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RESOLUTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE WORLD SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

I. Introduction

The crisis of humanity is the crisis of the proletarian leadership. Such was the opening sentence and the theme of the thesis which established the political position of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International. Today capitalism faces the masses with accomplishing the greatest historical tasks in order to satisfy their simplest demands.

The conflict between the development of the productive forces and the social relations now threatens the destruction of civilization itself. "Modern socialism is nothing but the reflex in thought of this actual conflict, its ideal reflection in the minds first of the class which is directly suffering under it, the working class." (Engels) In London, Paris and Rome, the cry rises from the masses for an end to the barbarism, and the exploitation of the monopolists of capital; in Java, Korea, the Philippines, India, China and Africa, the vanguard of the colonial masses link their desire for national freedom with the destruction of capitalist imperialism as an economic system. In such a world situation, the Fourth International as the only revolutionary Marxist organization in the world faces the decisive period of its existence.

I.

1. The War and the Decline of the Bourgeoisie  
Class Relations in 1939

In 1939 the bourgeoisie as a whole had reached a stage of degeneration where its representatives were rotting on their feet. Conversely, the proletariat had a deep, organic, insurmountable urge to tear itself free from the bloody capitalist chaos. The European proletariat had lost its democratic and pacifist illusions and had repeatedly taken the road of revolution. Even in the United States it had shown its instinctive striving to raise itself to the level of the tasks imposed upon it by history. But the leaders of the Second and Third Internationals, and the trade union bureaucrats in the U.S. tied to the existing forces of class rule, stifled and betrayed and crushed the revolutionary attempts and revolutionary pressure of the masses. Such was the analysis and such indeed the very phrases of the Fourth International as expressed in the person of its founder, Trotsky. The history of the proletariat is not a history of revisionism, but of repeated attempts to break away from it.

Production and World War II

Never before did bourgeois production accomplish such marvels as during the war, but it was precisely the incapacity to use these miracles except for capitalistic purposes that has accomplished its ruin. The war of 1914-1918 had used the technological developments

of the 19th century to transport great masses of men to the battlefield. By 1939 Nazism used the great developments of the 20th century, the Diesel engine and the radio, to transfer the mobility of men and fire-power to the battlefield itself. The air above and all enemy territory became one vast battlefield. Not to construct, but merely to keep 5,000 first line planes in action required in all a personnel of a million and a half men. The transformation of all the instruments of labor into instruments only usable in common, the economizing of all means of labor into combined socialized labor reached heights which carried to the last stages of antagonism the class contradictions hidden under the fiction of national unity. Not only the social and political relations but the development of the productive forces for total war showed that the length of the war could not be calculated in terms of the military power of the opposing imperialists but only in terms of its effects upon society itself. The defeat of France and the air assault on Britain showed how impossible it was for the war to continue for ten or fifteen years. To this basic consideration had to be added the social impossibility of Hitler's subjugating the advanced populations of Europe to his will.

The Defeat of Imperialisms

With nations thus economically and socially organized, military defeat was synonymous with social ruin. That is the history of the war. The volume of the German blow against Poland destroyed not only the Polish state but the Polish bourgeoisie. A similar stroke against France broke the French state and reduced the French bourgeoisie to beggary. The American victory over southern Italy shattered the Italian state and the Italian bourgeoisie. The combined strokes of Russian and Anglo-American imperialism destroyed not only the military apparatus of the German state but the German bourgeoisie. The atomic bomb merely dramatized the crowning blow which destroyed the Japanese state, and reduced to ruin the Japanese bourgeoisie.

Not a single existing European government could have been restored without the military, economic and diplomatic assistance of the Anglo-American-Russian imperialisms. The ruling classes of Europe in particular are incapable of the most elementary duty of any ruling class - that of feeding, clothing and housing the people. France, for example, is reduced to sending a former Prime Minister abroad to beg for food. Such reorganization of Europe as the victorious imperialisms undertake is carried out without even the formality of representation by a single one of the European powers. The European structure as a whole is shattered from top to bottom and from end to end. The economic structure of Western Europe is a collection of military zones which ration calories and starvation.

In Japan, Korea, Indo-China, the East Indies, Malaya, Singapore, Burma, and the Philippines wherever war passed, the former ruling classes are in a more or less similar position. Either directly or indirectly Anglo-American or Russian imperialism hold together the old social order by arms and supplies and the corruption of the revolution by Stalinism.

### The Victorious Imperialisms

The victorious powers are dominated by and do not dominate the common catastrophe. British imperialism, without American aid, would be unable to prevent itself sinking into a third class power. Little news emerges from totalitarian Russia, but the strain and the devastation of war are not overcome either by propaganda or by the looting of defeated countries. If, alone among the imperialist nations, the United States has developed a tremendous economic power, it has thereby developed to an unprecedented degree, its own internal contradictions. Before it can exploit, it faces the impossible task of restoring some elements of order to half the world. It is in irreconcilable conflict with a Russia strategically placed in Europe and Asia and aided by the far-flung Comintern.

If the Fourth International, despite its small numbers, entered into the war with its banners flying, today it faces its task not with any subjective optimism, but with an unshakable confidence in its own destiny, born of the cruelty, the barbarism, and the helplessness of the bourgeoisie, victim of its own contending passions.

### 2. The War and the Rise of the Proletariat

If the war carried to an extreme the ruin and confusion of the bourgeoisie, it unloosed also a tremendous revolutionary upsurge among the masses. Far from being hurled back to some indefinite period in its past, the proletariat has displayed in the last few years its tremendous reservoirs of class energy in the speedy organization of the resistance movements and immediately after the defeat of Hitler, of its trade unions and political parties. While Fascism at the height of its success smashed the workers' organizations, <sup>and demoralized the masses</sup> the perspective and actuality of Fascism in defeat heightened the consciousness and activity of the working class. In few instances has the instinctive power of the proletariat been so displayed as in the organization of the movement in Poland and Northern Italy even under the German occupation. It was the very attempt of bourgeois society to thrust the workers back into conditions of degradation and barbarism which provided the powerful impetus to its bold and courageous revolutionary actions when the chains of Fascism were loosened.

The attack of Hitlerism against Russia was the signal for a revival of the proletariat and its revolutionary struggle against the hated capitalist society. This took the form of resistance movements, by which the proletariat drew after it the peasants and the urban petty-bourgeoisie. With the landing of the American troops in North Africa and the rescinding defeat of the Nazi armies in front of Stalingrad, the masses realized that the defeat of Fascism was at hand.

The Italian proletariat, suppressed for over twenty years, reasserted itself in the crisis which produced the fall of Mussolini. The workers themselves helped to drive out the Germans in the larger cities, and were only prevented from seizing them by the

counter-revolutionary Anglo-American armies and their Stalinist tools. The Warsaw proletariat, with a program for the revolutionary socialist reconstruction of Polish society, armed itself against its own bourgeoisie and against both Stalinism and Anglo-Russian imperialism. For that very reason it was betrayed to the German army by Russia with the approval of the British government. In France the forces of the resistance movements seized the power on a program which promised nationalization of the means of production, punishment of collaborators (two-thirds of the French bourgeoisie) and a purge and reorganization of the bureaucratic apparatus of government, including the army. This to the armed masses meant socialism. No lesser program could have retained the leadership of the movement. At the moment of the defeat of Germany, the de Gaulle regime was saved from destruction by the armed masses, only by the direct intervention of the Stalinists. In Belgium, and to a lesser degree Holland, violent clashes resulted in the paralysis of government, and once more only the combined efforts of the British armies and the Stalinists saved open civil war.

The greatest achievement of the European proletariat occurred in Northern Italy. As soon as the German armies began to crash, workers' committees and partisan bands seized the factories and saved the territory from Nazi vandalism. They carried out a drastic purge of fascists and although, through lack of leadership, they were compelled to yield to the power of the Anglo-American armies, they held the factories for months and ran them through joint committees of workers and technicians. Their real desires were exemplified by the slogan for a Workers Republic raised by thousands of the revolutionaries in the last critical days.

These are the facts, irrefutable, and not for one moment to be challenged. ~~Yet actual proletarian power was nowhere won even for a period.~~ The fundamental cause of this must be established not only for historical reasons but as an indispensable guide for the present perspectives.

The Third International in its summation of the revolutionary events after World War I placed the responsibility for the failure to establish the soviet power in Europe upon the counter-revolutionary Second International which had the confidence of the masses. Today the Fourth International can sum up the events which followed World War II as follows: Far more than in 1918-1920 the failure to achieve Soviet power over large areas in Europe is due to the fact that in their readiness to overthrow bourgeois society the masses placed their confidence in what they considered to be a revolutionary party, which betrayed them and for the time being saved the bourgeois regime which otherwise would have been and still would be helpless.

### 3. The German Proletariat

As the war developed and the collapse of Hitler became a certainty, the perspectives and policy for Germany, and therefore for national liberation in Europe, assumed two clear conflicting lines. Either the counter-revolutionary perspective that the final blow against crumbling Germany would be delivered by the imperialist

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armies or the revolutionary Marxist perspective that the final blow would be delivered by the revolutionary proletariat of Germany. Particularly in France, Poland and Italy, many revolutionary elements, not only Fourth Internationalists, realized that Germany was the key to the European situation. They strove desperately to encourage the German revolution and restore the solidarity of a proletarian Europe against the rival imperialisms. Conversely, the Stalinists, both in Moscow and in the world as a whole, unloosed an agitation aimed at "preventing a repetition of 1918." Caught in the tremendous grip of the German totalitarian machine with armies advancing on four sides, the German proletariat unlike the Italian, proved unable to strike down the crumbling NAZI regime before the entry of the victorious armies. This is the great defeat which prevented the rest of the proletariat in Europe from administering still more complete blows to the European bourgeoisie.

Particularly in Eastern Europe, the failure of the revolution in Germany and the defeat of the revolutionary elements in Warsaw left the revolutionary activity of the masses at the mercy of the invading Russian armies and its Stalinist tools.

#### The Proletariat and the Peasantry Outside of Europe

In the Far East, the Middle East and the Near East the colonial masses showed their hatred of the existing social order. In the Levant, in Egypt, in Burma, in Java, in Indo-China, in the Philippines, in India and in China, they organized for revolutionary action and in various areas came out boldly for the destruction of the power of the landlords and the capitalists.

In the United States the certainty of victory which gripped the whole world as a result of the German defeat at Stalingrad, unloosed a movement among the masses which seriously disturbed the Roosevelt government. The strikes of the miners, and the readiness to follow them of the steel and rubber workers, faced the administration with the possibility of a general strike. But the labor lieutenants of capital were able to push the rebellious workers back into the factories. The war was no sooner over than the American proletariat challenged the bourgeoisie as never before in its history. The Japanese proletariat and peasantry almost at a stroke, emerged from the domination of decades with trade unions and working class parties, occupying factories and organizing peasant councils. Today, without any experience of class politics comparable to that of the European proletariat, the Japanese proletariat has clearly expressed its instinctive desire to reorganize society on communist beginnings by posing sharply, both in words and in actions the question of workers control of production. This has confounded the Japanese bourgeoisie which has to depend on American bayonets for support. Despite all appearances to the contrary, the actions of American imperialism have not encouraged but rather in reality have restrained and limited the movements of the Japanese working class.

In the breakdown of the social order and the urge of the masses to tear themselves from it are the prerequisites of profoundly revolutionary situations in large parts of Europe and Asia. The solution of the crisis is the solution of the question of leader-

ship.

II. The Statification of Production

The future perspectives of humanity are governed by the developing stage of economic and social relations, comprised under the term "statification of production."

In 1919, the Manifesto of the Communist International stated that it was "impossible to return not only to free competition, but even to the domination of trusts, syndicates and other economic octopuses. Today the one and only issue is: Who shall henceforth be the bearer of statized production, the imperialist state or the state of the victorious proletariat?" After 1919 the imperialist countries were able partially to reverse this economic movement. Today, peace no less than war poses the necessity of nationalization or the statification of production. It accomplishes itself by war, economic breakdown (France, Germany and Yugoslavia), or economic development (United States), by revolution and counter-revolution, by parliamentary means, with all the frequent contradictory manifestations of the actual historical process. It has not reached the same degree of development in all the countries of the world. But as a world-wide phenomenon, it has already reached the stage where it exercises the dominant influence in all social and political relations. The political evolution of the Social-Democracy in Britain and France, of the Stalinists in Eastern and Western Europe and the Far East, the whole course of economic and political development in the United States can be analyzed basically only in relation to this movement.

The Contradictions of Statification and Stalinist Russia

It is in Stalinist Russia that for historical reasons the statification of production has achieved its most complete and finished form. The example of Stalinist Russia shows that this latest stage of economic organization solves not one single basic economic contradiction of capitalism. The existence of the world market imposes upon all such formations the payment of the worker at his value. To do otherwise would raise the value of the commodity and thus ruin the economy in its competition on the world market, either in the traditional form of exchange or in the present form of struggle for world mastery by force, or a combination of both. The large masses of the population, free of legal restraint unlike the slave, the serf, or the guild-artisan, and free of property unlike the peasant, are thereby condemned to be wage-slaves and creators of surplus value. It is from this that all the basic contradictions of capitalist production flow.

The experience of Stalinist Russia since 1936 has exploded the idea that planning by any class other than the proletariat, can ever reverse the laws of motion of capitalist production. Planning becomes merely the statified instead of the spontaneous submission to these laws. Regulation by the capitalist state consists only in the power to exploit value production more ruthlessly than ever and suppress the most obvious manifestations of the old-fashioned commercial crises by means of terror and the degrada-

tion of the masses. Stalinist Russia, driven by the internal contradictions of value, production, i.e. capitalist production has defeated Germany only to embark upon the same imperialist program, reproducing in peace the economic and political methods of German imperialism, direct annexation, looting of men and material, formation of chains of companies in which the conquering imperialism holds the largest share. Such also was the economic movement of Japan in the Far East. The United States in modified form, follows the same essential course.

The backward countries, far from being able to escape this movement, more than ever are compelled to seek to overcome their economic weakness by statification of the means of production. All classes in India and China clearly recognize that the economic future of these countries is bound up with an advanced development of statification (combined development). The very ruin of the economy of Germany imposes upon the occupying imperialist states the need for statification.

#### The Social Structure of Statification

The economic movement brings with it social and political consequences which form the objective arena of contemporary society, confusing the bourgeoisie and objectively driving the masses to the world socialist revolution. Whereas before the war, the bourgeoisie was symbolized in the 60 families and the 200 families, etc. the diminishing number of magnates, as in Fascist Germany, now tend to hide themselves behind the state and the needs of "the nation" as a whole; where the Social-Democracy rules as in Britain, the uselessness of the bourgeoisie as a class is demonstrated to the workers. Thereby, is reinforced the concept of production and property as social and not as private relations.

The bourgeoisie of the subordinate countries, caught between the two dominant imperialist states (Russia and the United States) and the revolting masses, become increasingly and obviously an anti-national class (the bourgeoisie in Eastern Europe). Thus statification of production increasingly poses national independence openly in terms of the proletariat leading the masses of the people against the exploiting classes, native and foreign.

Statification of production increases the proletarianization of the middle classes. Through subsidies to agriculture (e.g. U.S.) or as hired functionaries, statification ties the petty-bourgeoisie closely to the political fluctuations of the regime. The middle classes as a whole begin to lose their sense of separate identity and tend more and more to see themselves either as adjuncts to the bureaucracy of the rulers of statified production or as part of the struggle of the proletariat against capitalist oppression and for the control of the state power (Great Britain and France).

But it is the proletariat that experiences more than any other class the revolutionizing effects of statification of production. Far more than Lenin noted in World War I, statification unifies the economic and social organization and consciousness of the world proletariat and tends to lessen the distinction between the workers

of advanced and backward countries. It socializes labor on a vast scale and assumes the direct social responsibility for the industrial reserve army of labor.

Under statification production relations develop to a stage of unbearable antagonism. In the totalitarian countries, the labor front (Germany) or the completely totalitarianized trade unions (Russia) become state organizations. But even in the countries which still retain the forms of parliamentary democracy, production becomes impossible without the direct intervention and control by the labor bureaucracy (Bevin in England during the war) on behalf of the state, or even in peacetime through collaboration with the government or the employers, as is seen most clearly in the United States.

In France and Britain any movement of the masses brings them immediately into direct conflict with their own leaders as rulers or direct representatives of the government. ~~The simplest of immediate demands concerning the high cost of living or the right to strike become questions of state policy and continually pose before the workers the fundamental question of state power. Thus, the social structure of state power in statified production places the workers in a situation where any determined struggle compels them to face the problem of creating their own organization in order to bring pressure upon, and if necessary, to break the power of the labor leadership as virtual functionaries of the existing government.~~

#### Statification and Bourgeois Democracy.

Upon the basis of the production relations of statification, the functions of government even in a democracy are carried out to an increasing extent by the executive, with the help of the labor lieutenants. Parliamentary bodies, (most conspicuously in the U.S.) become more and more mere talking shops. The state, even in its most democratic form, is compelled increasingly to assume the characteristics of Bonapartism. Every crisis of production, whether resulting in increase or decrease of wages, becomes merely an opportunity of the bourgeois state, behind constitutional forms, to limit and circumscribe the most elementary rights, right to strike, etc. of the masses. Thus, the struggle for democracy, particularly in the advanced countries, is no longer the struggle for the extension of popular rights. Liberalism is now the advocate, instead of the enemy, of the rights of the state. (Wallace) Today therefore, the struggle for democracy becomes a struggle against the encroachment of the Bonapartist state, aided by its agents, the trade union and labor bureaucracy. Thus, in the statified production, the consistent struggle for democratic rights becomes the struggle for militant independent mass organizations by which the workers can mobilize themselves to bring pressure upon, control, renew and ultimately overthrow the trade union bureaucracy and the labor leadership on the road to the proletarian revolution. This is the strategic basis for the tactical orientation towards the struggle for democratic demands in this period.

Statification of Production - The Ideological Struggle

Today, when the proletariat says democracy, it means above all, not bourgeois democracy. The bourgeoisie, having arrived at statification with totalitarianism (Fascism) the proletariat now desires no return to any previous condition of private enterprise but statification with democracy. Its social concepts are dominated by the idea that the catastrophes of modern society are caused by the private ownership of the means of production. The necessity that these be taken away from the monopolists and be returned to the nation to be planned for the good of all has now achieved the "fixity of a popular prejudice." This is one of the greatest advances ever made by human consciousness both in its implicit rejection of the concept of class distinctions and in the scores of millions who hold it.

That this is the fundamental ideological problem of modern society is proved by the unanimity with which the bourgeoisie concentrates its propaganda on this issue. This high stage of development is least advanced in the United States. It is therefore of great symbolical importance that more than anywhere else it is in the United States that the bourgeoisie with unerring instinct and understanding preaches incessantly that (a) free institutions are inseparable from free enterprise and (b) that no kind of planned economy (which it calls socialism) is possible without totalitarianism.

The bourgeoisie, recognizing what is at stake, misses no opportunity to confuse the masses on this issue. So powerful is the trend to statification that even bourgeois parties pay at least lip service to it. (M.R.P. in France)

Partly because of fear of the masses, partly because of the necessities of the economy, the bourgeoisie is compelled to take steps toward the nationalization of production but it fills this nationalization with as much bourgeois counter-revolutionary content as possible. In the Balkan countries that section of the native bourgeoisie, which is excluded by the Stalinists from the power raises the slogan of free elections, stimulated by Britain and the United States. Thus it confuses the masses who are torn between the nationalization and land-distribution programs of the Stalinists (directed against the native ruling class) and the Stalinist social and political tyranny. The Stalinists add to the confusion by calling their combination of economic reform and totalitarianism an anti-fascist democracy of a new type. In defeated Germany and Japan, the imperialist powers masquerade with the form of bourgeois-democracy in order to more surely to stifle the revolutionary aspirations of the masses. Whereas in France, the masses look to the Constituent Assembly to solve for them the contradiction between statification of production and the hated totalitarianism, the Social Democracy and the Stalinist manipulate the slogan so as to put a new fig leaf on the disgraced and bankrupt parliamentary regime.

Being unable to mobilize the petty-bourgeoisie on the pre-war

basis of Fascism, the bourgeoisie now uses the ideology and philosophy of Christianity, the rights of the individual and the family, as a weapon against the proletarian movement to socialism. In almost every country of Western and Central Europe, the reorganization of the Catholic Church and the growth of religious parties is today the mass basis of the European counter-revolution, particularly in France. That in the fifth decade of the twentieth century this should be the last ideological stronghold of the European bourgeoisie is but another proof of the desperation to which it has been reduced in every sphere. Thus, both objectively and subjectively it is the most dangerous and pernicious of falsehoods to say that the mass struggles today are for the restoration of bourgeois democracy. The very opposite is the truth. The dialectic of historical progress and the defeat of Fascism have initiated a period in which the manipulation of the concepts of bourgeois democracy become the last feeble weapon of bourgeois reaction against the developing socialist consciousness of the masses.

### III

#### The Fourth International and the Self-Mobilization of the Masses

The combination of statification and democracy can be achieved only by the Soviet Power. Both the objective and the subjective results of statification and the desperate attempts of the bourgeoisie to confuse the masses places as the main task of the day the exposure of the difference between bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy.

The Fourth International, therefore, particularly in Europe and Asia, undertakes a many-sided and powerful propaganda on the history, theory, successes and failures of the dictatorship of the proletariat with special reference to the first workers state. But in harmony with the objective relations posed by statification of production and by the violent conflicts in production, politics and ideology between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, it bases its agitation upon the adaptation of the program of transitional demands to the concrete circumstances of the day.

The task of the transitional program consists in systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution. In large areas of Europe and Asia today, the situation imperatively demands that the Fourth International today seek by agitation to stimulate the masses to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the problems of mass struggle in bourgeois society; not stopping, if necessary, even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions." (Founding Conference). In bankrupt Europe and Asia the factory committees, the workers defense guards, consumers committees, soldiers committees, etc. become now the forms which the revolutionaries must hold before the masses as most suitable in the struggle for their immediate demands against the dominating state power, in the struggle against Bonapartism and against the encroachment of the bourgeois democratic state on its democratic rights. "Trade union bureaucrats (and all the agents of the bourgeoisie) in accordance with their general conduct, will resist

the creation of factory committees as they resist every bold step taken along the road of mobilizing the masses. However, the wider the sweep of the movement, the easier it will be to break this resistance...The prime significance of the committee, however, lies in the fact that it becomes the militant staff for such working class layers as the trade union is usually incapable of moving to action. It is from these more oppressed layers that the most self-sacrificing battalions of the revolution will come..." (Founding Conference)

In this respect the part now played by the black market in the European economy offers exceptional opportunity to the Fourth International to teach the masses the necessity of their own direct intervention for the solution of their problems. Where governments themselves organize or sanction black markets and where black marketing activities are insured (France), the alert revolutionary party will find opportunity especially on a local or regional scale to stimulate the wrath and indignation of the masses to the point where they organize themselves and take drastic action against the individual and official fatteners on the festering bourgeois regime. It is on the basis of revolutionary actions on concrete events, explosions, partial risings, with successes and defeats, that on the basis of the general situation in Western Europe today, and the general revolutionary propaganda of the Fourth International, the proletariat gradually will recognize its own strength, recognize the Fourth International as its leader and nerve itself for greater and more shattering assaults upon the shaky fabric of bourgeois society.

In many areas of Europe and Asia today, class relations have reached a pitch where the Fourth International can carry on a serious propaganda for Soviets in order not to be caught unawares by the feverish explosions of the revolutionary masses and the whip of the counter-revolution. While it bases itself unequivocally upon the self-mobilization of the masses in the manner proposed by the Transitional Program, the Fourth International does not itself attempt to form any of these mass organizations; it does not call anarchistically for direct action or the seizure of power nor does it neglect to use to the utmost possible degree all bourgeois forms or constitutional and parliamentary forms and procedure. In the explosive situations which exist in many parts of the world, there will arise conjunctures in which, in accordance with the high stage of contemporary class struggle, it will be possible for the proletariat to link constitutional methods with its own self-activity. The classic example for our epoch is the election of Blum to the government and the seizure of the factories simultaneously by the self-mobilized masses. Particularly in countries where the Stalinists and the Social-Democracy are duping the masses by the refurbishing of parliamentarism with socialist trimmings, the Fourth International poses before the masses this combination of constitutional procedure and revolutionary action as the road to the exposure of the labor leadership and the mobilization of the masses for proletarian revolution.

IV

Socialism and the Continents

The Socialist Reconstruction of Europe

The rebuilding of Europe and the reorganization of world economy must be carried out either by the bourgeoisie or the proletariat, by the capital-labor relation or by socialist relations of production.

For this reason the Fourth International does not merely pose the struggle for immediate demands in terms of the actual intervention of the masses (factory committees, consumers' committees, etc.) It must ceaselessly propagandize to the masses the genuinely transitional character of the relationship between factory committees, etc., the social revolution and socialist relations of production. To the masses, who, lacking leadership are bewildered by the magnitude of the problems which face them, the Fourth International must place the organized rule of society by the workers as the only way to pull Europe and Asia out of the chaos and ruin in which capitalist society has placed them. It must categorically say to the masses there is not hope for a reconstruction of society except by means of the productivity of labor and social reorganization which only socialist relations of production can initiate. Basing itself on the necessity of these new relations, the Fourth International poses also the abolition of the bourgeois bureaucracy, the abolition of the bourgeois standing army and their replacement by the armed people and their elected representatives. It does this in the confidence that the bourgeoisie is unable to present to the masses any serious plan to overcome the existing barbarism and in any serious manner alleviate the exasperation of the masses.

Contrary to the belief of the timid petty-bourgeois radicals and the Mensheviks, it is precisely where the ruin and degradation of society are most obvious that the Fourth International makes the closest relation between the intervention of the masses in the struggle for immediate demands, and the struggle for the social revolution and the socialist reconstruction of society.

The Fourth International must at the same time pose to the workers in broad outline a plan for the reconstruction of Europe on a continental scale. Thus, in Europe, it poses the socialization of production on a national scale. But it responds to the concrete situation by linking this demand to the industrialization of Germany and its incorporation into a European economy as the indispensable basis not for some distant socialist well-being but for the satisfaction of the elementary needs of the masses and for the salvation of European civilization.

The Imperialist Reorganization of Europe

In no other way can the Fourth International meet the combined attempts of Anglo-American and Russian imperialism and their agents to enslave Europe and Asia. The Anglo-American bourgeoisie and

the second International seek to bribe the proletariat to accept the overlordship of American imperialism in return for bourgeois democratic forms of government and American economic aid.

Russian imperialism and its Stalinist satellites seek to tyrannize and then to bribe the proletariat to accept the virtual overlordship of Russian imperialism under the guise of the unity of the European continent in a new social order. So strong is the objective necessity for unification of the continent that even the bourgeoisie (for its own purposes) proposes internationalization of the Ruhr and the waterways of Europe; while Stalinism plays upon the obvious chaos and the deeply felt need for a unified Europe, now an organic part of the psychology of the European people.

Nowhere is this imperialist struggle so sharp and so crucial as in Germany, the heart of Europe where it appears as a battle between the unity of the working class movement (Stalinism) or the independence of the Social-Democracy (Anglo-American imperialism).

The Socialist United States of Europe

Under these circumstances it is a matter of life and death for the Fourth International to oppose both these ruinous roads and it can do so only by linking the struggle for national economic rehabilitation to the struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe.

- A Socialist France in a Socialist United States of Europe
- A Socialist Poland in a Socialist United States of Europe
- A Socialist Germany in a Socialist United States of Europe

The Fourth International bases its policy unequivocally on the following: during the war it was necessary to hold before the proletariat the proletarian struggle for the overthrow of Hitlerite Germany so as to fortify the vanguard against subordination to the armed forces of Anglo-American imperialism. So today in the continuing crisis of capitalism, the Fourth International must pose the proletarian solution to the great social questions placed concretely before the masses. ~~It is by this means that the proletariat in Europe and Eastern Asia can recognize in the propaganda of the Fourth International the subjective answer to its objective desires and revolutionary instincts for national freedom and a new social order.~~ It is by this means that it can repulse the insidiousness of American and the brutality of Russian attempts to reduce Europe to an appendage of imperialism.

In Eastern Europe the proletariat faces the colossal task of overthrowing not the delegated but the direct military power of the Russian state. In its rear, ~~it has the armed forces of Russia occupying Germany.~~ Under these circumstances, the movement against Russian domination in the separate countries must therefore orient towards the unification of proletarian struggle in the directly oppressed states, including Germany. A mass revolutionary movement with a common program and an advanced social goal has the best possibility of shaking the discipline of the Russian armies and re-awakening in them the traditions of the October Revolution.

With this perspective, the proletariat is assisted in the carrying out of the daily struggles against the oppressing imperialist power. Without a perspective of international struggle, the advanced workers will be less fortified against Stalinist propaganda or the defeatism which will await intervention on the part of another imperialist power as the only means of ridding itself of the Russian domination, exploitation and plunder.

A similar situation in Eastern Asia, (Korea, Manchuria, etc.) poses similar tasks for the Fourth International.

V

### World Socialism

#### The Class Consequences of Atomic Energy

Side by side with the objective movement toward the organization of production on a continental scale, the unloading of atomic energy and the enormous social and political explosions that are concentrated in it, have turned the minds of the masses of the people in every country towards world government not as an ideal but as an imperative necessity for the salvation of humanity from total destruction or barbarism. Atomic energy and the perspective it unfolds has given a violent shock to national aspirations, chauvinism and patriotism. World socialism and the struggle for it can no longer remain in the archives of the Fourth International but must become an integral part of its propagandistic approach to the masses.

Even before the launching of the first atomic bomb the bourgeoisie had recognized the accumulated hostility of the masses to the deceptions and barbarism of the war and their distrust of bourgeois society. It was only after World War I that the bourgeoisie organized the League of Nations, carefully avoiding giving to the League any economic function. Long before the end of World War II, however, the bourgeoisie organized conferences at Atlantic City, Bretton Woods, Dumbarton Oaks, all aimed at giving the impression to the workers that a new economic structure was to be organized which would correct the ills of the old. More than that, the bourgeoisie organized at San Francisco the United Nations Conference designed once more to assure the masses of a world organization to prevent the possibility of a third world war and recompense humanity for its present sufferings. But the insolubility of the imperialist conflicts and the scepticism of the masses, both aspects of the death agony of capitalism, have turned all these efforts into propaganda not for the strengthening but for the weakening of capitalist society. Whereas after World War I it was possible to deceive the masses for a period, today their scepticism is reinforced by the incapacity of the imperialist bourgeoisie even to come to any reasonable agreement on the vital issues of the day. The bourgeoisie is being driven more and more to make the most extravagant statements even to the degree that it is necessary to have a world assembly directly elected by the people of the various nations (Bevin). In the period of the extreme sharpening of antagonisms and the decay of capitalism, these and similar state-

ments only stimulate the political distrust of the masses without leaving any sedative effect.

The entire planet is now driven to see itself objectively and subjectively as one unit. For the bourgeoisie this can mean only the intensified struggle for world domination under one single imperialism. For the proletarian vanguard the only answer can be the most vigorous propaganda for world socialism.

#### The Fourth International and the Propaganda for World Socialism

The Fourth International recognizes that the drive to war by the bourgeoisie and the fear of war and devastation by the masses are today organic parts of contemporary society far more than after World War I. It recognizes that the explosive character of the world situation brings a World War far nearer than the previous twenty-five years interval. It therefore poses before the masses the only solution. To the world government of the petty-bourgeois radicals and the dishonest proposals of Bevin, it holds before the masses the idea of a world socialist federation. To the immediate continuing struggle of the imperialists for world power which now fills the mind of the masses everywhere, it poses the conception of the world wide struggle of the masses for social revolution. Only by recognizing the degree to which capitalism itself poses the most fundamental questions to the masses, can the Fourth International seize the opportunities presented to it and show itself to the masses not only as valiant fighters for immediate demands but as heralds of a new social order.

The rush of bourgeois society to an unmitigated barbarism, the helplessness of the bourgeoisie, the unexampled awareness, fear and disgust of the masses in every part of the world, these signs of the death of an old order and the birth of a new demand from the Fourth International on a world scale the iron determination, will to conquer and belief in victory which have always distinguished our great predecessors. It demands that today, inextricably linked to the masses in their day to day struggles, we counter the bourgeois helplessness by the boldest, the most vigorous, the most uncompromising posing of the socialist revolution in its greatest sweep and in its most far reaching ramifications as the only solution to the ills of society. Above all in Europe and Asia the very chaos of society enables us to pose the transitional demands in terms of the self-activity of the masses, as the most immediate, the most practical, the most realistic alternative to the burdens by which capitalism is crushing human society.

#### VI

#### Questions at Issue

The Fourth International impresses upon all its section and sympathizers the necessity of following the movements of the masses in every concrete situation with the greatest attention to national peculiarities and the specific stages of the class struggle at a given time. But in the great tradition of Bolshevism it declares that today more than ever it is only in the light of the

general character of our epoch that concrete situations can be examined, analyzed and acted upon.

The failure of the Fourth International to grow, the unspeakable treachery of the Stalinists and the Mensheviks who refuse to lead the proletariat towards the new social order which it so passionately desires, have created in our movement retrogressive currents which have brought confusion over fundamental strategy and tactics long accepted by revolutionary Marxists. While it is impossible and indeed it would be ridiculous to attempt to lay down a program of action for individual countries, it is necessary here to restate some of these principles of the Fourth International and to give examples of their concrete application.

Democratic Demands and Social Revolution

The Fourth International, like the revolutionary movement at all times, raises the slogans of right of free press, right to organize, free elections, wherever these democratic liberties are denied or are in danger. In the Balkan countries and in Poland, where the totalitarian states are not firmly established and the whole situation is in flux, the Fourth International raises these slogans in terms of their realization by the independent mass actions of the workers. It would be an illusion to raise the slogan of free elections to be organized by the would-be totalitarian regime of Tito or to be supervised by the regime of British imperialism in Greece. The Fourth International does not exclude mass rejection of participation in elections where the elections are notoriously totalitarian plebiscites even when the next immediate step may be the seizure of power. Such rejection of fraudulent elections can become a valuable means of protest and mobilization of the masses. These slogans are tied always, whether in defensive or offensive actions, to the rejection of the existing governments and the call for a Constituent Assembly.

The Fourth International must at all costs avoid posing the question of democratic demands in such a way as to lead the masses to expect that parliamentary legality will be any guarantee of its rights or any protection against reaction. To do so, particularly in critical periods as at present in Europe and Asia, flies in the face of the whole experience of the working class movement and of the most fundamental tenets of Bolshevism. The bourgeoisie, the Stalinists and the Social-Democrats by encouraging illusions about parliamentarism and legality, aim as always, at suppressing the instinctive tendency of the masses to take matters into their own hands. The Fourth International must recognize that for the masses in general and in its own defence (against the bourgeoisie, the Stalinists, and Social-Democrats) it must, above all in this period expose the fraud, the hypocrisy and treachery of confidence in bourgeois parliamentarism and the necessity of the proletariat and the revolutionary organizations defending themselves by mass organization and class strength.

The Constituent Assembly and the Social Revolution

The Fourth International can call at any period for a Consti-

tuent Assembly, recognising that in the shattered countries, the slogan becomes in the mind of the masses a medium for the construction of a new social order and not for the reconstruction of bourgeois society. The bourgeoisie and its agents, however, use the slogan in order to once again gild the chains of the bourgeois parliamentary regime. The Fourth International therefore separates itself from the counter-revolution by raising the slogan of a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly. It proposes that this assembly destroy capitalist society by appropriating the bourgeoisie. It proposes that the Constituent Assembly abolish the bourgeois state, the bourgeois bureaucracy and the bourgeois army and substitute a workers' militia of the whole people, workers committees, peasant committees, consumers committees, etc. It proposes that this assembly organize the planning of the economy by qualified representatives of political and social organizations, democratically elected. It proposes that all planning be controlled by the workers themselves in the process of production.

#### The Permanent Revolution in Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries

The high stage of capitalist development in the world today has already imposed upon the ruling classes of India and China not only concrete steps but grandiose plans for the statification of production as an indispensable stage in the development of the economy. This universal trend is already expressing itself in the most backward countries. (Korea, Nigeria, West Indies, etc.) To its traditional propaganda and agitation in the colonial countries for the permanent revolution (Soviets, agrarian revolution and Constituent Assembly), the Fourth International adds the slogan of nationalization of the means of production under the control of the working class.

#### Democratic Republic and the Liquidation of Monarchies

Under no circumstances does the Fourth International raise the slogan of any bourgeois constitution, however democratic, for countries like France, Italy or Belgium. It continues its traditional practice of using these institutions as a tribunal for the denunciation of the hypocrisy, fraud, corruption of bourgeois parliamentarism in any shape or form. It mercilessly attacks any Marxist tendency which advocates for these countries any constitution which is not based upon the Soviet Power.

The Fourth International is in the vanguard of any struggle for the liquidation of reactionary institutions like the monarchy, but it repudiates the conception that its struggle against the monarchy demands its advocacy of any democratic republic or any kind of bourgeois constitution. Particularly in Italy and Belgium it proposes concrete steps such as the immediate arrest of all members of the royal family and their close supporters, the confiscation of all their property, the abrogation of all laws, oaths and constitutional forms in which the authority of the monarchy is either directly or indirectly organized. While maintaining its own banner of the Workers Republic, it proposes a United Front for struggle against the monarchy with those proletarian organizations which advocate the democratic republic. It defends the bourgeois

democratic regime by similar concrete actions against attacks by monarchial or fascistic groups. But such concrete actions are under no circumstances to be accompanied by advocacy of any democratic republic.

The Fourth International does not at all exclude in advance participation in any body called together by the masses for the consideration of the future course of the state, e.g. recall of the members of a former parliament. However, in such an organization, today more than ever, it brings before the masses its own proposals to substitute proletarian forms, organizations, methods and actions for the rotting and discredited structure of bourgeois democracy.

National Liberation, Reunification of Germany, Etc.

The Fourth International in Germany, like the revolutionary movement at all times in its history, takes the lead in the struggle for the withdrawal of the occupying troops, for freedom of press, for right to organize and the other concrete demands of the German people. The Fourth International, however, repudiates the conception that because of the material ruin in Germany, the disorganization of production, the social and political disorganization of the proletariat, the domination of foreign imperialism, and the partition of Germany, that on account of these, Germany has therefore been hurled back to any stage which places before the German people the struggle for the bourgeois-democratic states as an arena for the struggle for socialism. Exactly the opposite is the case.

The course of the war, which has brought these difficulties upon the German nation, has also destroyed the power of the German bourgeoisie. Thus, the German proletariat is forced point-blank to reorganize itself not to reconstruct bourgeois democracy but to lead the nation. Whereas in the United States, the comparative stability of the traditional bourgeois society does not pose in all their nakedness the fundamental problems of bourgeois society to the American proletariat, precisely the breakdown of bourgeois society in Germany makes the German proletariat from the first moment of its resurgence see all its struggles for its immediate demands in relation to the fundamental problem of state power, posed inescapably precisely because of the alien domination and the ruin of the bourgeoisie. The Fourth International stands uncompromisingly upon the position that the very ruin of Germany imposes upon the German nation one of two roads, orientation toward the ruling classes of Russian and Anglo-American imperialism, or orientation toward the European and world proletariat. The Fourth International points out that the German bourgeoisie, in order to regain some pitiful remnants of its former power, will strive to orient it in the imperialist direction. The Fourth International, on the other hand, from the very beginning poses before the German people the unification of Germany under the leadership of the German proletariat in a Socialist United States of Europe. This theoretical postulate is amply demonstrated by such political life as exists in Germany today. The occupying powers battle to control the proletarian organizations of Germany, the only social base by which they can pretend to rule Germany with

some pretence of harmony with the people. Marxists will note that the very ruin of bourgeois Germany has strengthened the relation of the German proletariat to all other classes in Germany. It is this which, among other reasons, necessitates domination of Germany by foreign imperialism and it is this on which the Fourth International must base all policy including the struggle against alien domination.

The Russian Proletariat

The Fourth International does not abandon a revolutionary perspective for the Russian proletariat. It is confident that the contradictions of the productive and social relations in Russia must inevitably drive the Russian proletariat to the road of social revolution. The Fourth International seeks to mobilize the Russian proletariat against the bureaucracy, by slogans for the restoration of the Soviets, etc. At the present time, however, it devotes itself mainly to determined propaganda among the Russian troops abroad. Particularly it stimulates the revolutionary proletariat in the occupied countries to appeal to the Russian armies in the name of the social revolution and the traditions of the October Revolution.

VII

The Second and the Third Internationals

The Second International and World War. II

Between 1917 and 1939 imperialism, by means of super-profits, was able to maintain the labor aristocracy which formed its main social support. In the view of Lenin, it was by this caste alone that imperialism was able to bar the road to socialist revolution. Today the basis of super-profits on which it rested is gone - never to return. For this reason, whatever incidental influence it may have in the course of politics, its role in Europe as the main bulwark of bourgeois society against the revolutionary proletariat is finished. It has no perspective, except feverish maneuvering between the bankrupt bourgeoisie on the one hand and the highly organized Stalinists, on the other. Like every other non-revolutionary political grouping in the world today, it finds itself compelled to choose between the United States on the one hand and Stalinist Russia on the other. In Western Europe, it is ready to sell out the national interests to the United States for protection against both the revolutionary proletariat and the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. In Eastern Europe, it wavers between capitulation to Stalinist imperialism and frantic appeals for Anglo-American support for free elections, and democracy. Nowhere on the continent of Europe can it play an independent role. In the social crisis which now grips Britain, it is only owing to the weakness of the British Stalinists and of the Fourth International that the British Social Democracy maintains for the moment its undisputed hold on the allegiance of the British proletariat.

The Counter-Revolutionary Role of the Third International

If the Second International saved capitalism in the period

following World War I, it is infinitely more true to say that the Third International saved capitalism in the period following World War II. The political weakness of the Social Democracy placed upon Stalinism the role of chief political bulwark of imperialism against the socialist revolution. In their road from bourgeois society to soviet power, the revolutionary proletariat of Europe and the great millions of revolting Orientals (in all Eastern Asia, Burma and the Philippine Islands) have mistaken the reactionary party of Stalin for the revolutionary party of Lenin and Trotsky.

It is therefore a major task of the Fourth International to examine carefully and define its policy in regard to Stalinism.

The key to Stalinism as a political force is the contradiction in which it finds itself between the counter-revolutionary ruling class of Russia, on the one hand, and the revolutionary masses on the other.

The ideology of Stalinism is fundamentally bourgeois.

Stalinism, outside of Russia, serves always the interests of the Russian bourgeoisie, and for that reason also it is the mortal enemy of the revolutionary masses in their road to soviet power. Thus it is, always has been and always will be the agent of capital in the capital-labor relation. It is typically bourgeois in that it nowhere can dare to submit itself to the creative strength of the self-mobilized masses. For this reason, whatever power Stalinism may hold anywhere, it cannot under any circumstances solve one basic contradiction of the capitalist mode of production.

Like all organizations which live in fear of the revolutionary power of the proletariat, Stalinism outside of Russia can willingly take drastic economic and political steps towards the consolidation of power only as long as it is assured of the support of Stalinist Russia to oppose the revolutionary proletariat and/or give it protection against rival bourgeois powers. It will collaborate with the native bourgeoisie, or sometimes oppose it when it is a rival to the Russian bourgeoisie. But it never opposes any bourgeoisie to the extent of initiating and preparing proletarian seizure of power (e.g. in Germany during World War II).

#### Stalinism and the Revolutionary Masses

In the Western European countries and Asia, the growth of the Communist Parties in no way expresses the triumph of bureaucratic collectivism over capitalism. Such a conception can only disorient the party and the proletariat as to the nature of the epoch and the tasks which face it. The turn of the masses to the Stalinists expresses the extraordinary sharpness of the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The basis of revolutionary policy in general and the attitude toward the Stalinists in particular must be the recognition that the proletariat, in turning to the Stalinists demonstrates its readiness for the most drastic solutions to the chaos and agony which engulf Europe today.

In an advanced country like France or Italy, Stalinism can

reach the stage of threatening the bourgeoisie only through the revolutionary development of the masses. The Stalinists can only defeat the bourgeoisie by means of the revolutionary proletariat. The defeat of the bourgeoisie would leave the Stalinists face to face with the revolutionary proletariat, without any class base of their own. The Stalinists can defeat the proletariat only with the assistance of the bourgeoisie and only in a desperate civil war.

For these reasons, not only historically but concretely, the apparent strength of Stalinism contains the elements of its greatest weakness. In these countries today it has the opportunity of assuming power only under conditions in which it will face its mortal enemy, the developing power of the masses. Every serious step it takes against the bourgeoisie only helps to break the influence of bourgeois ideology upon the workers and creates the possibilities of their realizing their own enormous social power. The presence of Russian imperialist troops, as has been shown in Eastern Europe, turns the Stalinists into an anti-national party and mobilizes against them the growing antagonism of the proletariat and the great masses of the people.

It is in the clear understanding of this contradiction that the Fourth International has its great opportunity of developing itself. It bases itself upon the revolutionary sentiments of the masses who must increasingly find themselves in irreconcilable contradiction with counter-revolutionary Stalinism. But in order to do this, the Fourth International must base its strategic line upon the strength of the masses, and not on the strength of Stalinism. The Stalinists do not constitute a social class. They seek to profit by the struggle of the fundamental classes of modern society, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Except where the Stalinists hold state power with the help of the Red Army, the Stalinist party is a monolithic, not a totalitarian party. Membership in the Stalinist party is voluntary. The party holds no power of life and death over its membership. It cannot prevent secession and the formation of other parties.

To call the Stalinists in Western Europe a totalitarian party is to sow irretrievable confusion in the minds of the revolutionary vanguard and the proletariat. It leads to confusing the fascist party based on the petty-bourgeoisie with the Stalinist party with its mass base of the revolutionary proletariat.

To call the Stalinist party totalitarian is to capitulate to the conception that the masses of the workers in France and Italy are as much subordinated to the Stalinist leaders as are the workers of Russia to Stalin or the workers of Germany were to Hitler.

To call the Stalinists totalitarian carries the implication that the workers following the Stalinist parties in Western Europe are not the dynamic creative force of modern society, capable of learning from their own experience but are the docile tools of Stalinist reaction. To believe that the Stalinist accession to complete state power in an advanced country like France or Italy means the totalitarianization of the state is to express in its crudest form the idea that Stalinism is not the result of the at-

tempt to build socialism in a single backward country but is an inevitable stage following the development of capitalism. All these conceptions lead straight to demoralization and abstentionism in the ranks of the revolutionary party.

#### Stalinism and the United Front

With the above being borne in mind, it is necessary for the Fourth International to reaffirm unequivocally and with the utmost firmness that both the Social-Democratic parties and the Stalinist parties are working class parties. Neither of them is a working class party because of the character and aims of the bureaucracies which control them. They are working class parties because their program and practical activity appeal to the working class on the basis of the class struggle against the capitalist class for the socialist society. Both these parties have shamefully deceived workers and mercilessly suppressed revolutionary elements. The Stalinists, for historical reasons, have been able and forced to carry these practices to an unexampled height of treachery. But the revolutionary party has traditionally based its relation to the masses in the Social-Democratic parties on the contradiction between the desires of the workers striving to release themselves from capitalist society and the illusions sown among them by the social-democracy. Similarly, the revolutionary party must base its relation to the masses in the Stalinist party upon their desire to release themselves from capitalist society despite the illusion sown among them by Stalinism as the direct agents of capital in the ranks of labor.

The revolutionary party, therefore, basing itself on the perspective of a struggle for power by the proletariat, exposes the treacherous character of the social-Democratic and Stalinist parties and organizations by calling upon them, wherever they have the support of the masses of the workers, to break with the bourgeoisie, to take the power into their own hands. In following out this policy, the Fourth International, in accordance with the practice and traditions of Bolshevism, exposes with redoubled energy the theoretical falsities and criminal practices of the Stalinists, both inside Stalinist Russia and in the world at large.

The proletariat cannot be saved from the dangers of Stalinism by reliance upon the bankrupt social-Democracy, but only by its own power for revolutionary actions. The Fourth International, must, therefore, raise the slogan of the Communist Party to power even where there is no social-Democracy (China, Greece) and the Stalinists as the only working class party have the support of the broad masses against the bourgeoisie.

In the crisis of society those many-millioned masses who today follow the Stalinists will learn through their own experiences of the treachery of Stalinism. As they become disillusioned with the Stalinists, they will turn back to the social-Democracy (or in the case of some of the petty-bourgeoisie to Fascism) only to the degree that the Fourth International fails to link itself to the immediate demands of the masses while at the same time holding before them revolutionary perspectives corresponding to their most profound desires.

It is on the tactical slogan of critical support of or a United Front with the Stalinists that the Fourth International all over the world will demonstrate its understanding of the revolutionary yearnings and power of the proletariat. This question will in many instances determine whether the forces of the Fourth International will doom themselves to sectarian isolation from the mass movement or whether they will be able to use not only the struggles of the masses but the living conflicts between political parties to demonstrate their claims for leadership.

Finally the slogan of raising the Stalinists to power can only be posed in the traditional sense in which Lenin and Trotsky posed the question of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries to power, i.e. as transitional to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Any political organization which refuses absolutely to raise the slogan of the Stalinists to power, or raises the slogan with illusory safeguards (e.g. the Social-Democracy in France) against the danger of thereby facilitating a bureaucratic collectivist social order, makes it impossible for the party and the vanguard of the proletariat to reap the fruits of this slogan and this experience.

VIII

The Fourth International

The Fourth International Since the Death of Trotsky

The outstanding fact about the Fourth International is that it has failed to break the hold upon the masses of the Second and particularly, the Third Internationals. The main reason for this was not its program or platform but the association in the minds of the masses, of the Third International with revolution, the dynamic successes and apparent solidity of the Russian state and the Stalinist work in the resistance movements. Today the Fourth International remains essentially what it was at the beginning of the war, a small propaganda sect.

The years of preparation, however, have not been empty of all results. During the war the Fourth International maintained its principles of uncompromising resistance to all aspects of the imperialist war. The European sections, in particular the French and Belgian, were in the forefront of the class struggle against the Nazi regime and the native bourgeoisie. They firmly maintained both theoretical and practical solidarity with the German troops.

The Workers Party in the United States confounded the baseless and slanderous predictions of the Socialist Workers Party that their differences which led to the 1940 split represented for the WP the road back to social patriotism and capitulation to the bourgeoisie. The Workers Party was the only political party in the United States which issued a manifesto against the imperialist war when the United States entered it in 1941.

Historical Retrogression

The defeats of the proletariat and the rise of totalitarianism in Europe have had deep repercussions within the ranks of the

Fourth International. The defeat of France and the threat of Hitlerian domination of Europe produced from the German section (IKD) the theory of historical retrogression. For the IKD the decay of bourgeois society is more disastrous for the proletariat than for the bourgeoisie. To be historically consistent and to justify their theories, they have been forced to deny the very existence of the labor movement (e.g. in France 1945) and to introduce an intolerable confusion between the concept of the labor movement and the concept of the revolutionary vanguard party. They claim that the proletariat has lost "the characteristics of its rise and its formation", and has been hurled back to the conditions of its birth. They write away forty years of the most intense revolutionary struggles in human history and stultify the analysis of these years by Lenin, by the Fourth International and by Trotsky. Not basing themselves upon the opportunities presented to the workers by the breakdown of bourgeois society, they substitute, for the socialist revolution, conceptions of a "democratic-political revolution" for national freedom, thus confining the ideas and movement of the masses within the limitations of the bourgeois regime. By substituting the distinction into means of production and means of destruction for the traditional formulas of Marxism, they have played into the hands of petty-bourgeois moralists of all sorts and obscured the fundamental fact that means of destruction are in reality the basic means of production misused by capitalism. They have vilified the activity of the Fourth International during the war, claiming that its internationalism did not exist, and have thus given comfort to our enemies.

The Fourth International in the United States split in 1940 under the impact of the Nazi-Soviet pact upon Trotsky's indefensible position on Russia. But the threat of totalitarian domination in Europe also brought out retrogressionist ideas in the Workers Party leadership. Instead of the theoretical dogmatism of the Germans, the Workers Party leadership maintains a vacillating empiricism, which is dominated, however by retrogressionist conclusions and retrogressionist politics. It correctly urged participation in the resistance movements. But instead of posing the problem of workers power as the task of the proletarian insurrection against Hitlerism, it posed as the fundamental task of the day the revival and reconstruction of the labor movement. For the theoretical proof of the degeneration of the masses as a result of capital accumulation (IKD), the Workers Party majority substitutes the exhaustion of the masses and their consequent incapacity for revolutionary struggle. By supplementary resolutions, contradictory articles, long periods of silence and tacit support of the militant retrogressive theories of the Germans, the Workers Party leadership has been unable to clarify important revolutionary crises as they presented themselves or even afterwards. It has not been able to clarify whether there was a national or a civil war in Greece or the meaning of the dual power in France or in Northern Italy. It has vacillated between declaring that the European revolution has begun and that the center of revolutionary action for the world revolution has moved from Europe to the United States.

It now governs itself upon the theory that there can be no revolutionary situation except where there is actually in existence

a mass revolutionary party, a theory which is in contradiction to the whole theory and practice of Bolshevism. Governed by the idea of the retrogression of the masses, it raises the slogans of the most democratic constitution for France and gives tacit support to the slogan of the democratic republic for advanced countries in Europe.

#### The Fourth International and the World Revolution

Neither the threat of Nazi nor Stalinist domination of Europe shook the majority of the sections of the Fourth International from the correct strategic perspective of proletarian revolution in Europe. The International, however, led by the SWP took an opportunist position on the "defense" of China during the imperialist war. Far worse however was the sectarian refusal to recognize the significance of the resistance movements. Thus the European parties deprived themselves of valuable opportunities for increasing the strength and the prestige of the Fourth International both at home and abroad.

However, in its statement of January 1946 on this question, the European Executive Committee of the Fourth International has attacked both the sectarianism of the Cannonites which refused to enter the national liberation movement and the opportunism of the IKD retrogressionists and the majority of the Workers Party which saw these movements as devoid of social revolutionary content because the proletariat had been hurled back to the circumstances of its birth. The leadership of the Fourth International has adopted the position that the demand for self-determination of all nations belongs on the revolutionary internationalists program but that it is inseparable from the struggle against capitalism and for the Socialist United States of Europe. Thereby, it has adopted the position held consistently by the minority in the Workers Party since 1943.

Just as the threat of Hitlerian domination of Europe disoriented the IKD toward the theory of historical retrogression, so the threat of Stalinist domination of Europe produced in the Socialist Workers Party a minority which, while bitterly opposing the actual theory of retrogression, has shown powerful tendencies to retrogressive political conclusions. This tendency was reinforced by the sectarian policy of the Fourth International in Europe and the Socialist Workers Party majority toward the national liberation movement.

Only the minority in the Workers Party both rejected uncompromisingly the whole theory of retrogression and recognized the tactical importance of the national liberation movements, without in any way abandoning or equivocating on the strategic perspective of proletarian revolution created by the class relations in Europe and the breakdown of the bourgeois regime.

The failure of the German proletariat to revolt, the failure of the proletariat anywhere to seize the power, have unlocked among the retrogressionists of all shades, condemnation of those who based their policy on the perspective of revolutions which failed to come. The Fourth International rejects all such criti-

claims as they have had to be rejected repeatedly in the history of our movement. The recognition that revolutionary situations may fail to produce not only a successful but any revolution at all has always been clearly understood by Marxists. But Marxism has always maintained an irreconcilable antagonism against those who point to the end results of a specific revolutionary crisis in order to denounce the revolutionary policy advocated before or during the crisis itself. The Third International under Lenin and Trotsky dealt mercilessly with this type of criticism. And particularly in the present situation is it to be rejected, for otherwise the road is left open to treating Trotsky's abstract speculation of a possible bureaucratic collectivist social order as concrete reality. From this will flow inevitably currents of thought that the world revolution has failed to come, of the impotence of the proletariat, exaggerated conclusions as to the role of the party in relation to the socialist consciousness of the masses and pessimism and defeatism of all kinds.

#### The Fourth International and the Russian Question

Central to the development of the Fourth International is the position of Trotsky on the Russian Question. This position was held by the majority of the International all through the war. It resulted in the shocking misleadership of the working class as to the motives and objective results of Stalinist intervention in Europe. The climax came when the Fourth International sowed the most criminal illusions in the minds of the masses in Eastern Europe at the approach of the Red Army. This policy flows neither from the sterility nor the confusion of the Fourth International, in Europe or in America, but is the direct and inescapable result of the attempt to apply an untenable political line based upon the theories of Trotsky.

Today, when the imperialist aims of Stalinist Russia are patent to the whole world, the Fourth International continues to preach and base policy upon the theory that Stalinist Russia is a degenerated workers state to be defended by the working class. In an effort to defend its indefensible stand that the Stalinist bureaucracy could not survive the rigors of war, the Socialist Workers Party has been driven to the ridiculous position that the imperialist war is not yet at an end. For the same reasons, it disorients the working class and confuses its own position with that of the Stalinists by emphasizing that the expansion of Soviet Russia is due to the necessities of self-defense. By this means, it can do nothing else but strengthen Stalinism in Russia, weaken the critical elements in the Stalinist and other working class parties, handicap itself in its attacks upon Stalinism, grievously disorient the concept of a workers state and associate the Marxist doctrine with the defense of totalitarianism. The persistence in this indefensible doctrine has undermined and will continue to undermine the political and organizational strength of the Fourth International.

By its stand against the defense of Russia in the imperialist war, the Workers Party distinguished itself as the only party in the Fourth International which clearly and consistently warned the masses well in advance against the dangers of Stalinism and the Red Army.

However, despite the correctness of this position, the Workers Party has been unable to win adherents in the Fourth International because among other historical reasons, it has had no theoretically sound basis for its defeatist position and to this day is unable to find one. In October, 1941, it proclaimed Russia to be a bureaucratic collectivist state, a part of the collectivist epoch of human society. It left open the possibility of a defensist position on Russia in the event that Russia was attacked by capitalism. When Hitler attacked Russia, the Workers Party continued its defeatist policy on the ground that Russia was a subordinate partner of American and British imperialism. This empiricism was soon left without a base by the development of events which demonstrated that Stalinist Russia was playing no subordinate role.

Today, the Workers Party wavers between the conceptions that the Russian state is equally reactionary with capitalism, a slave state worse than democratic capitalism, and the conception that Russia is a part of the collectivist epoch of human society. It now experiments with the idea of a bureaucratic collectivist epoch for the whole world which expresses itself most clearly in the political attitude to the Stalinist parties in Europe and Asia.

The minority in the Workers Party has taken the position that Russia is a capitalist state subjected to the fundamental contradictions of capitalist production. It has always based its defeatist policy for Russia upon the economic structure of the Russian state.

International Conference

In the light of the above, the WP proposes to the Fourth International -

That an international conference be immediately prepared, whose main tasks would be:

- a) The unification of all Fourth International groups which stand on the principles of the Fourth International.
- b) A re-examination of the Russian Question.
- c) A reaffirmation of the Marxian analysis of our epoch as a conflict between proletarian power and the degeneration of society into barbarism.

J. R. Johnson