

Fourth International

The Russian Question Today

(Stalinism and the Fourth International)

Draft Theses of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International

The World Situation

and the

Tasks of the Fourth International

Draft Resolution of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International

NAACP Appeals to the UN

By ALBERT PARKER

Manager's Column

From imperialist-ravished Palestine, China, Siam and Singapore, as well as from Scotland and especially Canada, came new subscription orders and renewals in the last two months, while old and new readers in America have written us in praise of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**.

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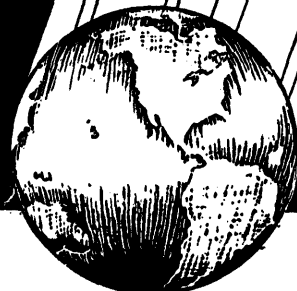
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A Correction

We take this opportunity to correct a serious error in the translation of E. Germain's article on Leon Trotsky which appeared in the July-August issue of our magazine. The English text contains the following statement: "The first important wave of workers' struggles in France was sufficient for organs as diverse, but equally hostile to our movement, as the Stalinist *L'Humanite* and Henry Luce's *Time* magazine, to discover 'Trotsky's shadow' projecting itself upon events" (p. 210). The author's reference was not to the daily periodical of the French Stalinists but to Sarragat's *L'Umanita* published in Italy.—Ed.

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The Russian Question Today (*Stalinism and the Fourth International*)

Draft Theses Adopted by the International Secretariat of the Fourth International

1. The Russian Question

The Historical Significance of the Developments in Russia

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

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

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

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

But the uprooting of all semi-feudal vestiges, the complete

elimination of economic domination by world imperialism, the extraordinary upswing of industry, the transformation of millions of backward illiterate peasants into industrial proletarians who have thus become conscious of modern wants, the rapid development of old towns and the accelerated appearance of new ones, the penetration of electricity and the tractor into the countryside—all this undoubtedly constitutes progress in relation to the semi-barbarous Russia inherited by the revolution from Czarism. This *contradictory process* defies any judgment proceeding from preconceived notions.

History has not yet pronounced its final verdict on the USSR. Its economy, its State, its culture, are undergoing constant change, which is far from having reached a definite conclusion. The composition of its social strata is subject to continuous and rapid variation. The proletariat, which emerged from the Czarist regime with the stirring memories of the October Revolution and entered upon the road of industrialization twenty years ago with fervor and enthusiasm, has given way to a working class newly drawn from the peasantry, whose immense creative energies are crippled by the Stalinist dictatorship. The peasantry of today, transformed by the tractor, the *kolkhoz* (collective farm) and the terror of deportations, only resembles superficially the old Russian peasantry. The workers' bureaucracy composed of upstart revolutionaries, has changed into a more or less closed caste, desirous of reviving the customs and nationalist traditions of the former ruling classes.

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

The Social Nature of the USSR

It was the proletarian revolution, i.e., the conscious action of the proletariat, which, in 1917, swept away the power of the capitalists and landowners. The production relations resulting therefrom: nationalization of the land, sub-soil and of all

the means of production, monopoly of foreign trade, expropriation of foreign capital, tendency towards conscious planning of economy—did not correspond to the level of development of the productive forces and could not, therefore, depend upon the automatic functioning of economy. Such production relations can only be maintained and developed on the basis of *workers' control* of production, the ever deeper transformation of the proletariat from the *object* into the *subject* of economy. The abolition of this worker's control, the complete exclusion of the proletariat from any, even indirect, participation in planning, can only widen the gap between the given production relations and those that guarantee the abolition of exploitation of man by man. In this sense, historic development has clearly changed direction in Russia. What remains of the conquests of October, is more and more losing its historic value as a *premise* for Socialist development. If these production relations have not yet collapsed, this does not mean, however, that we are witnessing their economic "stabilization." On the contrary, as in 1927 and 1937, the automatic economic process in Russia—abstracting therefrom the factor of the political dictatorship—would even today rapidly lead to the predominance of small handicraft and peasant production, which would effect a complete link-up with the capitalist world market. That not all of the October conquests have been overthrown, is due to the political expropriation of the proletariat, not by the old possessing classes or the new peasant bourgeoisie, but by the bureaucracy, whose social privileges rest on the production relations established by the revolution. The political dictatorship, today as twenty years ago, is decisive in preventing the complete collapse of planning, the break-through of the capitalist market and the penetration of foreign capital into Russia. However, in its bureaucratic form, this very dictatorship undermines more and more the production relations on the basis of which it keeps alive.

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

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

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

The fundamental contradictions of present Russian economy are the following:

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

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

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

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

- a) the productive forces are still far from adequate to give the State property a socialist character;
- b) the tendency towards primitive accumulation created by want breaks out through innumerable pores of the planned economy;
- c) norms of distribution preserving a bourgeois character lie at the basis of a new differentiation of society;
- d) the economic growth, while slowly bettering the situation of the toilers, promotes a swift formation of privileged strata;
- e) exploiting the social antagonisms, a bureaucracy has converted itself into an uncontrolled caste alien to socialism;
- f) the social revolution, betrayed by the ruling party, still exists in property relations and in the consciousness of the toiling masses;
- g) a further development of the accumulating contradictions can as well lead to socialism as back to capitalism;
- h) on the road to capitalism, the counter-revolution would have to break the resistance of the workers;
- i) on the road to socialism, the workers would have to overthrow the bureaucracy. In the last analysis, the question will be decided by a struggle of living forces both on the national and the world arena." (*The Revolution Betrayed.*)

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

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

The tendency towards primitive accumulation has strongly developed in the peasantry and has again openly penetrated the towns by means of cooperative industry and trade. The private employment of wage-earners is extending both in the towns and in the country, but its utilization remains restricted to the private satisfaction of needs of consumption by the privileged elements and to artisan production for the market. The rapid fall of social productivity of labor has made it necessary to introduce a system of compulsory labor on a vast scale, which is the only means whereby the State can get the workers to use all their labor force in the framework of the State sector of economy. The economic development no longer improves, but aggravates the living conditions of the broad masses of workers and is incapable of maintaining anything beyond the privileges of the bureaucracy. Not only does collective ownership not have a socialist character, but it is becoming more and more inadequate to guarantee, by itself, any further economic progress. The fall of productive forces resulting from the war only emphasizes the tendency inherent in bureaucratic management of becoming more and more an absolute brake on economic progress.

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

If we continue to apply the term "degenerated workers' state" to this social organism, we are perfectly aware of the weakness and the insufficiency of this definition. In reality, it is impossible to give any exact definition of present Russian society without a lengthy description. The relative superiority of this formula,—which could be re-formulated as: "Workers' state degenerated to the point where all progressive manifestations of the remains of the October conquests are more and more neutralized by the disastrous effects of the Stalinist dictatorship"—in comparison with all the others proposed up till now, lies in this, that it takes into account the historic origin of the USSR and at the same time emphasizes its non-capitalist character and the instability of social relations, which haven't yet acquired their final historic physiognomy, nor are likely to do so, in the next few years.

The Politics of the Stalinist Regime

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

If its regime seems to be "more stable" than the decadent capitalist regime, this is exclusively due to the fact that it has succeeded in using to its own advantage production relations which are infinitely superior to those of capitalism. In reality, the bureaucracy has, during the past twenty years, occupied a much less stable position in Russian society than the bourgeoisie, even the most decadent, occupies in its society. It has no juridical, political or economic safeguards of its privileges. It is in constant fear, not only of losing its privileges but also of losing its individual freedom and life; terror weighs on its privileged layers much more heavily than on the masses. The success of every bureaucrat does not depend on his birth, wealth, personal capabilities or on the success of his work, but on uncontrollable arbitrariness of the hierarchy. Not only has the bureaucracy not worked out a distinct ideology, not only is it bare of any collective instinct, consciousness and cohesion characteristic of every social class, but in the course of the unceasing transformations which it has undergone, and as a result of the terrible losses entailed by the consecutive purges, it has become demoralized even before it could attain an understanding of its own role. It is a "class in the process of formation" which, before assuming the forms of a class, has completely degenerated and decayed.

The Stalinist dictatorship appears as a Bonapartist political

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

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

The relative stability of the political dictatorship, therefore, reflects:

a) The disorientation and prostration of the working class following the defeats of the international revolution and the Stalinist victory;

b) The inherent inability of the peasantry to put up an effective political opposition;

c) The incapacity of the bureaucracy up to now to oppose to Stalin an organized expression of its caste interests.

The *economic* policy of the Stalinist regime has been entirely dominated, for the last ten years, by the necessity of overcoming the crisis resulting from the tendency toward a lowering of the social productivity of labor. This means a long series of coercive measures by means of which the worker is to be tied to his place of work as the serf was tied to the land—the least breach of "discipline" must be severely punished, the length of the working day must be *practically* extended to the maximum physical limit, the minimum real wage must be *pressed* below the minimum living wage in order to stimulate an increase in individual production. The war, with its dislocation of economy, the loosening of the ties between all sectors of industry, the growth of inflation, the development of the free market, the appearance of millionaire kolkhozniks, has largely weakened the bureaucracy's control over the whole of economic life and removed more and more sectors from its direction.

The struggle for increased production in the framework of bureaucratic management is beginning directly to undermine collective ownership. In small handicraft and light industry, this struggle is at present being carried out on the basis of strengthening the tendencies toward private appropriation in the co-operatives. In agriculture, the introduction of piecework has been accompanied by the actual division of the kolkhozes into parcels of land on which the same families continue working, thus strengthening the trend towards the restoration of the bond between the agricultural producer and the land on which he works. Crowning all these empirical efforts there is the policy of plunder followed by the Stalinist regime in the Soviet "buffer zone" which clearly shows the incapacity of the bureaucracy

to further develop the productive forces on the basis of the mechanism inherent in Russian economy, and corrodes at the same time what is left of the conquests of October by an attempt at coordinating Russian collectivized economy with the capitalist economy in these countries. The bureaucratic regime is today Enemy No. 1 of all that remains of the conquests of October and threatens in the years to come, to lead Russia to a total decomposition of collectivized economy. A revolution is necessary not only for fresh progress toward Socialism, but also to save the production relations inherited from October.

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

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

The bureaucracy at first tried to meet this new situation with a policy of *compromise* with imperialism, by offering its services in suppressing the revolutionary movements and aspirations of the masses in most countries of Europe and the world. In exchange, it was given a "free hand" for its expansion in Eastern Europe (policy of Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam). It has endeavored to consolidate its sphere of influence through the establishment of governments with Stalinist allegiance and an ever greater hold over the economic resources of these countries. The stiffening of the attitude of American imperialism, profiting from a favorable relationship of forces, has rapidly put an end to Soviet expansionism, while at the same time the "neutralization" of the bourgeoisie in certain countries (France) outside the "buffer zone" proved bankrupt. This forces the bureaucracy, in dread fear of military conflict, to lay stress on an armaments policy, while reckoning that the unceasing economic and political crises—the outbreak of which must be aided by the Stalinist parties as far as possible—will paralyze world imperialism for a time and make a compromise possible.

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

For the New Russian Revolution!

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

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

- a) The historic superiority of the Russian production relations vis-a-vis those of the capitalist world;
- b) The objective weakening of world imperialism resulting from the exclusion from its market of the Russian sphere;
- c) The crushing of the USSR by imperialism, whilst bringing with it the destruction of the counter-revolutionary Kremlin caste, would, on an infinitely larger scale than was the case in Germany following Hitler's victory, entail a profound demoralizing and decomposition within the world working class; for the great majority of the workers, this would be a defeat of Communism and not of Stalinism;
- d) The necessity of preserving what is left of the conquests of October, as a condition—not sufficient, but necessary—for a socialist development of economy.

By defending the remnants of the conquests of October, we do not in any way consider the USSR as a whole. On the contrary, we believe that the policy and the very existence of the Stalinist bureaucracy constitute a permanent threat to all that is, in our opinion, still worth defending. The struggle against Stalinism and all its monstrous manifestations, including the fields of foreign and military policies, was already before the war one of the essential elements of our defense of what remains of the conquests of October. Beyond the frontiers of the Soviet Union, this strategy found its essential expression in the struggle for the world revolution, the only practical means for preventing in the long run a breakdown of the productive relations bequeathed by the Russian Revolution.

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

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

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

account (a) the situation of the world working class movement and its revolutionary possibilities; (b) further developments of the internal situation in the USSR; (c) the relative imminence of imperialist military intervention.

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

a) The gravest mistake one could make would consist in applying the strategy of the "defense of the USSR against imperialism" to the different tactical moves of Soviet diplomacy, to its temporary military withdrawals, to the concessions which it is forced to make to imperialism, etc. Far from attacking Stalin because he "does not properly defend the USSR" by giving up Trieste or Azerbeidjan, we must attack the fact that, like world imperialism, the Stalinist bureaucracy sees in the regions which it occupies or leaves, only objects of bargaining and exploitation and that it persistently tramples on the interests and most elementary needs of the masses in these areas. "Defend what is left of the conquests of October" means, in the face of these problems, to denounce the reactionary character of the Stalinist policy which lays the most solid bases for a concentration of petty-bourgeois, peasants, etc. forces in the camp of imperialism and fundamentally discredits the very notion of Communism in the eyes of the proletariat of these countries. This means, under all circumstances, not to remain silent on a single crime of the bureaucracy, not to offer an apology for a single one of the monstrous manifestations of its policy, which constitutes the main brake on a revolutionary development of the workers' struggle.

b) All formulas along the line of "last bastion of the Revolution," "first Workers' State in history," "country of the October Revolution," "Socialist economy," "workers' and peasants' power," etc. . . . which constitute gross deformations of a Marxist definition which has henceforward lost all propagandistic value, must be expunged from our vocabulary. On the contrary, our duty consists in *not using formulas and slogans* which may sow confusion, but patiently to explain our analysis of the real situation in the USSR to the advanced workers whom we must educate.

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

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

reaucracy. Contact with the more "prosperous" life of the capitalist countries has deeply shaken the attachment to the regime of hundreds of thousands of soldiers.

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

In view of the historically unique power of the repressive apparatus, the gradual development of a working-class opposition or the political coordination of the restorationist petty-bourgeois tendencies, contradicted by the whole evolution of the last decades, is extremely improbable. The forces which can bring about an explosion in the Stalinist totalitarian system are, on the one hand, the internal contradictions in the apparatus itself—which may suddenly erupt to the surface following a grave economic crisis, or a possible withdrawal from the "buffer zone" etc.; and, on the other hand, a violent outbreak of the masses' hatred at any moment of crisis, encouraged by an abrupt change in the international situation. History will probably show a combination of these processes. It is, however, more than likely that the fourth Russian revolution will not assume at the outset a clearly Bolshevik-Leninist character, but that it will start with a general offensive against the vile dictatorship by the workers and peasants, who will be joined by various privileged strata; and that a political differentiation will appear only after Stalin's overthrow.

"Defend what remains of the conquests of October" means, in the face of the inevitable downfall of the present regime, patiently to prepare the cadres who will be able, at the next stage, to play a decisive role in the mass struggle; which will be able to gain the confidence of the masses and thus prevent

the restoration of capitalism following the overthrow of the bureaucracy. This is why today as yesterday, we remain for the unconditional support of all workers' struggles, of all manifestations of workers' opposition against the Stalinist dictatorship, by means of which the new generations will be able to rediscover the road of Leninism and prepare the long, underground struggle based on dissatisfaction with the regime, which has already started.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Down with the bureaucratic gang of Cain-Stalin! Long live Soviet Democracy! Long live the international socialist revolution! [From *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*.]

2. Stalinism Outside Russia

The Nature of the "Buffer-Zone" Countries

In the countries occupied by the USSR, the contradictory nature of the bureaucracy is most clearly shown, and the overwhelming preponderance of its reactionary policy over its historic connection with the production relations inherited from the October Revolution can be grasped most clearly.

The countries of Eastern Europe which the Stalinist bureaucracy occupied militarily since 1944 were, with the exception of Finland, countries where the bourgeoisie, already very weak and dependent on foreign capital, had during the war suffered mortal blows from German imperialism on the one side, and the masses in revolt on the other. The Polish bour-

geoisie was largely decimated by the Nazis. In Yugoslavia, the bourgeoisie was completely uprooted by the civil war. In Czechoslovakia, it lost most of its positions in heavy industry owing to German imperialist expansion and, in May 1945, witnessed the seizure of its factories by the workers. In Bulgaria, it faced a revolutionary tide which threatened all its positions. In Hungary, Rumania and Finland, its economic structure was shattered by the war and the defeat. All these countries were ripe for the socialist revolution.

In the face of this mortal danger, the bourgeoisie in these countries sought and readily accepted a compromise with the Soviet bureaucracy, which was imposed upon it by the international balance of forces. This was a "lesser evil" compared to a

revolutionary overthrow. In Finland, Rumania and Hungary, it succeeded in effecting a poor transfer of power from one bourgeois combination to another, more acceptable to the bureaucracy. The bourgeoisie had to pay the following price for the maintenance of its essential social privileges:

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

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

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

The bourgeoisie of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, or rather, what remained of it at the time of the Russian occupation, had to give in to the combined pressure of the revolutionary tide and of the Soviet occupation, and accepted, without resistance, a series of economic reforms. In part, these corresponded to the needs of capitalist economy (necessity of making good the capital shortage; necessity of replacing the German owners, etc.) In part, they were due to the pressure of the Soviet bureaucracy. This acceptance assumed the form of a conscious compromise (Czechoslovakia) or an outright imposition (Yugoslavia), depending on the relative strength left to the bourgeoisie at that moment. Based on the same factor as well as on the degree of independence of the mass movement, the Stalinists were able to occupy more or less rapidly all the key positions of the bourgeois state apparatus.

During the whole of this first stage, Stalinist politics were dominated by their *counter-revolutionary* character. The latter was essentially shown in two ways:

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

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

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

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

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

The Soviet bureaucracy, on the other hand, cannot under any circumstances tie this bourgeoisie to itself from the economic point of view—in the same way as the imperialist bourgeoisie succeeded in allying to itself the colonial bourgeoisie. It cannot supply the "buffer-zone" countries either with capital or industrial equipment which these countries need to carry out their economic reconstruction. To the extent that these reconstruction needs make themselves felt more urgently, the bourgeoisie considers Russian exactions more and more odious. Its resistance to these exactions grows on the economic as well as the political field. At the same time, the growing difficulties of "nationalized" industry, the inflation and financial disorder, the rapid concentration of agricultural production in the hands of well-to-do peasants (in whose favor the agrarian reform has worked), the spread of speculation, the accumulation of foreign exchange by the commercial bourgeoisie, the famine, etc., multiply the difficulties facing the Soviet bureaucracy and its native Stalinist agents. They have no way of attaining, within the framework of capitalist production relations, the economic aims they are pursuing (reparation deliveries at fixed rates, increase of trade, increased production in the mixed companies, etc.).

In view of these difficulties, and in view of the fact that the bureaucracy can appeal to the masses only to a very limited extent (which is determined by the more or less complete control it believes it possesses over their movement), there are only two means of struggle left:

a) The elimination, step by step, through police terror, of all centers of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois opposition. This has so far been successful in Yugoslavia. In Bulgaria it has managed to eliminate the main centers, with the exception of the Church. In Poland, Rumania and in Hungary, it is driving toward the same objectives. In Czechoslovakia and Finland, where the position of the bourgeoisie is much more solid, the Stalinists have not yet seriously attacked the political power centers of the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie.

b) Imposition on the bourgeoisie of control measures, by political and police pressure which, while keeping economy on a profit basis, deprive the capitalists of the possibility of disposing of the means of production and force the economy to orient itself along the road dictated by Moscow. These measures are comparable to those imposed by German imperialism on the bourgeoisie of the countries occupied in Western Europe. But they differ from the latter insofar as the social nature of Russian economy is different from the capitalist economy of these countries and insofar as a total integration of these economies into Soviet economy necessitates their structural assimilation by the latter and the abolition of capitalism.

The tendency toward structural assimilation was at first manifested exclusively in the countries and areas annexed by the USSR (Karelia, Petsamo, Baltic countries, Eastern Poland, Bessarabia, etc.). To the extent that the bureaucracy repressed in these areas all revolutionary aspirations of the masses, the destruction of the old production relations could only take place by means of the physical destruction of the old owning classes (deportations to Siberia, mass expulsions, etc.). But it has also started to manifest itself in certain countries of the "buffer-zone" insofar as the bureaucracy is repeating, here, the experience of 1927, namely: That it is impossible to maintain and increase its resources by following a "course towards the kulak," by benefiting from bourgeois production relations. While being capable of imposing on the bourgeoisie, through diplomatic and military pressure, certain measures contrary to its interests (the "Molotov plan," unprofitable industrialization, etc.), the bureaucracy will, in the long run, prove incapable of

successfully carrying out the veritable structural assimilation which demands the destruction of capitalism. This can be achieved on so large a scale only by the proletarian revolution.

The *capitalist* nature of the production relations in the "buffer-zone" countries and the fundamental difference between their economy and that of Russia, even at the time of the NEP, can be clearly seen from the following factors:

a) Nowhere has there been any real large-scale expropriation of the bourgeoisie (a certain section of the capitalists were, however, placed in the category of "collaborators" and expropriated).

b) Nowhere have the nationalizations affected more than 60% of the industrial capital, employing more than 40% of the wage-earners. The majority of the proletariat is still employed by private capitalists. (The parallel figure for Russia during the NEP is 90%!)

c) The greater part of merchant capital remains in the hands of private capitalists.

d) The nationalized enterprises retain their own individual management and accounting system. They are not managed in the same way as the Soviet trusts or "combines."

e) Nowhere were foreign debts cancelled.

f) Foreign capital has nowhere been expropriated; where its property was nationalized, compensation is being paid.

g) The land has not been nationalized.

h) There is no foreign trade monopoly (although the Bulgarian and Yugoslav constitutions permit "complete State control" over trade).

The characteristic feature of the maintenance of capitalism—and the fundamental difference with the Russia of the NEP—is the fact that the possessing classes as such had been completely destroyed by the October Revolution, whereas they still exist in the "buffer-zone" countries to the same extent as they did at the beginning of the Soviet occupation. Only the Stalinists, who have developed the theory of a "new democracy," claim to be able to destroy capitalism "coldly," gradually, simply by the radiation of the USSR upon the "buffer-zone" countries. To deny the capitalist nature of these countries amounts to an acceptance, in one form or another, of this Stalinist revisionist theory. It means seriously to envisage the historic possibility of a destruction of capitalism by "terror from above" without the revolutionary intervention of the masses.

But the peculiarity of the "buffer-zone" countries consists in the fact that the Soviet bureaucracy has succeeded, for the time being, in orienting the capitalist State and capitalist economy in a sense corresponding, in the first place, to its own interests. This situation can only be *transitional*. It must end either in the bureaucracy's withdrawal from its position, under the pressure of imperialism and of the native capitalists in these countries, or in the real destruction of capitalism, which can take place only as a result of the revolutionary mobilization of the masses.

The Revolutionary Strategy in the "Buffer-Zone" Countries

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

a) The existence, in different degrees, of a Stalinist police

dictatorship in these countries (except for the present, in Finland and Czechoslovakia).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

b) The Bolshevik-Leninist militants must at the same time pronounce themselves as the firmest opponents of any return to the situation of the past. They must constantly warn the

masses against the manifestation and growth of the reactionary forces and clearly point out Stalinist responsibility for this situation. In the case of any reactionary restorationist *coups d'etat*, led by imperialist agents, they must mobilize the proletariat in order to resort to action and crush the forces which can only establish a bloody fascist dictatorship in the country (as in Greece). In such a case, a proletariat victorious against its own bourgeoisie, through its own revolutionary mobilization, would easily eliminate what remains of the Stalinist apparatus. Only the abstention of the proletariat and the lack of a revolutionary party could strengthen the Stalinist dictatorship after the defeat of the reactionary bourgeois forces.

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

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

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

Abolition of the peace treaties, reparations, etc.

Seizure of all "Soviet property" by the workers of the occupied countries.

Workers' control of production.

Expropriation of the bourgeoisie.

Real planning through the centralization of the industries and banks in trusts and in a State Bank.

Expropriation of foreign capital.

Election of factory managers by the workers.

Reduction of their salaries to those of skilled workers.

Right of the workers to dismiss their managers.

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

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

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

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

Stalinist policies in Eastern Germany and Austria are the clearest demonstration of the reactionary role of the bureaucracy in the "buffer-zone." This reactionary role is likewise the best

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

The Nature of the Stalinist Parties

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

From revolutionary parties, following a more or less mistaken—"centrist"—line, reflecting the zigzags in the orientation of the Russian Bolshevik Party under Stalinist leadership, they have turned into organizations whose only function is to serve the diplomatic maneuvers of the Soviet bureaucracy. The Stalinist leadership is, by virtue of this fact, "counter-revolutionary" in the same sense as the reformist leadership of Social Democracy; it wishes to prevent by all means the outbreak of the victorious development of revolutionary mass movements. However, the Stalinist parties, in the same way as the Social Democratic parties, subjectively remain workers parties—profoundly degenerated. This becomes clear the moment one applies the following criteria:

- a) The workers belonging to these parties consider them as workers' organizations and join them because they are aware of the necessity for a proletarian class organization.
- b) The bourgeoisie considers these parties as parties of the "class enemy" representing the proletariat, although it is aware of their subordination to the Kremlin.
- c) The bureaucracy of the Stalinist parties itself is aware that in order to play its role efficaciously, it must rely on and keep the confidence of the working masses.

The extraordinary upswing experienced by the Stalinist parties at the end of the war cannot be understood unless one considers this phenomenon with the general flow of the workers' movement. For the greater majority of the proletariat and small peasants in most countries of the world, their passing from Social Democracy, petty-bourgeois organization or poli-

tical passivity into the Stalinist parties, was the expression of their first stage of radicalization:

- a) The Stalinist parties still appear in their eyes as representatives of a revolutionary tradition.
- b) The masses had experienced for two decades the devotion and the courage of the lower ranks of the Stalinist cadres with whom they were in constant contact during all class struggles.
- c) The masses had not yet passed through their own experiences with the class treachery of the Stalinist leaders (long government experience).
- d) The dominant role played by Stalinist militants in the mass Resistance movements—which was above all due to the solid power and dynamism of their apparatus—as well as the victorious resistance of the USSR to imperialist aggression, had created new illusions among the masses concerning the possibilities of a social upheaval under the leadership of the Communist parties.

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

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

This turn is the logical outcome of the political evolution of Stalinism. From that moment, the aim pursued by the Communist parties has consisted more and more exclusively in blackmailing the bourgeoisie so as to obtain its neutral or favorable orientation toward the Kremlin and so as to preserve the Stalinist positions "conquered" in the bourgeois state apparatus. The Stalinist parties have become neo-reformist parties which are distinct from the reformist parties by their connection with the Soviet bureaucracy. Owing to fluctuations in the situation, temporary turns may be carried out to the right or to the left, within the framework of this fundamental orientation. A real return to a pseudo-revolutionary orientation comparable to that of 1939-41 is no longer possible, except in the case of the outbreak of the U.S.-Soviet war and the crushing of the mass movement. The Stalinists can take up again "revolutionary

language" only insofar as this language does not actually incur the risk of starting the proletarian revolution.

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

a) Beginning with 1944, the Stalinist parties for the first time penetrated the bourgeois state apparatus; at the same time, bourgeois ideology penetrated for the first time organically into their ranks. To the extent that the Stalinist bureaucracy starts having "private" interests to defend in each capitalist country, the reformist character of its policy must inevitably become more pronounced. While the Stalinist apparatus remained almost completely faithful to the Kremlin in 1939-40 because all its interests bound it to the Soviet bureaucracy, at present it is certainly more independent than at that time. Nevertheless, one should not expect large cracks in the apparatus in the eventuality of war, because all the leading strata of the Communist parties are entirely aware that only their link with the USSR allows them to play a political role "independent" of other reformist currents inside the labor movement.

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

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

The Struggle Against Stalinism

Leon Trotsky correctly described Hitler and Stalin as "twin stars." The main power of Stalinism and the essential chance of survival of world imperialism, lie precisely in their inter-

action, their mutual relationship in the consciousness of the masses. To the extent that U.S. imperialism shows increased hostility toward the Soviet bureaucracy and the national bourgeoisies intensify their campaign against the respective "national" Stalinist parties, the masses will inevitably tend to consider the Soviet bureaucracy and the Stalinist parties as anti-imperialist and revolutionary forces; and the masses will continue to give them more or less passive support, even in cases where they have already had their first experience with the treacherous class collaborationist policy of the Stalinist leaders.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

revolutionary wave. They will only be able to play this role to the extent that they appear under their true colors, which the masses will in no way be able to confuse with "left Stalinism."

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

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

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

c) Against Stalinism as a political party claiming to represent the working class—*constant exposure*—not doctrinaire, but educational and understandable to the masses—of the anti-working class policy of the Stalinist leaders; *revolutionary propaganda* enabling the masses to go through their own experience with the treacherous character of the Stalinist leadership; *untiring agitation* for proletarian unity of action for all

class objectives; *propaganda for a united front* under appropriate circumstances, and provided that a certain relationship of forces exists.

d) Fight against the GPU by all means.

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

Its course, which is that towards world revolution, cannot, at the present stage of development of the mass struggles, contain any trace of favoring either the Anglo-American camp or the camp of the Soviet bureaucracy. On both sides of the "iron curtain," our political line, determined by the immediate and historic interests of the oppressed masses, is that of their independent class struggle, oriented towards its transformation into the proletarian revolution. This is why, essentially, the struggle between the Greek partisans and the Sophoulis-Tsaldaris Government does not constitute, in our eyes, a struggle between the "two blocs" but a battle between workers and bourgeois. This is in the "buffer-zone" why we are on the side of the working masses—against the Stalinist regimes and against possible reactionary conspiracies of the imperialists. Everywhere, we take as our starting point the preponderance of this class struggle as the decisive factor in the political development.

3. The Discussion of the Russian Question

The Historical Significance of This Discussion

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

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

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

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

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

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

a) The degeneration of the workers' state is not the product of conditional factors (isolation of the revolution, backwardness of the country, interaction between the bureaucratization in Russia and the bureaucratization of the Communist Interna-

tional, etc.), but is inherent either in the nature of Bolshevism (the revolutionary party) or in the proletariat itself, or in a combination of both.

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

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

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

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

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

The most finished "pro-Stalinist" expression of this revisionism—under the pressure of Stalinism in France!—has been supplied by Bettelheim, Martinet and Co. in the *Revue Internationale*. By likewise applying the above-listed ideas, they come to the following conclusions:

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

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

The parallelism of these two revisionist tendencies strikes the eye. There is no room for them in the revolutionary movement. But some of their features appear at the bottom of mistaken conceptions on the Russian question which have found expression in our own ranks. What is important is first of all to lay bare the inner logic of this incipient revisionism and make its proponents aware of its dangerous consequences to the whole of Marxism. Secondly, one must carefully distinguish

between a revisionist position on the Russian question, which endeavors to remain within the framework of the Marxist conception of our epoch, and one which carries with it the risk of branching out more and more into a complete revision of Marxism.

"State Capitalism"

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

These analogies are, in the main, the following:

a) The analogy between the nationalization of the means of production in the USSR and the tendency toward the statification of the means of production in the capitalist world.

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

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

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

c) The analogy between "planning" tendencies inherent in monopoly capital and the Soviet planning. The national "plan-

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

There is a qualitative difference between these two tendencies. The one maintains profits as the regulator of economy and subordinates "plans" together with the whole of economic life not to the interests of an abstract "capitalism" but to the interests, quite tangible, concrete and definite, of the monopolists. Soviet planning, on the contrary, derives its profound impetus from the fact that private appropriation of surplus value has been radically suppressed, and that consciousness is beginning to replace profit—although in a distorted form—as the decisive element in the regulation of economic development.

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

Unproved Premises

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

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

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

It is up to the adherents of the theory of state capitalism to explain how the bureaucracy constitutes a "state capitalist" class,

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

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

"Bureaucratic Collectivism"?

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

Not only are they obliged completely to revise the Marxist conception of the development of capitalist society—which is based entirely on the polarization of society into two basic classes: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—but they also question a series of the fundamental bases of historical materialism in general. This is, of course, their full right. One must only ask them to be more logical. As Trotsky has already stated and as only the thorough-going revisionists (Macdonald, Burnham and Co.) have clearly expressed, the logical outcome of the theory of bureaucratic collectivism is the conception that the proletariat is incapable of fulfilling its historic mission and the rejection of Marxism as Utopian.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For it is evident that the Communist parties and their members do not play any independent role in the process of production and would become a “class” solely on the strength of political privileges. And it is evident that they can obtain these privileges only to the extent that the proletariat proves incapable of overthrowing decaying capitalism. A new stage would open up in the history of mankind, that of bureaucratic collectivism

on a continental (or even world) scale, more or less identified with “barbarism.”

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

Our Analysis Reaffirms Marxism

Every exploited class which takes over power in a society, where the development of the productive forces does not yet guarantee the satisfaction of all social needs, must necessarily pave the way to a class exploitation. For the building of a classless society a high level of social wealth is required. The Russian experience only confirms the second aspect of this Marxist law. For, while Russia’s level of development of the productive forces does not allow a gradual progress toward a classless society, world economy as a whole is over-ripe for the building of socialism. Just as Stalin did not understand the interdependence between the development of the capitalist world and Russian development, so this interdependence is ignored by all those who believe they discern new social forces in Russia, by abstracting the latter from the decisive active forces on the world arena.

“Every sociological definition is a historic prognosis,” Trotsky said. Since we consider that the struggle on the world arena has far from spoken its last word since we start from the assertion that the proletariat has preserved intact its revolutionary potential, we do not think that the historic phase of the October Revolution is already dead and buried, or that Russia is a demonstration—either as an isolated or a world symptom—of the proletariat’s incapacity to hold power, as well as a demonstration of the instability of the production relations established by the proletarian revolution. This is why our analysis of the USSR maintains the whole Marxist heritage, with its interpretation of history as the history of class struggles, with its scientifically precise definition of the concept of class, with its analysis of the capitalist world as leading inevitably to the sharpening of class contradictions and to the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat, with its program of the socialist revolution, based on a historical process which renders it possible and necessary for the further progress of mankind.

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

The International Secretariat
of the Fourth International

November 1947

World Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International

Draft Resolution of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International

The documents of the April 1946 Conference of the Fourth International analyzed the changes brought about by the Second Imperialist War, correctly indicated the revolutionary perspectives flowing from them and defined the tasks of the Fourth International for the ensuing period. These remain generally valid at the present time.

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

On the basis of the fundamental crisis of capitalism in the imperialist epoch, the war opened up for the world bourgeoisie a new and long period of unstable equilibrium. This means, a

period of economic and political difficulties, convulsions and crises in one country after another, which inevitably set in motion great struggles of the proletarian and colonial masses. As these struggles develop and sharpen, they threaten the capitalist system as a whole.

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

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

A. The Economic Situation

I. Western Europe and the United States

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

The effort made during the year 1945 at starting up economic activity in Western Europe and the colonial and semi-colonial countries affected by the war, brought only slow and meager results. Production rose, in varying degrees from one country to another, especially during the first part of 1946. But only in exceptional cases have some countries exceeded the already very low 1938 levels of production. The development of production in all these countries, especially the European, including Great Britain, was largely due to American food shipments and the supply of industrial equipment financed by American credits.

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

Furthermore, Anglo-American efforts to revive economic life in Germany and accelerate its reconstruction have so far not brought any appreciable results.

The Marshall Plan, *i.e.*, the plan for new U.S. financial aid to the Western European countries extending over a number of years, aims at delaying catastrophe, and developing European economy under American control within limits compatible with

U.S. economic interests. However, to continue for some years to subsidize essential exports to the European countries, does not in any case mean that it will be possible to restore even the prewar economic equilibrium.

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

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

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

The U.S. for its part must maintain, if not increase, export of goods and services, so that its production may be maintained at its present level and the outbreak of the economic crisis may be postponed.

But even if American exports are maintained at present levels by grants of additional credits, while this deprives the other capitalist countries of the markets they need for their own development, it will not play a decisive role in forestalling the economic crisis in the U.S. As a matter of fact, total U.S. exports represent only a very small part of that country's total production. The principal market in the U.S. is largely internal.

For some time, American economy has been showing advanced signs of the coming depression.

U.S. production, after reaching a very high level by the second quarter of 1947, has since been stagnating, while prices

continue to rise. The downward curve of the purchasing capacity of the home market is becoming more pronounced, while there is no appreciable increase in exports.

II. The Asiatic Countries

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

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

India is endeavoring, with little success, to fill Japan's place, remaining the only great Asiatic country which has developed considerably its industrial and financial status during the war.

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

The troubled situation in the Netherlands East Indies, in Burma, Indochina, delays the economic reconstruction of all these countries, which are producers of important raw materials, and restricts their participation in world trade.

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

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

III. The USSR and Its Satellites

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

The results reportedly achieved by the five-year-plan seem to indicate that industrial production in general is proceeding according to schedule, but that certain key industries are lagging far behind, for example, timber, agricultural machinery, building materials, smelting, paper, rubber, certain coal mines. However, this production effort is due primarily to the intensification of control over the workers by the bureaucracy, while the productivity of labor continues to decline. To combat the downward trend of the productivity of labor, the Soviet bureaucracy has proceeded to a general revision of the production norms determining wages. This revision, which establishes piece rates both in industry and agriculture, proceeds from an increase in the required minimum of compulsory production in relation to the established wage and signifies an intensification in the exploitation of the labor power of the Soviet workers. Thus, an advance in reconstruction only benefits the Soviet bureaucracy and the privileged layers of the Russian proletariat, while the great mass of workers is forced to work and live under worsened economic and political conditions.

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

To counteract the Marshall Plan in Western Europe, the Soviet bureaucracy tries to develop trade relations between the USSR and the different countries under its control and to create a sort of closed economic circuit centered on the USSR. However, the development of production in these countries, retaining their basic capitalist structure, far from encouraging such an orientation, on the contrary emphasizes the need of trade with the West and imports of American capital and industrial products.

B. The Development of International Relations

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

UN has become an open agency of U.S. diplomacy, frustrating all the attempts of the Stalinist diplomats to push through their policies. The setting up of the "Little Assembly" has to all intents and purposes neutralized the operation of the veto, on which Stalinist diplomacy relied so much. The Marshall Plan for economic aid to the capitalist countries of Western Europe aims at placing these countries under exclusive American economic and political control, while eliminating the Communist parties from the governments.

The proposed reconstruction of Western Germany under the aegis of the U.S. will create, in the heart of Europe, the most powerful lever for the future economic and political disintegration of the countries of the Soviet "buffer zone" while Ger-

many's counterpart in the Far East, Japan, is already under exclusive U.S. control.

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

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

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

At the present time, by the use of increased pressure in every field, Washington aims to sharply change in its favor the relationship of forces between the U.S. and the USSR estab-

lished at the end of the war, and to induce the latter to negotiate as favorable as possible a compromise. U.S. imperialism would naturally prefer to attain its objectives by peaceful means. It has not exhausted all the possibilities for peaceful world expansion and will only feel itself in an economic impasse when the crisis actually breaks out and develops in scope. There are additional factors why U.S. imperialism would like to postpone a military show-down. In spite of its superiority in atomic armament, the strategic U.S. positions on the world front are yet weak. The instability prevailing in Western Europe and the Asiatic countries reduces the possibility of immediate effective aid from these countries against the powerful Soviet armies. These armies are stationed at their borders and reinforced by the as yet powerful forces of the Communist parties in all these countries.

The outbreak of a war under present conditions would result in its rapid transformation into an international civil war, with uncertain results.

Before venturing into war, U.S. imperialism will seek to establish both in Europe and Asia, solid strongpoints to enable it to deal with the world "chaos" which will inevitably result from such a war.

Like fascism, war is the last resort of the imperialists. It comes at the end of a cycle of economic and political developments. However rapidly this cycle may come to a close, we are at present witnessing only its first stage.

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

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

The intimidations and purges of recalcitrant or hostile political groups and leaders, which took place in 1947 in the majority of countries in the Soviet zone, aimed at neutralizing and atomizing any opposition from the right and the left. They have ended in the domination of their governments by the Communist parties. Parallel with this action, the Soviet bureaucracy, directly or through its agents, the Communist parties, has intensified the application of economic measures in all these countries. They have imposed various production "plans" and trade agreements with the aim of linking the economies of these countries more securely among themselves and of binding them to the USSR. The Stalinist bureaucracy seeks to keep them as an autonomous zone away from the attraction of the system of the Marshall Plan countries.

The Communist parties, confronted with the heightened pressure of U.S. imperialism, the fact that they have been forced out of the governments in the capitalist countries and have become isolated from the bourgeois and "socialist" parties with which they had been in close alliance, i.e., confronted with the manifest failure of their policy since "liberation," have decided on a turn which was proclaimed with the establishment of the Cominform in September 1947.

The antagonism between the U.S. and the USSR, while dominating by far the international scene, does not completely eclipse secondary conflicts between the powers nor does it eliminate other important factors in the political developments in other countries.

Europe

Germany remains the focal point not only in the relations and conflicts between the USSR and the U.S., but also of the other powers. The increasing dependence of Great Britain and France upon American imperialism—which has grown even further in the past year—also become evident, among others, in the case of Germany. The policy envisaged by these two countries at the end of the war, aiming to take advantage of the U.S.-Soviet conflict in order to maintain an intermediate position in the form of a Western European bloc, has suffered complete failure.

Great Britain, whose weakened world position has imposed upon it a series of retreats in India, the Middle East and in Europe as well as the partial abandonment of the Imperial Preference System, for the benefit of its overpowering partner, has reluctantly had to give up to the U.S., in addition, the economic and political control of the "Bizon" in Germany.

France, more and more forced to rely on American aid, had to confine herself to verbal protests against American policy in Germany, and to give up practically all hope of taking the latter's place as Europe's pivot of reconstruction under U.S. control. France has had to be content with annexing the Saar to her economic structure and with continuing to claim a share in the "international control" of the Ruhr.

America

In the *Western Hemisphere*, U.S. economic, political and military pressure on the other countries of the two Continents, has succeeded in cementing the bloc of these countries against the USSR under the aegis of the U.S., unifying at the Petropolis Conference the military organizations of these countries. Coupled with it is the reinforced offensive of the native bourgeoisie in every country of Central and Latin America against the proletarian forces.

Asia

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

Japan is subject to strict American economic and political control. U.S. policy aims at transforming this country into the chief economic and strategic base of Yankee imperialism in the Far East.

In *India*, the partition into Pakistan and Hindustan, imposed by Great Britain, has thrown the country into a large-scale fratricidal war, thus benefitting British imperialism and the native reactionary forces.

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

Only the proletariat, which has considerably increased in numbers and social importance since the First World War and which has resolutely entered upon the road of struggle against the native bourgeoisie, is capable of becoming the motor of the Indian revolution, leading it towards the establishment of the Socialist Federated Republic of India.

In *China*, facing increased pressures from the Yen'an armies in the North and the proletarian mass movements in the big Southern centers, Chiang Kai-shek has put an end to the "democratization" measures with which he tried to win a social basis for his shaky dictatorship.

Aided by American imperialism, he tries to retain power

by resorting more and more to brutal force. But he has fewer chances of success than ever.

All the efforts so far made by U.S. imperialism to stabilize the regime in China and to open its immense market to intensive exploitation, have failed. It is due in part to its failure in China that Washington lately centered its attention on Japan.

In *Indonesia* and *Indochina*, neither Dutch nor French imperialism has achieved any decisive result by force of arms. The stalemate which exists for the moment in these countries can be resolved in favor of imperialism only by the betrayal of the native bourgeoisie.

C. The Social Conflicts

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

U.S. imperialism, embarked on its course of world domination, must seek to become undisputed master at home. At the end of the war, however, it was challenged by a tremendous strike wave that showed the entire world the latent revolutionary power of the American working class. Wall Street had to yield temporarily and to circumvent this challenge instead of meeting it head-on.

But the powerful upsurge of U.S. labor remained confined to the economic field. The top trade union bureaucracy, allied with the old capitalist parties, prevented it from gaining political expression. This permitted the bourgeoisie to organize its counter-offensive unhampered, culminating in the vicious anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act. Combined with the anti-union drive, the capitalists launched a vicious red-baiting campaign. Both served as domestic counter-parts of its anti-Soviet and anti-Communist foreign policy.

Although the counter-offensive of the American ruling class has been largely successful in all its aspects, thanks to the reactionary and cowardly role of the labor bureaucracy, its effect upon the working class has not been that of a crushing defeat. Resistance to the repressive regulations of the Taft-Hartley Act has been relatively weak. The bulk of the AFL and CIO, including the formerly very progressive United Auto Workers, comply with its provisions. Only the miners, the steel workers and the railroad trainmen, etc., have taken a clear decision in defiance of the law. But the latter are not a negligible force; they represent important numbers in key industries. The relatively young American working class has not been fully aware of the implications of the political counter-offensive of capitalism. The revolutionary party is still too small for effective intervention. But the inter-connection between Wall Street's reactionary role abroad and its anti-labor drive at home is becoming more obvious. Rather than benefitting from the imperialist drive—as was the case in 19th century Britain—the workers in America have to pay for it from the first and are its first victims.

This dawning realization and the inflationary process eating into the living standards of the American workers, are preparing the ground for new social explosions in the United States. The approach of the economic crisis can only accelerate their outbreak. That this time an upsurge of labor will take on political form is indicated by a whole trend towards independent political action in the trade unions. This is strongest on a local

In the *Middle East*, where the sharpening antagonism between the U.S. and the USSR is particularly acute, it has had a depressing effect on the development of the national revolutionary movement of the Moslem masses.

Almost all the colonial and semi-colonial countries have witnessed a tremendous upsurge of the masses. But the tasks of the national democratic revolution have not been resolved. This is due mainly to either the lack of a revolutionary proletarian leadership or its weakness where it exists. But neither has imperialism been able to reestablish stable relations for exploitation.

scale at present and still isolated. But the fact that the last national convention of the conservative American Federation of Labor gave up its tradition of "hands off politics" and, following the more advanced CIO, organized its own "Labor Political and Educational League"—is a significant sign of the times. The next period in the U.S.A. may well see a tremendous politicalization of the working class, and repeat on the political field the stormy rise of the CIO in the 1930's.

In *Western Europe*, American imperialism has not as yet found a solid basis of support in the existing regimes, in spite of the considerable economic and political advantages acquired by the bourgeoisie since the "liberation." The coalition governments which have followed one another since the "liberation" for a period of time with the participation of the CP and SP, have proved impotent. The persistence and, in some cases, aggravation of inflation food shortages and even unemployment in some of these countries (Italy), are responsible for growing discontent. This applies not only to the workers but also to the petty-bourgeois masses. The petty bourgeoisie supported the CP and SP in the hope of a radical solution and are now turning away from the Left in order to look elsewhere for a stable regime. This holds true, within certain limits, also for Great Britain. There, the radicalization of the masses expressed itself in a landslide that swept the Labor Party to power in 1945. The policy of the Labor Government has featured a "Socialism" which permitted the capitalists to hang on to their profits while "equalizing" an austerity which has meant increasing restrictions in living standards for the broad masses. Under these circumstances, a Rightward swing of the petty bourgeois masses has been inevitable. As the last municipal elections show, the Tory party of Churchill has been able to profit from it. But, at the same time, these conditions produce a greater polarization within the Labor Party—which retains its monopoly over working class politics. A conflict between a left-wing representing the socialist aspirations of the workers, and the right wing that constitutes the Government, is in the offing.

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

Britain. These struggles have opened a new stage in the class relationships and particularly in the relations of the proletariat with its traditional leadership.

Broad layers of workers have entered the struggle to defend their living standards against the galloping rise in prices and against food shortages. They have forced their leadership into action and have gone over their heads when the leaders refused to act.

The experience acquired by the masses in the course of these struggles on the one hand, and the intensification of the reactionary menace on the other, have brought about the increased politicalization of the workers' struggles.

The bourgeoisie, aware of the precarious economic situation and the fighting power of the proletariat, is advancing only cautiously in its economic and political offensive. It will endeavor, as long as it can, to prolong the existence of the "Right-Center" cabinets which, on the parliamentary field, have replaced the "Left-Center" cabinets in France and Italy after the exclusion of the Stalinists from the governments. It hopes that the application of the Marshall Plan will improve its economic positions in the near future and that a possible compromise with the USSR will attenuate the opposition of the Communist parties.

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

But if the weakness of the workers' parties and the working class movement in general should continue and if the deterioration of the economic situation in Western Europe should grow, it is probable that France and Italy will become the theater of a bitter civil war between the forces of bourgeois dictatorship and the masses.

The Stalinist parties would, in such an event, have no al-

ternative but to fight, even with arms, as in Greece; even in such cases where, as in France, de Gaulle would come to power by "constitutional" means.

Social antagonisms are also developing sharply in the *colonial and semi-colonial* countries. In *Latin America*, the passing prosperity of the war gave way to an acute economic crisis. This crisis is revealed in raging inflation and, in part, also in growing unemployment. Against the accentuated economic and political offensive of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat of these countries, greatly reinforced since the war, is engaging in great battles, especially in Chile, Bolivia and Brazil.

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

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

In India, mass strikes in all the big industrial centers of the country—often led by Trotskyist militants—mark the powerful awakening of the working class against the Indian bourgeoisie, allied with the feudal lords and the imperialists.

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

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In general, the workers' movement throughout the world continues to be characterized by a mass upswing far outstripping any before the war. This applies especially to the countries of Western Europe, Latin America and Asia.

D. The Situation in the Labor Movement

The labor movement which emerged from the last war, is mainly under Stalinist influence, particularly in Europe and in Asia. However, an unceasing differentiation within its ranks has been in progress.

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

I. The Socialist Parties

The Socialist parties have retained a basis mainly in the European countries, although they have lost a large part of their worker elements to the Stalinists. This is proof that the masses cannot complete their experience with reformism, in the

absence of a genuine revolutionary party. The conservative role of tradition and the existence of an apparatus have also been contributing factors. An additional reason for the survival of the Socialist parties is that their principal social base, in the imperialist epoch consists of petty bourgeois elements. As a result of their position and mentality these elements are constantly wavering between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. They can only be attracted to the latter at decisive moments of the class struggle, provided there is a strong revolutionary party capable of overcoming their hesitations and drawing them towards the revolution or else neutralizing them.

The loss by the Socialists of part of their working class base to the Communist parties at the end of the war has been a general phenomenon. It has varied only in degree in most countries of Europe and the rest of the world. Exceptions to this general trend exist mainly in the Scandinavian countries, in England and Australia—i.e., where the traditions of the Socialist parties were strongest and the objective situation of capitalism relatively better. The radicalization of the masses in these countries found its main expression in the growth of these parties.

In France and Italy as well as in certain countries of the Soviet "buffer zone" the Socialist parties suffered their greatest losses to the Communist parties. Subsequent developments have

modified this situation. In the countries under Soviet control, where the masses went through a more decisive experience with Stalinist policy, there is a new shift of the workers towards the Socialist parties. Proletarian discontent with the nationalist, bureaucratic and police regime of Stalinism, has once again revitalized the Socialist parties.

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

In other countries also, these organizations still constitute an important field of work for the growth of our international movement, as shown by the example of France, Italy and India. As long as there will not emerge and consolidate itself, within the working class movement, a pole of attraction other than that of the traditional parties, there will be constant shifts of forces between the Socialist and Communist parties.

The policy of Stalinism, far from being able to ensure the growing isolation of the Social Democracy, favors the maintenance of its base and even its relative growth. The same holds true for the policy of the Social-Democracy in a converse sense.

The real disintegration of the traditional parties can take place only as a result of the attractive power of the Fourth International. It alone can polarize the left centrist currents developing inevitably inside these parties.

II. The Communist Parties

The constitution of the Cominform of Belgrade in September 1947, has marked a change in the policy of the Communist parties.

The Stalinist bureaucracy has decided upon a "left turn" as a consequence of the increased aggressiveness of U.S. imperialism against the USSR and its satellites; the campaigns against the Communist parties in the other capitalist countries; their exclusion from the governments; and also as a consequence of the pressure of the masses, who have shown signs of growing discontent with these parties.

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

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

Nevertheless, the experience of Greece as well as the recent events in France, Italy and elsewhere show that, within the framework of a general policy of class collaboration, the Stalinist bureaucracy is capable of undertaking sharp turns in its policy. They may even go so far as to prepare for general strikes and armed struggles. But the Stalinist bureaucracy uses these weapons, not in order to overthrow the capitalist system. They are aimed only to exert pressure on the bourgeoisie for limited

objectives. Thus, it conducts this struggle, in the last analysis, in an opportunist and defeatist spirit, ready at any moment to stop and betray it.

To the extent that it seems to take up the defense of the workers' demands in opposition to all the other parliamentary parties, the new policy of the Communist Party contributes, at first, towards an apparent strengthening of the loosened bonds between the Stalinists and the workers. At the same time, the opportunist and maneuverist spirit which animates it, will become more evident to the masses, once they have launched into battle. The Stalinists' fear of genuine revolutionary action makes their leadership of the present struggles hesitant and indecisive. In countries like France, workers tend to become suspicious of their motives, particularly when they recall the whole treacherous CP policies in the past years ("production first," "the strike is the weapon of the trusts," etc.). The workers, in turn, tend to become hesitant of following Stalinist leadership, often even when the struggle revolves around their own legitimate demands. In this situation the Stalinist domination over the workers' movement begins to break down. The CP in Western Europe especially, becomes incapable of effectively mobilizing the masses. This can be done only by the emergence of a new leadership. The workers' conditions, however, compel them to resort to struggle again and again. The opportunity is thus created for the effective intervention of the sections of the Fourth International, to gain leadership of the mass movement.

The Stalinist "turn," by encouraging the outbreak of the workers' struggles, can thus be utilized to strengthen considerably the organizations of the Fourth International. But only if they know how to combine unity of action and the united front tactic—applied mainly on a local scale, in the factories and the trade unions—with a clear policy and a sharp and firm exposure of the Stalinist leaders. These are conditions indispensable to winning the confidence of the fighting proletarian vanguard.

III. The Centrist Formations

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

Thus, in Great Britain, the ILP is vegetating, following the desertion of its former leading nucleus to the Labor Party bureaucracy.

In France, after the complete dissolution of the PSOP, Marceau Pivert has joined Leon Blum in adopting for the decrepit Socialist Party the role of the "Third Force." This "Third Force" is theoretically supposed to combat equally de Gaulle and the Communist Party. In practice, it allied itself with the de Gaullist candidates against the Stalinists in the municipal elections.

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

The POUM is torn by a serious and continuous internal crisis. After a first split with a Right Wing, its political and organizational independence is now altogether imperilled by Maurin, its principal leader. Maurin advocates an alignment with Western "democratic Socialism" and dissolution into the Spanish Socialist Party.

The present anti-Stalinism of all these organizations, which

has replaced their former pro-Stalinist policy, does not at all mean a progressive evolution. On the contrary, it is part of their retrograde development and merely accentuates their traditional opposition to the principles of Bolshevism, as well as their political confusion.

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

On the other hand, the aggravation of the crisis of capitalism and of the social antagonisms in the new post-war period—coupled with the more and more manifest bankruptcy and treachery of the traditional workers' parties—create powerful new Centrist currents, mainly in the Socialist parties, but even in certain Communist parties. These currents are developing in a progressive direction.

It is the task of the Trotskyists to pay serious and constant attention to the new centrist currents and to aid them to advance toward the revolutionary positions of the Fourth International. Successful work in this direction can greatly accelerate the transformation of our sections into real mass parties.

IV. The Fourth International

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

The Trotskyist movement, on an international scale, is much broader and more cohesive than at any time before the war. But the progress achieved is not yet proportionate to the objective possibilities and even less so, to historic necessities. The organizations of the Fourth International almost everywhere are coping with the problem of transforming themselves into real mass parties.

A number of organizations are fulfilling this task with growing success and, by their experience, are showing our whole international movement the road to the masses. Our sections in North and South America, India and France, each make their own experiences of penetrating the mass movement. Several other sections are following them in this road.

Furthermore, it is probable that the assets we shall gain in some countries from progressive centrist currents from the Socialist and Communist parties, will radically transform the physiognomy of our movement in these countries and, correspondingly, of our whole International.

Objective conditions remain favorable for the achievement of this task. The main obstacles in the present period result from our subjective weaknesses. These are due, on the one hand, to the limited number of cadres capable of effectively intervening in the workers' struggles as organizers and leaders; and on the other hand, to sectarian or opportunist conceptions which have influenced the policy of some of the sections. The experience of the International demonstrates the need of a struggle against sectarianism as well as against opportunism. To fight against sectarianism means to break resolutely with the circle habits inherited from the past, that is, with any form of thought or organization method which, while paying lip-service to our Marxist Leninist principles, turns its back on the real mass movement. The fight against sectarianism means a resolute break with the circle habits of the past, when the objective situation compelled us to confine our activities largely to the elaboration of our program and to criticism of the treacherous currents in the labor movement. Under the present favorable conditions, it is necessary to *demonstrate* our program *in action*. Otherwise we are faced with the danger of stagnation and decline.

To fight against sectarianism means to fight against sterile, abstract propaganda. It means to fight against the concept that our movement can only be built by gradual recruitment of individuals and routine education. A mass revolutionary party can only be built in action. That requires first and foremost the penetration of the workers' movement as it exists. A specific field of work must be chosen where the possibilities for the development of our movement are most favorable. Our general program must be concretized. The concrete slogans must take into account the elementary economic and political demands of the masses. Our revolutionary aims must be translated into the living language of the workers. Our cadres must take an active part in the workers' lives and struggles, in the factories and unions and there develop a broad revolutionary tendency that will be capable of challenging the traditional bureaucracy at every step.

In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, our sections must stand completely and audaciously for all democratic and national demands of the masses, organize and lead their struggles for these objectives, penetrate all popular national organizations in order to fight by every means for our revolutionary policy.

The struggle against sectarianism does not mean, under any circumstances, to give way to opportunist pressure. The problem is one of leading the masses in revolutionary struggle and not to adapt ourselves to centrist positions. The militants of the parties of the Fourth International have the duty of being in every real movement of the masses and in every organization which musters and mobilizes them, without being called upon to defend on a local scale, in their daily action, at every moment, the whole program and complete political line of their party. But, irrespective of the more or less advanced political situation, the party as such permanently defends before the working class a *combined* program, in which our full Socialist objectives tie in with the transitional slogans appropriate in the given situation. The Party never reduces its policy to the simple level of a trade unionist or democratic minimum program.

The constant preoccupation of all our sections must be that of connecting their agitation around the immediate slogans with the propaganda for our complete program. Our central slogans for a certain period proceed, not from what seems to be the momentary political consciousness of the masses, under the influence of the traditional leaderships, but from the character of the period, the living conditions and needs of the masses. The masses, through their own experience in struggles, will inevitably arrive at an understanding of the correctness of our slogans. Our task is to put forward successively and audaciously ever higher transitional slogans as the workers' struggles grow and deepen; to heighten the political content of the Party's propaganda and agitation. That has particularly been demonstrated by our recent experiences in France and Italy.

In their effort to seek the road to the real mass movement, our sections are inevitably subject to deviations—both sectarian, which express the inertia of the past, and opportunist, reflecting the mass pressure and the ideological weakness of the cadres.

Only democratic discussion and criticism of every national experience by the whole of our international movement and its well considered intervention, can minimize the dangers of these deviations and allow us to conquer the masses, not on a centrist program, but on that of Marxism-Leninism, enriched by the new developments of the workers' movement.

Following the end of the war, it has been necessary to re-

constitute the organizational unity of the Trotskyist movement and to resume connections with all the organizations claiming to adhere to the Fourth International, and complying with its discipline.

At the present stage, it is necessary for the International to plan its activities, with the aim of aiding a more rapid and effective development of our movement in some countries where

the conditions are more favorable as compared to others. That means a concentration of attention and support to those sections which have the best possibilities of becoming mass parties. Other sections will be aided in their development by the living example and the experience of some organizations of the International which will have succeeded in finding a road to the masses.

E. Perspectives and Political Tasks

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

In spite of the tension in the relations between the USSR and the U.S. and the economic and ideological preparation of the next war, formidable obstacles stand in the way of its immediate outbreak. A new compromise between these two powers is possible. The race between war and revolution will most probably accelerate at the moment when the economic crisis in the U.S. breaks out and as it unfolds. But even before then, the world bourgeoisie will undergo great economic and political difficulties, convulsions and crises. These will unleash great working class struggles. In the course of these struggles, new revolutionary forces will be emancipated from the domination of the traditional leaderships and thus enabled to regroup themselves around the program of the Fourth International.

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

The capitalist world as a whole develops under the sign of an increased disequilibrium in its economic foundation, which reduces the possible periods of relative stability, and extends the periods of convulsions and crises.

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

In general, the practical tasks formulated in the resolution of the April Conference, flowing from the concrete application of the Transitional Program, remain valid. The character of the period remains fundamentally the same.

The Fourth International in its propaganda constantly denounces the imperialist plans for World War III. It shows that only victorious socialist revolutions can prevent this catastrophe which could only have disastrous consequences for humanity.

At the same time, it constantly combats the reactionary propaganda of the imperialists designed to create among the masses a fatalistic acceptance of another war. The Fourth International bases its policy on every struggle and every victory

of the proletariat and the colonial peoples, and places its confidence in the revolutionary action of the masses to counteract the plans of the imperialists.

In the countries of Western Europe, particularly in France and Italy, where the polarization is the most advanced and the reactionary threat the most immediate, our sections must pose boldly the question of power in their propaganda and agitation. They must call for unity of action and the united front of all working class forces, on the basis of a program linking up the masses' economic and political demands to the slogans of workers' control, workers' militia and a workers' and peasants' government.

They must constantly advocate the necessity of broadening and coordinating the struggle and expose the traditional leaderships opposing this. They must expose particularly the opportunist and adventurist spirit of the new Stalinist policy, with its incoherent social agitation, its lack of a program and perspectives, that leads to the ultimate demoralization of the masses and the victory of reaction.

Our sections will denounce the capitalist nature of the nationalizations carried out by the governments headed by "Socialists" or "Socialists" and Stalinists without workers' control, and imposing exorbitant sums for compensation and indemnities on the shattered economy of these countries.

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

In opposition to the control of American imperialism over European economy by means of the Marshall Plan—which aims to transform it into an economy subordinated to that of the U.S. and thus detrimental to the free development of its productive forces and of the masses' living standards—our sections will put forward unceasing propaganda for the Socialist United States of Europe.

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

In the European countries controlled by the Soviet bureaucracy, the militants of the Fourth International will aid all of the mass movements for the defense of their living standards and their liberties against the bureaucratic police regimes dominated by the Stalinists.

In the United States the task is to accelerate the penetration into the trade union organizations and to intensify the political

campaign for a Labor Party based on the trade unions. It is necessary to expose the reactionary maneuvers of Yankee imperialism and denounce its plans for the third imperialist war. It is necessary to prepare politically and organizationally for the outbreak of the depression and the crisis in the U.S. which will carry the Trotskyists to the head of the great mass struggles that lie ahead.

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

In general, the main task facing the Fourth International as a world party in the present period, is that of entering the mass movements in the capitalist and colonial countries with greater determination than in the past, in order to advance the socialist and revolutionary solutions, which are more necessary than ever. The capitalist system in decline and decay and the regime established by the Soviet bureaucracy in the USSR, accumulate and sharpen their inherent contradictions. These

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

In the light of all historic experience, the revolutionary proletariat proves to be the only social force capable of incorporating in its leadership the common struggle of all the oppressed and exploited strata, crushed by imperialism, the bourgeoisie and the Soviet bureaucracy, and of leading towards the socialist solution. In this sense, the Fourth International must and can fulfil its role as leadership of the revolutionary proletariat. Based on the achievement and the experience of its cadres and on their increasing influence, the Fourth International can go to the masses with greater resolution, greater firmness, greater political clarity than ever.

Forward with the fighting masses, to win them for the Revolution and for Socialism!
November 1947

NAACP Appeals to the UN

By ALBERT PARKER

There are plenty of vital statistics and useful facts about the oppression of the Negro people in the document* presented to the United Nations last October by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

This document can be of considerable value to those first becoming acquainted with the American Negro question, but it does not take us very far toward solution of that problem. Strong on the presentation of facts, it is weak on explaining and analyzing those facts, and almost worthless when it comes to a consideration of what should be done about them.

These facts constitute a damning indictment of American "democracy." They show that the Negro people, "something less than a tenth of the nation . . . form largely a segregated caste, with restricted legal rights, and many illegal disabilities. . . . [They have] a strong, hereditary cultural unity, born of slavery, of common suffering, prolonged proscription and curtailment of political and civil rights; and especially because of economic and social disabilities. . . ." But why? Nowhere in this document is there a clear answer to this all-important question.

Du Bois comes closest to discussing it in the following widely separated remarks, buried away in the midst of discussion of other issues. Slavery, he notes, "was a matter of economics, a question of income and labor, rather than a problem of right and wrong, or of the physical differences in men. Once slavery began to be the source of vast income for men and nations, there followed frantic search for moral and racial justifications."

After the Reconstruction Era, he declares, Northern industry joined with the Southern landowners "to disfranchise the Negro; keep him from access to free land or to capital, and to build up the present caste system for blacks founded on color discrimination, peonage, intimidation and mob-violence." The U.S. as a result is "ruled by wealth, monopoly and big business organization to an astounding degree." And in the South today, Du Bois adds in passing, "Industry encourages the culture patterns which make these groups [competing for jobs] hate and fear each other."

Added together, these statements provide at least a clue to the answer. Why then aren't they added together and summed up in a forthright declaration on the causes of Jim Crow oppression? Because Du Bois and the NAACP leaders and most of the prominent Negro leaders are afraid of the conclusions that would have to be drawn from a consistent analysis of these causes. We have no such fears, however, and neither do the Negro masses. Let us therefore say plainly what Du Bois only hints at:

Like slavery, Jim Crow oppression is rooted in economic life. It is profitable to the capitalist ruling class in both the North and the South, and that's why they not only encourage, but instigate and maintain this system and bitterly resist any attempt to end it.

Furthermore, Jim Crow is a matter of politics. Du Bois gives irrefutable proof of this in demonstrating that the disfranchisement of the Negroes in the South "means greater power for the few who cast the vote." His analysis of the 1946 elections shows, for example, that the Southern landowner who disfranchises Negro and white workers and sharecroppers has a power at the polls greater than that of six workers and farmers in the North. This explains not only why the South is the most backward section of the country but also why the Southern congressmen elected by this political monopoly form the most reactionary bloc in Washington where the laws for the whole nation are written.

*A Statement on the Denial of Human Rights to Minorities in the Case of Citizens of Negro Descent in the United States of America and an Appeal to the United Nations for Redress (edited by W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, historian and director of the NAACP Department of Special Research, with contributions by attorney Earl B. Dickerson of Chicago, Milton R. Konvitz of Cornell University, William R. Ming, Jr., of the University of Chicago, Leslie S. Perry of the NAACP Washington Bureau, and Rayford W. Logan of Howard University).

Facts About Jim Crow

(As Compiled by Leslie S. Perry for the NAACP's Appeal to the UN)

HEALTH: "The combined impact of economic and social discrimination in America casts a shadow over the Negro which extends from the maternity bed to a premature grave." The chances of a Negro mother dying in child birth are 2½ times greater than if she were white. Infant mortality is 69% higher among Negroes than among whites. Negroes are hit especially hard by poor men's diseases—proportionately three times as many Negroes die from tuberculosis as whites. The Army had to reject 47% of the Negroes it examined during the recent war; only 28% of the whites. Four hospital beds per thousand persons is "the minimum requirement for a reasonably well-cared for populace"; yet "in some areas where the population is heavily Negro there are as few as 75 beds set aside for over one million of this group."

Result: "If a Negro infant manages to survive to the age of one, his average life expectancy is still 17% (or about 10 years) less than that of the average white infant of the same age."

EDUCATION: "The Negro in North America has been allowed to enjoy only the barest minimum [of educational opportunity] regarded appropriate to his half-slave, half-free status." In the 17 Southern states and the District of Columbia (where more than ¾ of the Negroes live) Negroes can go only to Negro schools. "White officials, interested largely in keeping Negroes in a semi-slave status, determine who shall teach them, what and how they shall learn, where and how long they shall receive training. Segregation is the vehicle for unrestrained and undisguised white domination." It also makes possible the diversion of state and federal funds from Negro to white schools; the spending of twice as much on white as on Negro students; "education" from textbooks that malign Negro history and achievements; shorter school terms; a one-fourth heavier pupil load for teachers,

who are paid less and who are less well trained. Of the 137 millions spent annually on higher education in the states where education is segregated, 126 millions are spent in institutions rigidly excluding Negroes.

Result: 10% of all Negroes 25 years or older have received no formal schooling as compared with 1.3% whites; 82.7% have had no formal schooling or less than eight years of elementary training as against 53.1% whites.

JOBS: "In a society where the push of a button or the turn of a switch moves mountains, color-mad America insists that the chief asset of the Negro is, and must remain, a strong back and a humble mien. Color-mad America demands that black workers remain beyond the pale of decent wages, job satisfaction and economic security." During and after World War I Negroes got a slight foothold in industry, taking the hot, heavy and dirty jobs white workers didn't want. With the depression they were driven from these jobs, sometimes by violence; from 7.3% in 1930 their proportion in manufacturing fell to 5.1% in 1940 (lower than 1910). Locked out of industry, they were forced to live on degraded relief standards (in Chicago, 1940, they were 7.1% of the population, 46.6% of those on relief). A month after Pearl Harbor a survey showed 51% of job openings were "barred to Negroes for the sole reason that they were Negroes." Conditions improved during the war, but after it the FEPC reported: "The wartime employment of Negro, Mexican-American and Jewish workers are being lost through an unchecked revival of discriminatory practices." The biggest single employer is the federal government, but it widely disregarded a 1940 law banning race discrimination until the war began. "Today, there is strong evidence that government agencies are resuming their practices of wholesale discrimination against the Negro workers."

Result: Negro workers get the worst jobs, if any, and are generally paid less than whites doing identical work.

HOUSING: "The overwhelming majority of Negroes in America live in urban slums or rural slums. They are forced to remain bottled up in these blighted areas by the prejudice of the dominant white community, enforced by courts of law, physical force and violence, and the mechanism of organized government. Negroes make up 20% of the population of the city of Baltimore but they are crowded into less than 2% of the living space. In Chicago the population density of the Negro district is 90 thousand per square mile (35 thousand is considered the optimum). A single block in Harlem has 3,871 persons. 'At a comparable rate of concentration,' concluded *The Architectural Forum* (Jan. 1946), 'the entire United States could be housed in half of New York City.'" Negro neighborhoods are among the worst in the community and are most neglected so far as city sanitary and repair services go. Corruption among police and licensing officials make them a haven for criminal elements. Restrictive housing covenants prevent Negroes from moving elsewhere. Four-fifths of Chicago, for example, is covered by such covenants. The U.S. government through the FHA "has thrown its entire weight and prestige on the side of keeping the Negro bottled up in run-down, segregated neighborhoods." Congress refuses "any provisions to correct existing housing discriminations."

Result: "Negro citizens are held virtual prisoners in substandard housing all over America today. There is no relief in sight." And for these privileges, which give them housing twice as much in need of major repairs as whites, and three times as overcrowded, Negroes are compelled to pay 10-50% more rent than whites using comparable facilities.

But here too the NAACP document fails to draw the necessary conclusions. True, it cites the obvious need for abolishing Negro disfranchisement. But that is too narrow and limited an answer for the many political problems arising out of Negro oppression, and fails to even touch the crucial point: What measures are necessary to achieve the goal of Negro equality at the polls—itsself a political goal? We are again compelled to say explicitly what the NAACP document only half-implies:

Jim Crow is not only a source of political power for the ruling class, but the political power of the ruling class is itself a source of Jim Crow. This inevitably raises the question of the government—the executive committee of the ruling class through which its political power is exercised.

Consequently, the only effective way to fight Jim Crow is

by fighting the capitalist system, and the only way to end it for good is by political action to replace the capitalist system with one under which Jim Crow won't be profitable—that is, a socialist system.

By rejecting or evading this approach, whose basis is no confidence whatever in the capitalist class or any of its agencies, the Negro leaders are trapped in one contradiction after another, thus weakening and undermining the Negro struggles. A few examples from the NAACP document will illustrate this.

When the ruling classes of the North and South worked out their "gentleman's agreement" in 1876 and set out to deprive the Negro of the civil rights he had won during the Civil War and Reconstruction, the Supreme Court was one of the chief instruments employed. The Court obligingly ruled that most

of the Congressional civil rights statutes were illegal, and that the states rather than the federal government had the responsibility of guaranteeing civil rights. As a result, it is precisely in those places where the Negro most needs legal protection that he gets it least—in the South, where the state governments, far from adopting civil rights laws, legally established the pattern of segregation which is the base of the modern Jim Crow system.

Dickerson does a great deal of historical and legal research on the period leading up to 1914 to disprove what he calls "the fallacy inherent in the argument that the legal rights of American Negroes can be entrusted to the states." Now a fallacy is a mistaken assumption, an erroneous conclusion or argument, etc. But there was nothing at all "fallacious" about the thinking of the U.S. ruling class when it decided to "entrust" the Negro's legal rights to the states! On the contrary, it was a carefully thought-out device for achieving exactly what was intended—the legal destruction of the Negro's rights. Only people who are themselves suffering from the most pernicious fallacies about the nature of the ruling class or its Supreme Court could use such a namby-pamby term to describe a diabolically successful conspiracy against the Negro people.

But the authors of the NAACP document do not even carry through consistently their own line of reasoning. They refrain from a similar criticism of the idea that the legal rights of the Negroes can be safely entrusted to the federal government and its agencies—a conception spread far and wide by most of the Negro leaders. Is that any less a "fallacy" than the one concerning reliance on the state governments? Not at all. Remember, first of all, that the federal government connived to make "state's rights" dominant in this field. And now it follows a pattern in its treatment of Negroes (armed forces, government employes, District of Columbia) which essentially duplicates that followed by the Southern states. The "big" difference between the two is that the federal government is the executive committee of the national ruling class while the state governments perform the same repressive role for the local sections of that ruling class.

In another place, Dickerson says that "to tell a Negro who has suffered from mob violence because of state inaction that he must look to the state for protection sounds very much like telling a woman who has been seduced that her future protection lies in the hands of the seducer." This is apt and well put, although the crime committed in the case of the Negro is more like rape than seduction. But in that case, telling the Negro to rely on the federal government is like telling the woman to rely on the man who delivered her to the attacker and even held her while the crime was committed. Yet, because of their false theories on the main cause of Jim Crow and on the nature of the capitalist state, that has been the essence of the Negro leaders' program and demands.

By the above we do not at all wish to belittle or criticize demands for federal legislation against lynching, the poll tax, discriminatory employment practices, and so on. Such demands are obviously necessary and progressive because they facilitate the mobilization of the masses against the Jim Crow system and because their realization would considerably weaken and undermine the Jim Crow status quo. What we are criticizing and warning against here is the impression spread by Negro leaders that such limited demands are the be-all and end-all of the Negro struggle and that their realization would solve the problems of the Negro people. Such a conception is false to the core for it ignores the real roots of Jim Crow—the capitalist system.

Now this very same fallacy appears, even in a more ex-

tended form, in the NAACP appeal to the UN for redress. Having obtained no satisfaction from petitions to the states, then having made little headway as a result of petitions to the federal government, the NAACP leaders feel that it is "fitting and proper that the thirteen million American citizens of Negro descent should appeal to the United Nations and ask that organization in the proper way to take cognizance of a situation that deprives this group of their rights as men and citizens."

It is, of course, perfectly proper for the Negro people to utilize the UN as a forum in which to present their grievances. Skillfully utilized, such a procedure can serve to expose the fraudulence of the U.S. government's pretensions about democracy at home and abroad. (The NAACP document, incidentally fails to take proper advantage of this opportunity by bewailing the fact that American prestige is lowered and embarrassed by its oppression of Negroes at home. While this may be important to the American ruling class, which wants to extend its power and domination all over the globe, it is certainly not embarrassing to the Negro masses, and it is certainly not the reason why they want Negro oppression ended.) But what can practically come out of such an appeal to the UN, except some publicity and an advance in the education of the people about the indifference of the UN to genuine democracy and its subservience to Wall Street?

The NAACP leaders do not say anything on the question one way or the other, and perhaps they privately don't expect much to come of it. But in the absence of any statement to the contrary, their appeal creates illusions among the masses about (1) the nature of the UN and (2) the correct way to fight Jim Crow. Instead of strengthening, it tends to weaken that fight by creating the wrong impression that there is some other way to win equality than by mass struggle against capitalism and its agencies.

Such an appeal, while useful as propaganda, is manifestly worthless as a means of improving conditions in this country because the American imperialist oppressors of the Negro, who dominate the UN, just will not permit it to "intervene." And even if the U.S. ruling class did not dominate the UN, it wouldn't make any difference because this association of bandits has no desire or intention to halt oppression anywhere. This has already been amply demonstrated by its attitude toward the colored peoples of Indonesia, Indo-China and South Africa. For the Negro masses to entertain any illusions on this score would be like a Negro slave complaining about the cruelty of his master to the Confederate Government during the Civil War and expecting it to give him redress.

The Nationalist Element

There are many things that the NAACP leaders see but do not understand. One of the most important is the national element in the Negro struggle. Du Bois notes the fact that all Negroes are discriminated against, those with "wealth, training and character" as well as those without. He declared: ". . . prolonged policies of segregation and discrimination have involuntarily welded the [Negro] mass almost into a nation within a nation with its own schools, churches, hospitals, newspapers and many business enterprises."

The results of this growing national (or racial) consciousness, he finds, have been both good and bad. *Good* in that it inspired the Negroes to "frantic and often successful effort to achieve, to deserve, to show the world their capacity to share modern civilization." And *bad* in that it has made the Negroes to a wide extent "provincial, introverted, self-conscious and narrowly race-loyal." Coming from the pen of a white liberal

or social worker, such an estimate might not seem out of place. But from a Negro leader who has made genuine contributions to the study of Negro history, it is certainly inadequate and negative, especially from the viewpoint of what effects national movements have on the struggle for Negro liberation. Let us consider the Marxist estimate:

The national consciousness of the Negro people, induced by the factors cited by Du Bois, does indeed have varying effects. Such attitudes as Negro nationalism, black chauvinism, etc., do carry a danger of being utilized to spread mistrust of all whites, including the whites who are opposed to Jim Crow, and to widen the divisions between Negroes and their natural ally, the labor movement. But essentially this national consciousness is an expression of the Negro's desire for equality and is therefore progressive (unlike white chauvinism which reflects the desire for continued racial supremacy). J. R. Johnson has correctly called attention to an important consideration in this connection: "Whereas in Europe the national movements have usually aimed at a separation from the oppressing power, in the U.S. the race consciousness and chauvinism of the Negro represent fundamentally a consolidation of his forces for the purpose of integration into American society."

That is one side of it, and not all of that is bad by a long shot. On the other side are the power and explosiveness lodged in national movements, which organize the oppressed minorities in struggles whose objective consequence can only be the abolition of capitalism. The American Negro as a minority cannot solve his problems without powerful allies, but even by himself he can direct heavy blows at the system, keep it in a state of instability by his opposition and help set into motion other revolutionary forces which can and will collaborate in the solution of his particular problems because they share the same fundamental interests. Du Bois seems oblivious of the dynamite lodged in the Negro's national consciousness; for him it presents only a "dilemma." But for those who aim at destroying Jim Crow the racial feelings and nationalist movements of the Negro people present a challenge and an opportunity. Here is a powerful anti-capitalist and anti-Jim Crow force if they know how to direct it into correct channels.

It is one-sided and therefore wrong to stop with the national aspects; the Negro question involves much more than that. . . . It combines the struggle of an oppressed minority for democracy with the struggle of the entire working class for emancipation from capitalism. This second factor is never explicitly stated or recognized in the document, although it contains the figures to prove it.

A Class Question

Perry cites the following statistics from the 1940 census:

The total number of Negroes gainfully employed in the United States amounted to 4,479,068 men and women (not counting those on public emergency work). Of these, the vast majority, 61%, were unskilled workers. Less than 3% were "skilled and foremen" and only 2.6 were professional persons. The rest were largely semi-skilled workers, farm tenants and the like.

Thus the Negro question is overwhelmingly a working class question, tied up with the fate of the labor movement as a whole and dependent on the fulfillment of the working class's destiny as the gravedigger of capitalism and the builder of a new society. To ignore this vital fact is to deprive the Negro of the aid of his best and strongest ally. It is not enough merely to pass annual declarations of solidarity with labor and to invite an occasional union bureaucrat to speak at NAACP meetings

or add his name to the NAACP Board of Directors. What is needed above all is for the Negro organizations to strengthen the ties of active collaboration with the labor organizations and to try to influence them in a progressive direction. The Negro people will not win their second emancipation until labor has settled accounts with capital. The Negro people have a great part to play in that settlement.

The assumption guiding these Negro leaders—that the Negro people can attain equality under capitalism, even in its "democratic" form—is not consistent with the facts adduced or implied in the NAACP document. It is the theoretical source of all their mistakes, vacillations and betrayals of the Negro struggle.

The authors can admit flatly, as Dickerson does, that "by 1914, the eve of the First World War, the legal status of the American Negro had degenerated to the pattern that existed before the Civil War." But do they understand what this statement really means—that at the height of the flowering of democratic capitalism the American ruling class had no more to offer the Negro than in slave days? Do they appreciate what a terrible indictment that is of capitalism in its prime, when it was able to grant some concessions to the masses? Can't they realize what this means today—and even more for tomorrow—now that the permanent crisis of this decadent system drives the ruling class not to grant new concessions and rights but to withdraw as many of them as they can, as the anti-labor drive now sweeping the country demonstrates?

They can calmly declare, to quote Konvitz, that in addition to "the inequalities that exist despite the law," there are also many "*inequalities that exist because of the law.*" These include the right of Negroes "to live where they please, to be free from segregation in schools and universities, to vote without the poll tax restrictions, to ride in intrastate commerce in public conveyances without subjection to Jim Crowism." In court contests against these inequalities, "the Negro has been unsuccessful, *even when, as in recent years, the Supreme Court has consisted of a liberal majority.*" Do they actually grasp what they are saying when they admit that so far as the Negro is concerned, the capitalist liberals upon whom they rely for improving the situation, act no better than the other supporters of capitalism?

Or take the conclusion reached by this remark of Ming: "The political and legal system of the United States appears to be unable or unwilling to cope with this hiatus between the theoretical and actual status of the Negro." But what does it matter whether the capitalist politicians and judges are "unable or unwilling"? Isn't it plain that a system which either can't or won't grant the most elementary democratic rights to the Negroes is rotten to the core and must be replaced by one that can and will?

But while their "theory" is contradicted at every point by the facts, the policy recommended and followed by the Negro leaders is consistent with and flows from their "theory" of refusing to place the responsibility for Jim Crow where it really belongs. Refusing to recognize the core of the problem, they attribute Negro oppression to "fallacies," "paradoxes," "enigmas," "apathy" and even "shortsightedness" of the capitalist class.

True, they put pressure on the capitalist class in order to get recognition and correction of these "fallacies." But they want to arouse and employ no more than the most limited kind of pressure—the kind that will serve to embarrass and extract a concession or pat on the head from the ruling class, but that will never under any circumstances challenge their power to

oppress and exploit and their right to rule. This is shown best of all by the Negro leaders' approach to politics.

The NAACP program—to end lynching, the poll tax, industrial and military Jim Crow, etc.—is conceived by its leaders as a legislative program. To put it more correctly, it is a political program whose fate will be decided by the political struggle of the masses. As was stated above, the NAACP leaders reject our concept that what is needed is an anti-capitalist political movement aiming to take power away from the Jim Crow capitalist parties and government. What is more, they reject even the concept of organized political action by the Negro masses.

Yes, ludicrous as it may appear and tragic as it is, the largest Negro organization in the world still refuses to use political weapons in a political war and still relies on lobbying methods that have proved their ineffectiveness over and over again during the NAACP's 37 year history. This puts the NAACP leaders on an even lower political level than the moss-backed AFL bureaucrats, who finally had it drummed into their fat heads by the Taft-Hartley Act that no fight against the employers can be divorced from politics. How many more blows will the NAACP leaders need before they are forced to a like conclusion?

The alibi offered by the NAACP leaders for the abstentionist policy is as pathetic as the policy itself. The NAACP, they say, is a "non-partisan" organization that cannot take sides in politics without offending and alienating its members, friendly politicians and wealthy well-wishers, who have diverse political views. The best it can do is urge its members to register and vote, to inform them of the voting records of the various candidates—and then hope for the best! They do not explain what value to the organization are members and sympathizers who want to be "non-partisan" as between the political foes and the political friends of the Negro people. Nor has it apparently occurred to them that the loss of such followers would be compensated many fold by the recruiting of Negro workers when they saw that the NAACP really meant business about fighting their enemies, including those in high political seats.

Abstentionism from politics is, however, also a kind of politics—the worst kind because it damages above all those who practice it. The NAACP's "neutrality" is most pleasing to the political practitioners of Jim Crow because it leaves undisturbed the political monopoly by which they sustain the Jim Crow system. How the reactionary politicians whose election was left unopposed by the NAACP must laugh when the NAACP comes around lobbying for something like an anti-lynch law! They probably even smiled when the politically self-disarmed NAACP presented its document to the UN, where

the politically "safe" appointees of the U.S. capitalist government will see that it comes to naught.

In the middle Thirties, there was a strong movement among the workers in the factories toward the AFL as the only important national labor organization in the field. But these workers were looking for something different and better than the AFL, as was soon shown in the industrial explosion out of which the CIO was born as the labor movement on a higher level—industrial unionism. In the same way during recent years there has been a strong tide among the Negro masses toward the NAACP as the only important national Negro organization in the field.

This tide has swept into the NAACP tens of thousands of militant young Negroes eager to deal a finish blow to the Jim Crow system. Explosions lie ahead here too. They will either transform the NAACP's character in accordance with the needs of the times or else replace it with a new organization that can play the role required. It behooves these Negro militants to study the origins as well as the effects of the Jim Crow system and to take measures to prepare themselves and their present organization for the most useful ways to conduct the Negro struggle.

New Leaders Needed

What is needed now is a new Negro leadership—one that is not afraid to draw radical conclusions and advocate drastic measures when they are justified by the facts. Fighters who will not have any illusions about the hostile character of capitalism and all its agencies and servants, no matter how disguised; who will recognize and strengthen the bonds linking the Negro struggle for equality with the organized labor movement and who stand ready, if that becomes necessary, to mobilize their people for action on their own behalf without waiting for labor to act first. This new leadership will understand the progressive character of Negro national consciousness and will know how to utilize its power in the right direction; it will rearm the Negro movement politically through an independent labor-Negro coalition.

Jim Crow is twined inextricably around the trunk of capitalism like a poisonous vine around a tree; both are nourished by the same soil of class society. It is necessary to cut down this tree at its roots in order to kill the vine, just as it was necessary to abolish slavery root and branch. The more hands that are put on the job, the sooner it will be done. The axe is waiting to be used by that new Negro leadership which is already arising from the ranks and is destined to replace the present half-way leaders who dare neither to think things through to the end—nor to act decisively to destroy Jim Crow.

Struggle for 40-Hour Week in Australia

The following account of the victorious fight for the 40-hour working week has been contributed by a member of the Labor Socialist Group of Australia (Trotskyists) who played a leading part in the initiation and conduct of the campaign.—Ed.

The recent judgment of the Arbitration Court in favor of a 40-hour working week as from the first pay period in 1948 marked the virtual end of one of the most important struggles in the history of organized labor in Australia. Arbitrationists saw in the judgment a vindication of the Court. However, the truth is that the unions suc-

ceeded in "convincing" the judges only after a considerable number of workers had already won 40 hours or less by a variety of tactics, including collective bargaining, strike action, and mass pressure upon the Labor Governments.

The initiators of this fight for 40 hours were members of the Printing Industry Employees Union in Sydney. Shorter hours of work have already had a special attraction for printing workers because of the health hazards of the industry—lead poisoning, respiratory diseases, optical disorders, occupational deafness, and strain resulting from excessive concentration.

During the war, the PIEU in Sydney established a Post-War Reconstruction Committee, the purpose of which was to draft a program of demands for achievement in the post-war period. Prominent in this program was a claim for a reduced working week.

"Sun" Workers Take Action

In October 1944, the PIEU Chapel at the Sydney *Sun* newspaper office launched a sudden strike for a 40-hour week and four weeks' paid holidays per annum. Other unionists at the *Sun*, including members of the Amalgamated Printing Trades Union and the Australian Journalists

Association, swung in behind the PIEU. The capitalist press barons immediately tried to produce the *Sun* in the other offices controlled by the Daily Newspaper Proprietors' Association, but the workers everywhere refused to print the scab paper and were locked out. Soon the whole of the daily press in Sydney was closed down. By an overwhelming majority, the controlling body of the PIEU decided to support the newspaper workers. Arrangements were made by the bosses to produce a scab "composite" newspaper, bearing the headplates of all the capitalist daily rags concerned in the dispute. A labor force of staff men and bosses from some of the commercial printing offices went to work on the "composite" journal. Some of the staff men refused to scab. The workers engaged in the struggle quickly set about publishing their own newspaper (*The News*). All the work of planning and producing this large daily publication took only a few days.

Preventing an Extension

Use of the printing plant of the Communist (Stalinist) Party was obtained, together with stocks of newsprint and ink. With a great array of talent available among the striking and locked-out journalists, cartoonists, photographers and printers, *The News* was an instantaneous success, its sales averaging 110,000 a day during its brief life. Newsvendors co-operated by pushing sales of *The News*. Limited technical facilities and paper shortages prevented further expansion. The Labor Party's weekly, *Standard*, and the Stalinists' twice-weekly, *Tribune*, were published in enlarged editions, and were sold on the streets in great numbers. Both featured articles exposing the vicious nature of the capitalist press. In the war-time atmosphere nothing could have been more dramatic than virtual elimination of the capitalist journals and their replacement by working-class publications.

Because of the then current pro-war line of Stalinism, the attitude of the "Communist" Party towards the dispute was to accord a measure of support to the struggle, but to strive for a quick settlement, meanwhile preventing any extension to "vital" war industries. Rank and file members of the CP plied refreshments to those working on *The News*, but the Stalinist leaders took care to loan their printery only on the express stipulation that *The News* refrain from advocating any extension of the fight to new sections of workers. Undoubtedly the restrictive tactics of the Stalinists greatly delayed the general introduction of a 40-hour week.

Coinciding with the dispute was a meeting of 500 shop stewards, convened at the Trades Hall to hear a report by the prominent Stalinist, Thornton, on the World Federation of Trade Unions. Prior to Thornton's address, a spokesman for the PIEU put the case for the newspaper workers, emphasizing that the time was opportune to secure 40 hours in all industries. Rising to speak, Thornton voiced his disapproval thus: "Comrade chair and comrades—There are some people in this hall who do not seem to realize that there is a war to be won."

Control of the dispute was assumed by the Labor Council, which, at that time, because of

the "war effort" policy of the dominant Right-Wing and Stalinist factions, had rightly become notorious as "the graveyard of industrial disputes." Settlement terms were compiled and presented to Council for ratification. It was claimed that the press barons had capitulated. The Stalinists interpreted the terms as a great victory. Mass meetings were convened to endorse the settlement. PIEU members met in the Town Hall, while other unionists assembled at the Trades Hall. The Trades Hall meeting was stampeded into quick acceptance of the terms, whereupon a leading Stalinist member of the Labor Council hurried to the Town Hall with the news and succeeded in persuading the PIEU members to agree to resume work.

Upon returning to their jobs the newspaper workers soon realized the true position. The bosses denied having granted any concessions, as claimed by officials of the Labor Council. Victory was clinched only after the women and girls had made a last-ditch stand, and after the Chapel officials had carried out further negotiations. The ultimate success of the newspaper struggle created a grossly anomalous position among the 9,000 members of the PIEU in New South Wales. Some 1,500 newspaper workers had won 40 hours; several hundred in the State Government Printing Office worked 42½ hours; a section in "Union Label" shops had secured 40 hours by collective bargaining; while most of the remaining workers in commercial and country printing offices were forced to continue on 44 hours. In the latter half of 1945 swift moves were made to end the hours anomaly. A ballot of the trade resulted in an overwhelming majority in favor of refusing to work more than 40 hours per week. The Amalgamated Printing Trades Union fell into line with the PIEU.

Marvelous Response

Zero hour for the working of 40 hours found a marvelous response from the commercial printers. This was all the more remarkable because they were dispersed throughout literally hundreds of offices in Sydney and Newcastle. After a period during which the printers worked 40 hours for 40 hours' pay, the Master Printers received legal advice that if they continued to condone this set-up the Arbitration Court might consider 40 hours to have become the custom of the trade, and it might be possible for the Union to claim full Award rates for the new hours. Hence an ultimatum was issued, demanding a resumption of the 44-hour week. A huge mass meeting was held. Union officials advocated that direct action be abandoned and the dispute submitted to the Arbitration Court. This advice was overwhelmingly rejected. Except for a few small offices, some of which had conceded 40 hours, all the commercial printers were then locked out.

On October 23 (1945) at a critical stage in the dispute, a meeting of 600 union executive members and Labor Council delegates was held in the Trades Hall. It was decided to hold mass demonstrations for 40 hours on December 9. Support for the printers' claims was declared, but the meeting, despite a strong demand for an extension of the struggle by a spokesman for the

rank-and-file printers, limited itself to calling upon the Federal Government to implement a 40-hour week within six months after V-P Day, using the powers it possessed to ratify the 40 hours policy of the International Labor Office. Under the depressing effect of this decision, the struggle then moved toward a climax. The Federal officials of the PIEU came to Sydney. Another mass meeting was called. Officials made predictions that if the dispute were referred to the Arbitration Court a quick hearing was assured. It was decided to hold a secret ballot of the PIEU and the Amalgamated Printing Trades Union. The result of the ballot showed that a clear majority favored going back to work and submitting the case to the Court.

Meanwhile the Labor Council's campaign was getting under way. A procession was held, followed by a big rally in the Domain.

A Marathon Hearing

The printers' case came before the Arbitration Court, but the Commonwealth Government and the Australasian Council of Trade Unions intervened to make the case a general 40-hour hearing for all Federal unions. Thus, instead of a quick "test case," the hearing became a marathon affair which lasted approximately two years. Union officials appearing before the Court emphasized that the workers had been promised "a new social order" after the war. However, the officials had great difficulty in substantiating this claim in evidence because they had failed to secure any written promise from either the Government or the employers.

As a result of the Court delays the Stalinists sought a revival of strike action, arguing that the judges were stalling in order that the coming of an inevitable economic depression would justify them in delivering an adverse judgment. By this non-dialectical approach the Stalinists showed that they had failed to assess the degree of mass pressure on the Court. Pressure on the Federal and State Labor Governments had become intense, and this situation, of course, had repercussions in the Court. Shortening of hours was a burning issue on every job, in every union, and in every branch of the Labor Party. While Prime Minister Chifley could plead lack of constitutional power to legislate a reduction of hours, there was no barrier in the New South Wales legislature except the Upper House.

A few weeks after James McGirr succeeded McKell as Labor Premier of New South Wales, he introduced 40 hours for all State employees and workers operating under State awards. Once again was demonstrated the power of the NSW unions to influence the passage of reforms through Parliament.

Most of the capitalist class in Australia are perturbed at the tremendous victory which has sprung from the agitation for 40 hours. They dream of capturing lush overseas markets on the basis of intense exploitation of the toilers, and the shorter week is a blow at their plans. The coalminers are now demanding a 35-hour week, and enthusiastic crowds who flocked to the recent six-hour demonstration in Sydney showed clearly that new struggles for shorter hours are not far distant.

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