
Only Victorious Socialist Revolutions Can Prevent The Third World War!

*Manifesto of the Fourth International
to the Workers, the Exploited and the
Oppressed Colonial Peoples of the
Entire World* *April 1946*



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FOREWORD

The International Conference of the Fourth International, held in Belgium in April 1946, was an inspiring event and a great conquest for the world working class.

This Conference was composed of revolutionary communist fighters, representing Trotskyist parties which have been subjected to savage persecutions for their devotion to the cause of labor. Convened in the face of the gigantic obstacles of the postwar period, it was an even more representative gathering than the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in 1938. Participating in the work of the 1946 Conference were delegates from the principal European sections, France, England, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Ireland and Switzerland; in addition there came representatives from the Western Hemisphere and from colonial countries.

The Socialist Workers Party of the United States, although not formally affiliated to the Fourth International because of the anti-democratic Voorhis Act, is in complete solidarity with the political ideas and the decisions of the International Conference.

The Conference issued two main political documents. The first of these was the Manifesto printed here, "Only Victorious Socialist Revolutions Can Prevent the Third World War!" This Manifesto was first published in English in the May 11, 1946 issue of the American Trotskyist weekly newspaper **The Militant**. The other main programmatic document adopted by the Conference was the political resolution entitled "The New Imperialist 'Peace' and the Building of the Parties of the Fourth International." This was published in the June 1946 issue of **Fourth International**, monthly magazine of the American Trotskyists, and is now in preparation for publication as a pamphlet by Pioneer Publishers.

June 15, 1946

Only Victorious Socialist Revolutions Can Prevent The Third World War!

MANIFESTO OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The first world-wide conference of the Fourth International since the conclusion of the second imperialist war meets at a time when the crisis of society has reached unprecedented depth and breadth.

In the very sight of the smoldering ruin and devastation and bloodletting of the last holocaust, the third world war is being prepared! The empires of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Japan have been destroyed by the "United Nations." But already the victors are engaged in a furious race among themselves for the possession of the most perfected weapon of destruction, the atomic bomb. What the totalitarian war fought with flying fortresses and super-tanks, buzz-bombs and bazookas, flame-throwers and katinikas has still left standing, faces complete annihilation by this most dreadfully thoroughgoing of all death-dealing inventions. Thus the crisis of humanity has become a life-and-death question in the deepest and most literal sense of the words.

The Fraud of the "Four Freedoms"

The second imperialist war was solemnly consecrated by the governments of the "United Nations" and their flunkies at the head of the "socialist" and "communist" parties as well as the trade-union bureaucrats, as a war against fascism and for democracy. It was a war for the "Four Freedoms" in the words of its foremost protagonist, the late leader of American imperialism, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Instead of "Freedom from Fear," mankind faces the threat of atomic self-destruction.

Instead of "Freedom from Want," three-fourths of the world is plagued with starvation and disease.

Instead of "Freedom of Speech," the vast majority of the peoples are forced to obey the dictates of military governments or the puppets of the victors.

Only the spurious "Freedom of Religion" remains, in the hands of the rulers always a pliant tool by means of which to create rancor and strife among the ruled.

That is the true face of the promised freedoms. Meanwhile, under the benevolent eye of the victors, fascism raises its head again under new forms, as in Italy with the "l'Uomo Qualunque" movement, and elsewhere.

These were the **alleged** aims of the war, the promises brandished before the masses of the people. They have proved to be a pack of deceitful lies. In the Manifesto of the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International in May 1940, we branded these lies in advance. The Fourth International alone told the truth!

"Contrary to the official fables designed to drug the people," the 1940 Manifesto written by Trotsky said, "the chief cause of war as of all other social evils—unemployment, the high cost of living, fascism, colonial oppression—is the private ownership of the means of production together with the bourgeois state which rests on this foundation."

Like Lenin during the First World War we warned: "But as long as the main productive forces in society are in the hands of the trusts, that is, of tiny capitalist cliques, so long must the struggle for markets, for sources of raw materials, for the rule of the world inevitably take on a more and more destructive character."

These were the **real** aims. These remain today the motive forces leading to the next war.

If victorious revolutions of the working class do not supplant the rapacious system of private property and establish a planned socialist order of production for use, we repeat with Lenin and Trotsky, imperialist war is sure to follow once more. This time, accompanied by atomic annihilation of the entire industrial areas of whole countries at once.

This manifesto is therefore directed to the workers, the exploited, the oppressed. The fate of mankind rests in their hands and in their hands alone. It is to them that this Conference of the Fourth International, the World Party of the Socialist Revolution, turns with its explanation

of the situation we face together and it is they whom we summon to action against the rulers of the world.

Results of the First World War

The real aims of the war were the struggle for markets, for sources of raw materials, for hegemony of the world economy. Two sets of capitalist powers faced each other in the conflict.

There were on the one side the old and bloated imperialist nations like England and France, who had long ago divided up among themselves the lion's share of the world's markets into colonies, but whose antiquated industrial technique made their economic hold very tenuous.

On the other side were the younger imperialist nations like Germany and Japan, which rose late in capitalist development, benefited from that fact in order to equip themselves with the most modern industrial plant, but found the world market already divided and colonies obtainable only by force of arms from the older powers.

In the sphere of the former were also such "sated" secondary powers as Belgium and Holland. In the sphere of the latter, such "hungry" powers as Italy. Their alignment was predicated upon their early or late arrival on the scene of capitalist development.

Hovering over the lot was the threat of the newest capitalist giant, the United States of America. Although it too came late on the scene, America possessed a vast internal market, which enabled it for a long time to enrich itself without coming into direct clash with the other powers and at the same time to build the most modern productive plant in the world. In the First World War, which was only a prelude to the Second, the United States had participated only as a preventive measure. It wanted to forestall the threat of Germany's swallowing up all of Europe.

Meanwhile, the productive apparatus of world capitalism as a whole had expanded to such an extent as to make even the existing market shrink by comparison. The struggle for markets thus brought every imperialist nation into conflict with every other imperialist nation. Resort to war was determined only by the degree of desperation for markets. "Export or die" was the battle-cry of Nazi Germany in its struggle for "living space."

Already in the First World War, while defeating Germany, both England and France became greatly weakened

economically to the great benefit of America, which came out of the war with the greatest gains.

But a factor of the first importance which reduced the market for capitalism as a whole was the great proletarian revolution in Russia in October 1917. By abolishing private property and socializing all industry, the revolution led by the Bolshevik Party at one stroke withdrew one-sixth of the earth from capitalist exploitation.

Under the impact of this event, the first great colonial uprisings took place in the Far East, warning imperialism of the coming universal revolt against its rule. All capitalist powers, after vain attempts to crush the young socialist republic by armed intervention from 1917 to 1921, cast greedy eyes upon this lost market. Their fear of further loss by the spread of the revolution to Europe and their desire to recoup the original loss, attenuated for more than twenty years the struggle they were conducting among themselves. That is why all the victors of 1914-18 aided in rebuilding capitalist Germany. They meant to use Germany as a battering ram against the USSR. At the same time, England hoped by doing her share toward this end to keep her French competitor weakened and to find alliances against the American colossus. France and America had similar aims.

Rise and Fall of Nazi Germany

But German capitalism, once helped to its feet, with the high degree of technical culture it had attained, would not rest content with this role. Since the unification of Europe had not been accomplished by a victorious proletarian revolution throughout the continent, the German capitalists undertook this task by reactionary means. That was to be their springboard in the struggle for world domination. To carry out these ambitions, they chose the most murderous and barbaric form of government yet known — the Nazi state of Adolf Hitler. The task of the Nazi state was to subjugate the working class at home, crush the USSR and enter into struggle with the USA for hegemony of the world.

The initial phase of this task was directly aided by the "democratic" powers. It was facilitated by the bankrupt, cowardly, and treacherous policies of the Social Democracy, the Stalinists, and the trade-union officialdom. Even when their own skins were at stake, the latter could not form a united front of the working class to struggle against

Nazism. The later phases brought on the clash with the Western powers, on whose side first the Social Democrats and later the Stalinists then participated in the war.

In the Far East, the imperialists similarly looked upon Japan as a bastion against the USSR. There, too, Japan was not content with its role. Swallowing up half of China, with the toleration of the other powers, the Mikado's empire set out to challenge British and American domination over the markets in the Pacific, with the aim of creating a Japanese "Greater East Asia."

The economic resources of Italy, Germany and Japan proved insufficient for the vast totalitarian second imperialist war that ensued. One after another, they finally succumbed in the struggle. But England, France, and the other secondary powers were not any more equal to this struggle of world proportions. Both have come out of the war vastly reduced in stature, their economy weakened as never before, their empires threatened with disintegration. Their real aims in the war—to retain their markets, to continue and increase their colonial exploitation, to safeguard their age-old profit system—were not attained any more than were Germany's and Japan's.

The Capitalist Victors and Their Prospects

Only the United States came out of the war tremendously strengthened. Its rivals, Japan and Germany, lie in ruins. Its allies, France and England, have become indebted to it to the point of vassalage. But what price victory for the American imperialists?

The USSR, that great sector of the world market withdrawn from capitalist exploitation in 1917, still stands. It even threatens to engulf numerous other countries around its borders, thus further causing the capitalist market to shrink.

The remaining world under capitalist rule has been vastly impoverished and devastated by the war and the purchasing power of its population reduced by half. At the same time, American productive capacity has, in the course of the war, more than doubled.

Even if its domination were absolute and unchallenged in the capitalist world, American imperialism could gain profits only during a short boom, while the shelves at home and abroad are still altogether empty because of the conversion of all industry in the past period to war produc-

tion. Once reconverted industry begins to satisfy pent-up demands, American capitalism must face the crisis of "overproduction": a depression so acute as to put in the shade the memories of 1929-33 with the 15,000,000 unemployed at that time.

But Wall Street's domination is neither unchallenged nor absolute. The other capitalist states, with their lower standard of living and lower wages, still retain a certain degree of importance as competitors to harass it.

A resumption of planned production in the USSR, and particularly its acceleration with a revolutionary overthrow of the Stalin regime and reinstatement of workers' democracy, is an ever-present threat.

Meanwhile the colonial world is rife with revolts — beginning with Indonesia and Indo-China and penetrating India and China as well, not to speak of the Near East and Africa.

The masses of Europe have entered into a sweeping swing to the left, challenging the whole system of capitalism including that of the oldest bourgeoisie in the world, England. Only the cowardice and treachery of the traditional workers' parties (Labor Party, Socialists, Stalinists) to whom the workers turned in the first phase of this swing, and the continued absence of mass revolutionary parties, have for the moment arrested its transformation into successful revolutions.

Wall Street's own army, reflecting the moods of the toiling masses from whom its ranks hail, clamors to go home from all the outposts of the world. The GIs do not want to serve as overseers of a world of slaves. And at home, Big Business has initiated a wage-freezing and union-breaking drive in order to prepare for cheaper production with which to consolidate the markets won by military might. But the masters face a rebellious wave of millions upon millions of strikers resisting this drive, fighting to bring their earnings in line with the rising cost of living.

The Results of World War II

Even as regards their real aims, the second imperialist war has resolved none of the basic problems of the world's rulers. On the contrary, they have become more acute than ever. As long as private ownership of the means of production, as long as production for profit, as long as the search for the elusive market amidst a constant decline

of the masses' purchasing power continue — that is, as long as capitalism continues to exist — so long must misery and chaos and the inevitable and futile recourse to war persist.

The second imperialist war, with its 50 million dead and 50 million crippled victims, with its hundreds of millions uprooted from hearth and home, with its immense destruction of cities and devastation of fields, solved nothing. **But it was inevitable.** The coming third world war, whose only conclusion can be the atomic annihilation of the human race, is just as inevitable as long as capitalism exists.

Make no mistake about it. The third world war is on the way. The anti-Soviet, anti-Communist harangues of Churchill; the spy-scares around the atomic bomb; the orders reestablishing secrecy of troop movements and reactivating air forces in the American army — all these are drum-beats announcing it. In their greed for super-profits the capitalist rulers are entirely heedless of the fate of mankind. The two world wars since 1914 have demonstrated this with shattering effect. Only successful proletarian revolutions which will transform society into a planned socialist order can prevent the third world war and the barbaric self-annihilation of-humanity.

Power of Marxist Prognosis

When the Nazi panzers rolled over Europe to the English Channel and Hitler still maintained his pact with Stalin, certain impressionable people, rejecting Marxist theory, drew "innovating" conclusions. Europe, according to them, faced a whole epoch of the "New Order." Some even went so far as to see in the events, and in the fact of the Stalin-Hitler pact, the rise of a new class replacing the entrenched capitalists as well as the proletariat which challenges for hegemony of society. They spoke of the new "managerial society," which bracketed under one head: the National Socialist Party of Hitler, the Fascist Party of Mussolini, the New Deal of Roosevelt, and the Stalinist bureaucracy. These innovations found wide currency among the petty bourgeoisie and even penetrated into the ranks of the workers' vanguard. The Fourth International, defending Marxism against the revisionist "innovators," wrote in its Manifesto in 1940:

"In return for the enslavement of the peoples Hitler promises to establish a 'German Peace' in Europe for a

period of centuries. An empty mirage! The 'British Peace' after the victory over Napoleon could endure a century—not a thousand years! — solely because Britain was the pioneer of a new technology and a progressive system of production. Notwithstanding the strength of her industry, present-day Germany, like her enemies, is the standard-bearer of a doomed social system."

How quickly this evaluation has been verified! How quickly have the evaluations of the revisionists been refuted! The power of the Fourth International lies in its program, which is capable of withstanding the test of great events.

The fall of Nazi Germany as well as that of Fascist Italy merely proved that even the most brutal and open form of state dictatorship cannot solve the tangled contradictions of the capitalist class. Frenetic fascism and decadent bourgeois democracy are doomed because they are merely different forms of the same decayed social system long ago condemned by the development of the productive forces.

The Fourth International in 1940 also castigated the lie that the United States, victorious in the war, would sponsor a democratic European federation of states, sharing the world market with it.

"The state is not an abstraction," the Manifesto said, "but the instrument of monopoly capitalism. . . . Voluntary renunciation by the most powerful state of the advantage given by its strength is as ridiculous a Utopia as voluntary division of capital funds among the trusts."

As to the future of the USA itself, the Manifesto declared: "However, the industrial, financial and military strength of the United States, the foremost capitalist power in the world, does not at all insure the blossoming of American economic life, but on the contrary invests the crisis of her social system with an especially malignant and convulsive character."

Compare these prognoses made six years ago with the reality of today. In every important respect the analysis of the Fourth International has stood the test of time!

Basic Antagonism in World Today: USSR versus World Imperialism

At that time, conjunctural considerations based on the Stalin-Hitler pact aroused speculations about the "fun-

damental" alignment of the USSR with the fascist states, just as the rupture of the pact and the unleashing of the war between the partners later gave rise to allegations of a "fundamental" alignment of the USSR with the "democratic" states. The theses of the Fourth International long ago gave an evaluation that remains valid:

"Episodic agreements between the bourgeoisie and the USSR do not alter the fact that 'taken on the historic scale the contradiction between world imperialism and the Soviet Union is infinitely more profound than the antagonisms which set the individual capitalist countries in opposition to each other.' "

Only on the basis of this evaluation could the unleashing of Hitler's war against the USSR be explained after the Stalin-Hitler pact. Only on the basis of this evaluation can the current violent war-mongering campaign of American imperialism and its British junior partner against their Soviet ally of yesterday be explained today.

The whole period of world politics before us is characterized by this basic contradiction. As long as the USSR exists with its present social structure, despite the ever more monstrous degeneration it has undergone under the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy, it remains an obstacle on the path of the imperialist greed for markets. The Second World War did not solve this contradiction but only sharpened it.

The laying waste of the whole industrial western regions of the USSR has weakened the Soviet Union tremendously from an economic point of view. The reactionary, chauvinistic, and pillaging policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy has weakened the USSR politically by alienating wide strata of its natural allies, the masses of Eastern Europe. But the very fact that the USSR has survived the war, that the bureaucracy has not been able to destroy its social foundations from within, and has even been forced to give an impetus toward the social transformation in varying degrees of the economies of the countries occupied by the Red Army under its command, has increased the acuteness of the problem of imperialism. That is why the imperialists have posed the settling of accounts with the USSR as their most pressing task.

The Fourth International remains unreservedly for the defense of the USSR against imperialism. But this defense, now more than ever, can be only a revolutionary defense. counter-revolutionary policies of the Kremlin. Consequently, it can have nothing in common with the

Role of Stalinist Bureaucracy

“The defense of the USSR coincides in principle with the preparation of the world proletarian revolution. We flatly reject the theory of socialism in one country, that brain child of ignorant and reactionary Stalinism. Only the world revolution can save the USSR for socialism. But the world revolution carries with it the inescapable blotting out of the Kremlin oligarchy.”

From 1924 on, when this nefarious theory of “socialism in one country” was first proclaimed by Stalin, the policy of the Kremlin has served to prevent the establishment of socialism in any country. In practice, this theory was meant to justify the entrenchment of a privileged caste of nationalist bureaucrats. Basing itself on the isolation of the young Soviet state amidst the decline of the first revolutionary wave in capitalist Europe, and on the fatigue caused by years of civil war in Russia itself, the bureaucracy sought to assure itself a privileged position at the expense of the masses on whose backs it climbed to power. Rejecting the internationalist policy of Lenin which, with the aid of the workers in all lands, saved the USSR in its first years against imperialist intervention, the Stalinist clique utilized the Communist International he founded to undermine a whole series of revolutionary opportunities.

Thus, in 1926, at the time of the British General Strike, it made opportunist deals with the Laborite trade-union council to prevent the revolutionary development of the great strike wave. In China, from 1925 to 1927, it bound the Communist Party hand and foot to the politics of the bourgeois Kuomintang, which eventuated in the dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek, the hangman of the Chinese proletariat. From 1929 to 1933, it promulgated the concept of “social-fascism” to lump Social Democrats and Nazis under one head, preventing a united-front struggle of the workers’ organizations and thus permitting Hitler to come to power. In 1936, when the wave of sit-down strikes raised the question of power in France, the “People’s Front” which it had created with the reformists worked to tie the working class to the capitalists. When the civil war broke out in Spain that year, the “People’s Front” did everything in its power to restrain the revolutionary action of the masses and to confine them within the stranglehold of bourgeois democracy, thus making possible the victory of Franco. The development of this whole policy was motivated by the desire to ward off attacks from without and permit

the bureaucracy to entrench itself within the USSR, by currying favor with the capitalist rulers and their petty-bourgeois agents among the masses. In the process the Communist parties were transformed into mere tools of the Kremlin's foreign policy. The natural allies of the USSR, the masses in all capitalist countries, were led by the Stalinists from defeat to defeat.

Within the Soviet Union itself, the Kremlin oligarchy developed a violent wave of repression against the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky. For Trotsky pointed out each step in the growing betrayal, from the proclamation of the theory of "socialism in one country" to the strangling of the Spanish revolution. Only the advanced Communist militants in all countries, rallying to the banner of Trotsky and the International Left Opposition, could at first grasp the counter-revolutionary import of this evolution of the clique which usurped power in the first workers' state. But the Moscow Trials and the blood-purge of the whole generation of Lenin's co-workers in 1937 began to open up the eyes of ever wider strata of workers to the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism.

The Stalin-Hitler pact was accompanied by the partition of Poland and the whitewash propaganda picturing Nazi imperialism as "peace-loving." Fascism became, according to Molotov, "a matter of taste." Broad masses of workers everywhere were repelled by this vile self-debasement of the Kremlin. When Hitler repaid the Stalin clique for this service which inaugurated the war, by unleashing his whole war machine against the Soviet Union, the Kremlin made an about-face. In a campaign of the wildest chauvinism, Stalin branded not only the "peace-loving" Nazi band of yesterday, but **the whole German people**, for the crimes of Hitler!

Kremlin's Policies

Today, with the military action concluded, the Red Army under Stalinist orders is directed to plunder and pillage industry and homes in Germany, in Austria, in all conquered Eastern Europe. The aim is allegedly to rebuild ruined Soviet industry. That is a foul lie. The pillage and plunder are intended solely to cover up the bankruptcy of the Stalin regime, against which the Soviet masses are growing increasingly restive.

The present foreign policy of the Kremlin, which serves only the bureaucracy and its privileges, is directed ostensibly to strengthen the USSR against imperialism, just as

the whole pre-war policy was directed toward "neutralizing" the capitalist states and preventing war. But the bloc with the British trade-union fakery, the capitulation to Chiang Kai-shek, the betrayal of the French and the Spanish revolutions, the allowing Hitler to come to power without a struggle, and finally the Stalin-Hitler pact—all these "clever" maneuvers—did not prevent Hitler's war and the devastation of half of Soviet industry. They weakened the Soviet Union tremendously and threw back its progress for years. In exactly the same way, the present counter-revolutionary policy of pillage and plunder in Eastern Europe and Asia, and of outright suppression of the movement of the masses in these countries, cannot but lead to the inevitable strengthening of American imperialism and the preparations it is making for the ultimate crushing of the USSR.

In 1940, Trotsky wrote:

"As a consequence of the first period of the war, the international position of the USSR, despite the window-trimming successes, has already obviously worsened. The foreign policy of the Kremlin has repelled from the USSR broad circles of the world working class and the oppressed peoples. . . . Meanwhile Germany has obtained the most important and the most industrialized section of Poland and gained a common frontier with the USSR, that is, a gateway to the east."

A year later, this warning was completely borne out!

Today the Fourth International warns: In spite of the advances in territory, in spite of the wholesale looting, the policy of the Kremlin has in this latest phase of the conflict still further weakened the international position of the USSR. The peoples of Eastern Europe smart under the criminal policy of the Kremlin and turn, as the elections in Austria and Hungary have shown, to the most backward parties as an expression of their anger. In the Far East, the insurrectionary mood of the masses is making itself felt not only in the territories under British and American domination, but also in Korea and Manchuria, where the Red Army rules. Meanwhile, American imperialism has penetrated the very outposts of the USSR everywhere, strategically encircling its territory from Eastern Europe to China, the whole stretch of the globe.

The Kremlin oligarchy thus only facilitates the aims of imperialism against the USSR itself and at the same time undertakes the task of directly suppressing the in-

dependent movements of the masses for their emancipation, hatred and fear of which it shares with the capitalist rulers.

Only the revolutionary action of the masses can forestall the plans of predatory imperialism, defend the USSR by extending the social overturn of October 1917. But the revolutionary action of the masses is possible only in struggle for the overthrow of the counter-revolutionary Stalinist regime in the USSR itself and its replacement by soviets elected freely by workers and peasants. The defense of the USSR thus implies directly the defense of the European and world revolution against Stalinism.

Present Revolutionary Situation

Are the conditions ripe for the revolutionary action of the masses? Will not Stalinism on the one hand, and the Social Democratic helpers of world imperialism on the other, prevent revolutionary developments once more from reaching a successful conclusion? Will the Fourth International, with the small forces at its disposal today, succeed in overcoming these obstacles and in giving leadership to the masses? These are questions that no doubt are bound to be raised by serious-minded workers.

The past defeats of the working class, under Social Democratic and Stalinist leadership, hang heavy indeed. These were grave blows. The great weight of Stalinism today undoubtedly remains a grave obstacle. But as against these, there must be weighed the fact that today the critical situation of world capitalism is by far graver than ever before. That is the point of departure for revolutionists, for those who seek to point out the road to action to the masses.

Long ago the Fourth International enumerated the conditions for the workers' revolution:

"The basic conditions for the victory of the proletarian revolution have been established by historical experience and clarified theoretically: 1) the bourgeois impasse and the resulting confusion of the ruling class; 2) the sharp dissatisfaction and the striving toward decisive changes in the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie without whose support the big bourgeoisie cannot maintain itself; 3) the consciousness of the intolerable situation and readiness for revolutionary actions in the ranks of the proletariat; 4) a clear program and a firm leadership of the

The World-Wide Voice of the Fourth International



These are reproductions of the mastheads of some of the publications — newspapers, magazines and pamphlets — which are published in almost every written language of the globe by the parties of the Fourth International. They all speak one message—the message of emancipation from capitalism through international socialist revolution.

proletarian vanguard—these are the four conditions for the victory of the proletarian revolution.”

Never has the impasse of capitalism been more tangled or the confusion of the ruling class more widespread. In one country after another, inflation is rampant. The burden of the state debt reaches astronomical figures. The decline in the standard of living and the impoverishment of the masses of the population as a whole reaches unprecedented proportions. In spite of a degree of government regulation and control never before attained, the economic crisis continues to rise in a dizzy spiral and, being already acute in Europe and in the colonies, threatens to overtake the most stable economy in the world, that of the USA.

After the First World War the bourgeoisie, in order to reestablish the class equilibrium in society threatened by the revolutionary wave that commenced in Russia, resolved to make considerable economic concessions to the masses. It thus lent a certain degree of stability to the political regime of social reformism, which was called upon to save it from destruction. After this war such a strategy is a luxury which the capitalist class can no longer afford. Particularly in Europe, where unproductive expenditure for war needs and the vast destruction of capital values have enormously reduced the specific weight of the economy in the world market, the bourgeoisie can hope to rebuild ever so slightly its profit-making capital only by a further onslaught on the wages and living standards of the masses. But this holds true in a broader sense of England and the USA as well.

If the government is therefore permitted to fall into the hands of the Labor Party in England, or of a coalition of the Socialists and Stalinists with bourgeois-democratic parties in a “People’s Front” in France, Belgium, etc., **that is not the design of the bourgeoisie.** The ruling class tolerates these “leftist” regimes because the pressure of the workers and the mass of the population is too strong, their own forces are as yet too weak, for an open dictatorship. The capitalists reckon that the consequences of the economic breakdown will heap discredit upon the traditional parties of the masses which have been driven to take power. They correctly assess the cowardice of these parties, who fear to go beyond the limits of the bourgeois structure of the state, who leave the reactionary army and police setup unchanged, who stand in awe of private property which is so sacred to the bourgeoisie.

While the hatred of the trusts leads the workers and

peasants to clamor for the socialization of industry, the reformist parties in power are forced to take measures of "nationalization." But these measures **do not touch the property rights of Big Business**. They assure the owners of "nationalized" plants **full compensation**, thus imposing new burdens on an already overburdened economy. By means of government bonds issued to them in place of their former stocks, the capitalists are assured continued profits. The direction of "nationalized" industries, instead of being turned over to workers' committees, is in effect left in the hands of the old managers who serve the trusts. By means of these fictitious "nationalizations," the bourgeoisie thus aims to concentrate ever more the power over the whole economy in the grasp of monopoly capitalism.

While the Socialist and Stalinist ministers disarm the independent militias of the workers and peasants which sprang up in the course of the Nazi occupation, while they put down all manifestations of class revolt in the armed forces, the bourgeoisie concentrates the permanent apparatus of the state (army, police, secret service) in its own hands. Behind the scenes it prepares and conspires with royal dynasties and reactionary generals for the proper moment to seize full control of the state and set up new Bonapartist dictatorships.

Meanwhile, the whole policy of the bourgeoisie, based on the aggravated economic situation, is marked by indecision and vacillation. After more than a year of efforts to bolster his position by authoritarian ultimatums, de Gaulle steps aside and into the background in France. In Belgium the bourgeoisie alternately pushes forward and retreats in its campaign for the return of King Leopold. In Greece, the attempts to reinstall the monarchy under the protection of British bayonets foreshadow open civil war. And so forth, and so on.

Fate of Petty Bourgeoisie

At the same time, the petty bourgeoisie, upon whose support monopoly capitalism has in the past depended both for its internal aims (fascism) and for its foreign policy (war) has been torn loose from the control of Big Business. In the countries where fascism has been the state form no less than in the "democratic" countries, the process of proletarianization and pauperization of the urban middle class has not only not been halted, but accelerated by the wiping out of savings and the absolute decline in the standard of living brought about by inflation. On the other hand,

the peasantry which, as in every war, seems to have profited from the black-market conditions, is in reality no better off than before. Its profits are mainly in devaluated currency. With its paper riches it cannot buy the necessary and increasingly more costly agricultural machinery, fertilizer, cattle, etc. Thus a new and more acute agrarian crisis looms ahead.

Furthermore, the war has blown up the old petty-bourgeois illusions of national unity. The big bourgeoisie has revealed itself to be thoroughly "collaborationist." The discontent of the petty bourgeoisie and its efforts for a decisive change are revealed in the mass swing to the parties traditionally known to it as labor parties. The tremendous victory of the British Labor Party, the huge vote for the Socialists and Stalinists in France, in Belgium and in Italy, the mass support for the EAM in Greece, etc., etc., cannot be understood except in this light.

Meanwhile, the mounting waves of strikes, which involve one country after another in Europe and in the Far East, reaching their highest points in the American citadel of world capitalism itself and spreading into its semi-colonies in South America, attest by their persistence and high degree of militancy as by their advanced slogans ("for the sliding scale of wages," "open the books of the big corporations," etc.) to a growing consciousness of an intolerable situation in the ranks of the working class. The incipient formation, during the first period of the war's end, of workers' militias and factory committees in Italy, in France, in Belgium — for the time being thrown back through the connivance of the Stalinists and reformists with the bourgeoisie — were clear indications of preparation for revolutionary action.

If these elements in the preparation for revolutionary action have not yet matured actually in Europe, this is in no small measure due to the unprecedented physical collapse of Germany. The signal for the intensification of the revolutionary struggle all over the continent was expected in the form of the outbreak of the German revolution. The criminal campaign of chauvinism unleashed during the war by the Kremlin against the German people including the working class — and supported by the treacherous reformist and Stalinist parties in all the "democratic" countries — served to bewilder the German masses in the course of the catastrophic military developments and to paralyze their action with the increasing debacle of the Nazi regime. At the same time the "Big Three"

connived to prevent the outbreak of revolution by concerted physical destruction never before known to history (on a much larger and vaster scale than the bombardments against insurrectionary Turin and Milan after the fall of fascism).

Perspectives in Germany

Before the German working class, potentially the most powerful in Europe and the one with the longest revolutionary traditions, can take the road to revolution which it undoubtedly will, the physical prerequisites (reestablishment of a minimum of food, shelter, communications, and the return of its millions of young men from the prison camps) will have to be fulfilled. But the failure of the revolution to break out immediately in Germany has only slowed down the tempo of development. It has not in the slightest altered the trend.

In spite of this fact, in spite of the disarming of the workers' militias, in spite of the crushing of the armed struggle of the masses in Greece, we have not witnessed a turn toward reaction. None of these defeats has been decisive. On the contrary, all attempts of reaction to intrench itself (through the monarchy in Greece, Italy, Belgium, through the establishment of an authoritarian executive in France) have thus far met with the greatest resistance on the part of the masses, and failed of their purpose.

On the other hand, the workers do not confine themselves to combatting all these reactionary attempts. They go over to the offensive. The strikes against the freezing of wages, directed against the bourgeois regimes in which their "own" parties participate, objectively pose the question of state power.

While the revolutionary developments show a slackening of tempo in Europe, they take on a more accelerated pace elsewhere. The waves of strikes and soldiers' demonstrations in the USA testify to a speedy development of the revolutionary consciousness of the American masses, in the past much more backward than those in Europe in this respect. But of even greater importance is the present ripening of the revolutionary struggle in the colonies. Starting out with tenacious insurrections against British, French, and Dutch imperialism in Indonesia and Indo-China, and with an incipient revolt even against hypocritical "liberating" American imperialism in the Philippines, the wave of struggle in the Far East has penetrated the Indian masses,

where great political strikes and mutinies foreshadow the outbreak of nation-wide insurrections with the object of overthrowing all imperialist rule. The effect in China, and later in Japan, is certain to make itself felt. In the Near East as well, the persistent mass demonstrations and strikes of the Egyptian masses are the prelude to the revolutionary uprising of the masses in all the Arab lands.

The world situation thus shows all the earmarks of fulfilling the first three conditions for a victory of the proletarian revolution, which were posed in the Manifesto of 1940. What about the fourth—is there a “clear program and a firm leadership of the proletarian vanguard”?

Posed differently, the question is: In a situation which is undoubtedly more favorable for revolution than ever before, both because of its profound crisis character as well as its universal extent, does the party exist which is necessary to lead the revolution successfully? Shall we, in other words, succeed in transforming the present revolutionary minority into mass parties of the working class? Or will the old parties, the reformists and Stalinists, once again be able to betray the revolution?

To answer this question, we must put it in its proper setting. The present situation is not one of a conjunctural crisis. It is not a question of a single uprising in a given country. It is a question of a whole revolutionary period taking place on a world-wide scale. The capitalist world has no other way out except its prolonged death agony. In such a period the programs of the old parties — the Socialists and the Stalinists—cannot have the slightest validity among the masses. That is why they are bound to clash with them. On the other hand, our program is built precisely for this epoch. In the turbulent developments occurring before us, our program has already found and will continue to find growing response.

Only a few short years ago, skeptics and dilettantes ridiculed the Transitional Program of the Fourth International. Today its main slogans — **“For a Sliding Scale of Wages and Hours,” “For Nationalization Without Compensation,” “Open the Books of the Big Corporations to Inspection by Workers’ Committees,” “For Workers’ Militias,” “For a Workers’ and Peasants’ Government”**—are beginning to echo from the lips of millions in all parts of the world. The program is clear. The growing response it receives shows the great possibilities that open up for the building of mass parties of the Fourth International.

The building of mass parties, however, even in the

most favorable situations, is a process that entails great difficulties. A whole complex of organizational problems requires mastery. Confidence must be established in the relationship between the leadership and the party, between the party and the masses. Not everywhere is the process even. Undoubtedly there will be situations still where the failure of a mass party, of a revolutionary leadership to develop in time, will cause a partial defeat. But it is precisely because a whole epoch is involved that such defeats are partial, that the task of rapidly building mass parties is constantly posed before us anew, that the opportunities increase. That is the perspective on which the young parties of the Fourth International base themselves.

A firm revolutionary leadership is developed, in the first place, in defense of the program. If the program of the Fourth International is today beginning to penetrate millions, if it is beginning to be verified in the test of action, that is due first and foremost to the ability of the young cadre parties of the International to withstand all assaults on its foundations and to survive against all the obstacles placed in their path.

Fourth International Has Survived the Test of War and Reaction

The cadres of the Fourth International were gathered in the bitter struggle against the stream, in the years of reaction that followed the decline of the revolutionary wave after the First World War. The slogan of Trotsky, the founder of the Fourth International, was from the beginning of its development in 1923: "Back to Lenin!" That was the original battle-cry of the Trotskyist Left Opposition against Stalin and the whole clique that then began its counter-revolutionary course by revising the internationalist, class-struggle theory of Lenin and Marx. That was the battle-cry which in the years that followed signified the devotion of the Trotskyists to the program and concept of the Bolshevik Party, the first and only party in history which showed how the proletarian revolution can be successfully achieved.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, the Fourth International once again had occasion to fight other attempts to revise the foundations of the revolutionary program. This time in its own ranks. It was in that struggle that the Fourth International armed itself from within

against the trying test of the war years that ensued. "Back to Lenin," back to proletarian internationalism, to fraternization between the warring peoples, to the revolutionary defense of the USSR, to the continuation of the class struggle, to the preparation for the coming revolutionary tasks—that was the battle-cry of the Fourth International in the dark years under the Nazi terror and amidst "Allied" persecution.

The Second International disappeared without a trace and the Social Democratic parties within it became transformed into miserable propaganda agencies of Anglo-American imperialism. The collapse repeated in more grotesque form its performance of 1914-18.

The Third International, after being corroded by years of betrayal, was merely traded out of existence by Stalin in exchange for Wall Street's Lend-Lease.

All the centrist organizations, like the London Bureau, simply broke up into their component parts.

Only the Fourth International held high the banner of proletarian internationalism, of the revolutionary struggle against war. Only the Fourth International withstood the test of war. Only the Fourth International remained true to the program of Marxism, to the traditions of the October Revolution. "Back to Lenin" remains our battle-cry, for that is the battle-cry of proletarian victory.

Our Heroic Martyrs

The war has been a terrible trial for the Fourth International. Aligned against it were all the powers of present-day society, from imperialism and its war machines to the Stalinist bureaucracy and its GPU.

In the very first year of the war, in August 1940, the Fourth International was bereft of its founder and organizer, of the great revolutionary genius of our time. Leon Trotsky was foully assassinated by an agent of the GPU in Mexico. It was a monstrous blow. Our enemies thought that it was fatal for the young International. But Trotsky had built better than they knew. Trotsky was dead, but the International he built took the dastardly blow as a challenge. The Fourth International honored the memory of its great martyr by expanding and growing more than ever before.

In France, in Belgium, in Holland, in Greece, on the whole European continent the cadres of the Fourth Inter-

national were submitted to the murderous terror of Hitler's Gestapo.

Leon Lesoil, Marcel Hic, Pantelis Poliopoulos and their friends, a whole generation of heroic Trotskyist leaders, fell victims to Nazi and fascist bestiality.

Right in the midst of the Nazi domination of Europe, French and German Trotskyists together organized fraternization between soldiers and workers. They published and spread within Hitler's Wehrmacht the remarkable newspaper "Arbeiter und Soldat" which held high the banner of proletarian internationalism even as the storm of chauvinism was still raging. Sixty Trotskyist soldiers and workers under the leadership of the dauntless Victor Widelin paid for this work with their lives. Their memory will be cherished by all workers when the Fourth International triumphs.

In Greece, the vile agents of Stalin murdered over a hundred of the best fighters of the Fourth International right in the midst of the civil war of December 1944.

But they could not kill the world party of the socialist revolution. In spite of the frightful and debilitating losses, the sections of the Fourth International have grown all over the European continent.

In England and America, the "democratic" bourgeoisie clamped the Trotskyist leaders, alone among all the working-class parties, into the jails of Roosevelt and Churchill. They sought to decapitate the parties. But the British and American Trotskyists, no less than their European brothers, took the persecution as a challenge and redoubled their energies.

Even more vicious were the persecutions and jailings meted out to our comrades in India and China, in the colonies. But there, too, the fighters of the Fourth International proved equal to the challenge of the rulers.

In the very midst of the war, with terror and persecution at their fiercest, new sections of the Fourth International arose in India, in Egypt, in Italy, and in South America.

The fact that neither Stalin, nor Hitler, nor the "democratic" imperialists, were able to suppress the onward march of the Fourth International is a token for the future. It shows the workers that the surest way to overcome the treachery of Stalinism and reformism lies in rallying to the new parties, to the parties which learned to swim against the stream with the program of the Fourth International.

The test of the war has shown that the Fourth International is not only a living reality but possesses such vitality that not even the most adverse conditions can impede its growth. This Conference, calling the roll of the sections after years of interrupted relations, can proudly say to the workers of the world:

Your International lives! The Fourth International has survived the worst years of reaction and imperialist war! The parties of the Fourth International are everywhere in a process of growth and maturing!

More than that, this Conference can report to the workers of the world that, despite isolation and lack of direct communications during the war, the parties of the Fourth International find themselves in greater programmatic solidarity than ever! The strength of the Fourth International, its own experiences have shown, lies in its unshakable Marxist program. The survival and growth of the Fourth International in the struggle against reaction and war augurs well for the development of its sections into the mass revolutionary parties which are needed to transform the present favorable revolutionary situations into successful revolutions. The overthrow of capitalism, the next steps toward the establishment of the world federation of socialist states which alone can prevent the annihilation of another war and solve the crisis of humanity—that is the task for which the Fourth International has been prepared by its whole past.

Program of the Fourth International

This Conference of the Fourth International meets after the so-called "United Nations Organization" has adjourned its sessions in London and as preparations are being made to hold their "Peace" Conference at secret sessions next month in Paris. The UNO Conference was marked by clashes between the representatives of American and British imperialism on the one hand, and of the Stalinist bureaucracy on the other. Hypocritical concern over the fate of small nations served to cover up the clash. The "Laborite" Bevin bemoans the fate of Iran, Rumania, and Bulgaria at the hands of the Kremlin while continuing in full the arch-imperialist Churchill's policy in the British Empire and in Greece. The representative of the Stalinist bureaucracy, Vyshinsky, bemoans the fate of Greece and Indonesia at the hands of Britain while the Kremlin violates the conscience of the workers of the

world by its shameful actions in Eastern Europe and in Asia. Two bureaucrats, raised on the backs of the workers to power, play the game as "world rulers" according to the prescriptions laid down by rotten imperialist diplomacy. The UNO even elects the "Socialist" Spaak of Belgium as its chairman and the "Laborite" Lie of Norway as its general secretary.

But none of this "leftist" camouflage can hide the fact that the UNO is merely a new edition of that imperialist League of Nations which Lenin dubbed the "thieves' kitchen." Not a single act in this assembly aroused the slightest enthusiasm among the masses of the world. Its debates were watched with fear and apprehension, or at best apathy, by the world's peoples. No one expressed any hope that it would solve any of the problems facing humanity. It was simply accepted as a new arena of combat among the warring powers, completely belying its name. The "Peace" Conference in Paris is not regarded with any greater optimism.

But even while the diplomats are heckling each other in London or in Paris, the revolutionary storm is brewing in India, in Egypt. Developing events there follow the pattern set forth by the program not of the aborted UNO or of any of its participants—but by the program of the Fourth International. That is why we can say with assurance that the deliberations of our Conference are of infinitely greater importance than those of the bourgeois "international" with all its imposing facade and for all the labor-camouflage lent to it by the treacherous reformists and Stalinists.

This Conference of the Fourth International calls upon all workers, all the exploited and oppressed, not to despair at the handiwork of their masters, but to take up the struggle against them. Not merely to disdain their misleaders, but to impose upon them their own will. The present masters of the world dangle the threat of the horrendous atomic bomb to cow mankind. But they forget that atomic bombs, too, need the hands of workers to be produced. They forget that workers in uniform will be required to handle the dread weapons. Workers, filled with distrust for their greedy bosses, will know how to strike in atom-bomb factories as well as at other points of production. Soldiers, filled with hatred for their imperialist rulers, will know how to prevent the utilization of this weapon of self-annihilation. They need but the consciousness of the power of the world-wide solidarity of

the working class and of its revolutionary socialist goal. That is the only way to face the threat of the atomic bomb.

Call to Action

The World Conference of the Fourth International, in summoning the international proletariat to action, hails first and foremost the heroic struggle of the Indian and Egyptian masses who, as the Conference convenes, have entered upon the path of revolutionary overthrow of the yoke of British imperialism. It notes with satisfaction that in these mass upheavals signs are already evident that the attempt of American imperialism to profit from the dilemma of its British rival is being met with open hostility and demonstrative resistance. It warns against the attempts of the colonial bourgeoisie, tied to imperialism by its capitalist interests, to curb the struggle and sell it out. No trust in Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, and their counterparts! The struggle of India, Egypt, Indonesia, Indo-China, and of every other colonial people for national independence, for complete freedom from imperialist oppression, can be successful only by an uncompromising fight against the oppressors. Only the young working class, supported by the peasant masses, can lead the struggle to a victorious culmination!

Form your own workers' and peasants' council to organize the struggle! Seize the land for those who till it! Establish control over the factories by workers' committees! Do not permit the bourgeois leaders and the Stalinist betrayers to conclude a rotten compromise with imperialism! Demand the immediate convocation of a Constituent Assembly which will freely express the will of the people and their right to govern themselves as they wish!

The struggle of the colonial masses for freedom is part and parcel of the struggle of the workers in England, in Europe, in America, against the same imperialist masters. The Fourth International calls upon the workers of the great metropolitan countries to rally to the defense of the colonial masses!

Hands off the Indian Revolution! Hands off the revolution in Indo-China, in Indonesia, in Egypt, in the Far East and the Near East! That must become the determined cry of the workers in England, America, and Europe against the machinations of their capitalist masters!

The oppression in the old colonies is faced with

revolt just as the imperialist masters, in accord with the Kremlin bureaucracy, are attempting to foist the same kind of predatory oppression upon the masses of the defeated imperialist nations—Germany, Japan, Italy. The Fourth International calls upon the workers of the “democratic” nations to rise up against these reactionary plans.

Against the chauvinist lies which attempt to cast the war guilt of all the imperialists on the shoulders of the German, the Japanese, the Italian proletariat, the Fourth International calls upon the American, the British, and the European workers to demonstrate their class solidarity with the workers in the defeated countries. Withdraw the troops from Germany, Japan, Italy! Full freedom for the masses of these countries to decide their own fate—freedom of speech, of press, of assembly, free elections!

Only by raising these demands against the imperialist oppressors and their Kremlin henchmen can the German, the Japanese, and the Italian masses be won by the workers of the “Allied” nations for their common goal: the Socialist United States of Europe and the World!

In all countries, the raging inflation and enormous tax programs, by means of which world capitalism is attempting to shift the burden of its war debt upon the backs of the masses, must be met by the counter-offensive of the masses led by the working class. The Fourth International calls upon the workers to defend themselves through these slogans:

For the Sliding Scale of Wages to Meet the Rising Cost of Living! Tax the Rich, Not the Poor! Confiscate the War Profits of the Big Corporations!

At the same time, the bourgeoisie is planning to cast off the burden of the coming depression by throwing countless millions out of work, thus demoralizing the working class and dividing it against itself. The Fourth International calls upon the workers to combat the depression plans of the capitalists through the slogans:

For a Sliding Scale of Hours! Share the Work Among All Able to Work! Reduce the Work-Week Without Any Reduction in Pay!

The war has revealed what prodigious feats of production modern industry is capable of. But under capitalism these great productive efforts all go for war, for destruction. With the end of the war, factories stand idle—capitalism cannot produce for peace. The Fourth International calls upon the workers in every country to demand:

Open the Idle Factories! Operate Them Under Workers' Control! To the laments of the bourgeoisie that these measures would "ruin the economy," the Fourth International calls upon the workers to demand: **Open the Books of the Trusts to Inspection by Workers' Committees! Abolish the Business Secrets!** In this way the robbery and plunder of monopoly capitalism will be revealed to all.

In Great Britain, in France, in the other Western European countries, the leftward swing of the masses has put the monopoly capitalists and their trusts on the defensive. To the rising demand for the socialization of industry, the Labor government and the coalitions of social-reformists and Stalinists with the bourgeois parties are replying with "nationalizations" which leave the profits of the capitalists untouched. Thus the monopolists are in a position to utilize the cover of such "nationalizations" to increase their stranglehold over the economy. The Fourth International warns against these fake measures and calls on the workers to demand:

Nationalizations Without Indemnity and Without Compensation! For Workers' Control over the Nationalized Industries!

To put through these necessary measures, without which there is no way to prevent world-wide crises from plunging humanity deeper into the death agony of capitalism, the workers' organizations must break with the capitalist parties, must carry on independent working-class politics. The Fourth International therefore calls upon the masses to demand of their traditional organizations:

Break the Coalition with the Capitalists! Take Full Power! Form Workers' and Peasants' Governments! Apply a Genuine Anti-Capitalist Program under the Control and Protection of Workers' and Peasants' Committees!

The Fourth International puts forward these slogans while participating actively in the daily struggles of the masses, while going through their experiences with them and drawing the lessons of these experiences. In the course of the common struggle, the parties of the Fourth International unfold its full program, the program of the socialist revolution and the establishment of free workers' republics within the world federation of socialist states. In the fight for this program the Fourth International calls upon the workers to combat chauvinism, both of the reformist and the Stalinist variety. In the Eastern Eu-

ropean countries, particularly, it calls upon the workers to combat the fierce chauvinism of the Kremlin by fraternization with the troops of the Red Army. To combat the reactionary bureaucratic policy of pillage and plunder, they must unfold their independent movement of workers' and peasants' councils to enforce socialization of industry and the division of the land among the poor peasants, to fight for their democratic rights, for the right of all nationalities to self-determination. To fight successfully for these demands, the toilers of Eastern Europe will join forces with the workers of the USSR to overthrow the reactionary bureaucracy under Stalin and re-establish the workers' state as a genuine Soviet democracy.

In opposition to social-reformists and Stalinists, the Fourth International constructs its policy, not on the basis of the military and diplomatic designs of the capitalist states, but upon the crying needs of the workers, the exploited, the oppressed. Its program is the program of full emancipation of the working class from capitalist exploitation, of the colonial peoples from imperialist rule, of the Soviet masses from the blight of paralyzing bureaucracy. The Fourth International supports none of the existing regimes. It calls upon the workers to overthrow these regimes and to establish their own power. The overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of workers' power is a task that can be fulfilled only on a world scale.

Only socialist states, united in a world federation of socialist republics, can banish war for all time, organize production for use with plenty for all, and bring about the society of the free and equal. Only a socialist world federation can transform atomic energy from its present position as a threat of annihilation against mankind into an unprecedented boon for the progress of humanity.

This is our program, Workers of the World, there is no way out but this: to unite under the banner of the Fourth International!

**The International Conference of the
Fourth International, World Party
of the Socialist Revolution**

Brussels, April 1946

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