treating the Russian question as "unique" and beyond the Marxist study of decaying capitalism, it places this question within the framework of the decisive problems of our epoch.

This is why our analysis of the USSR maintains the whole Marxist heritage, with its interpretation of history as the history of class struggles, with its scientifically precise definition of the concept of class, with its analysis of the capitalist world as leading inevitably to the sharpening of class contradictions and to the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat, with its program of the socialist revolution, based on a historical process which makes this revolution possible and necessary for the further progress of mankind.

The building of the Fourth International is today the essential condition for the extension and victorious realization of the workers' revolutionary struggles on a world scale. A victorious solution of this task will in effect "answer" the Russian question through the triumph of the fourth Russian Revolution. History will show that a correct analysis of the phenomenon of Stalinism is one of the premises for the achievement of our historic mission.

