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EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

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Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part 4

Struggle in the Fourth International

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT DOCUMENTS 1951-1954

Volume 3 of 4 volumes 75¢ March 1974

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT DOCUMENTS, 1951-1954

Contents, Volume III

Contents of Other Volumes

Introductory Note

In 1953, sharp differences over Stalinism and organizational matters divided the Fourth International into two public factions, the International Committee of the Fourth International and the International Secretariat of the Fourth International. This division lasted until the Re-unification Congress of the Fourth International held in 1963.

The articles, documents, correspondence, and circulars published in these *Education for Socialists* bulletins are presented as an aid in tracing the evolution of this dispute. The material is divided into two parts. The first (Part Three of *Towards a History of the Fourth International*) is composed of four bulletins and contains materials from the International Committee. The second (Part Four of *Towards a History of the Fourth International)* consists of four bulletins containing material from the International Secretariat faction.

Both sets of bulletins begin with the discussion prior to the Third World Congress of the Fourth International held in 1951. They are divided into sections dealing with key stages in the development of the dispute. Each section opens with a brief introductory note. To the extent that these notes include historical interpretations or conclusions, the views expressed are my own.

The documents, correspondence, articles, and circulars have been subjected to minimal editing. In general the style, grammar, etc., have been retained as in the originals. Additions to the text for explanatory purposes appear in brackets.

The term "section" appears frequently in these documents. This word was used in two different senses within the world Trotskyist movement. On the one hand, it refers to those groups which are affiliated to the Fourth International. Secondly, it is used in reference to organizations that are barred from membership in the Fourth International by reactionary legislation, such as the SWP, but are in full political solidarity with the world Trotskyist movement and represent the continuity of Trotskyism in their countries.

The faction struggle in the world Trotskyist movement occurred when the McCarthyite witch-hunt was at its height in the United States. Similar manifestations of political repression appeared in other capitalist countries, as the ruling class sought to whip up anticommunist hysteria. In view of these sharp attacks on democratic rights, many radicals found it necessary to use pseudonyms or pen-names in carrying out their political activity. This was true of the Trotskyist movement as well. In line with a policy of printing this material as it originally appeared, these have generally not been changed. Instead, a glossary of these pen-names is included in each volume. Note that some individuals used more than one pen-name on occasion.

The 1953-54 dispute was worldwide in its scope and repercussions. Many parts of the Trotskyist movement that participated in the struggle are not represented in this collection. An instance of this is the lack of documentation from Latin America. Material from the dispute in the Latin American Trotskyist organizations is now being translated and will appear in a future volume.

This selection is based on the documents and correspondence presently available to the National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party. Because of the speed with which the dispute developed, once the differences had become apparent to both sides, many aspects of the struggle are not fully dealt with in official documents. Therefore, it was necessary to include a considerable amount of correspondence to allow maximum clarity for the reader.

Hopefully, the publication of these bulletins will inspire others who were involved in the dispute to make available the relevant materials in their possession. Special thanks are owed to James P. Cannon, National Chairman Emeritus of the Socialist Workers Party, and Tom Kerry and Karolyn Kerry for making their personal archives available for this project.

Fred Feldman
February 1974

Glossary of Pseudonyms and Pen Names Used by Key Figures

The individuals' names appear on the left, with the pseudonyms following in italics.

Harry Braverman: *Harry Frankel*
James P. Cannon: *Walter, Martin*
George Clarke: *Campbell, Livingstone, Livingston*
Colvin R. DaSilva: *Roy*
Farrell Dobbs: *Smith, Barr*
Ross Dowson: *Kane*
Leslie Goonewardene: *Tilak*
Sam Gordon: *Tom, Harry, Burton, Joe*
Joseph Hansen: *Herrick*
Gerry Healy: *Burns, Mason, Jerry*
John Lawrence: *Collins*
Ernest Mandel: *Ernest Germain, Albert, Jeb*
Sherry Mangan: *Patrice, Terrence Phelan, Patrick O'Daniel*
George Novack: *Manuel, William F. Warde*
Michel Raptis: *Michel Pablo, Gabe*
David Weiss: *Stevens*
Milton Zaslow: *Mike Bartell*

SECTION VI: DEEPENING DIFFERENCES OVER STALINISM

[The summer of 1953 saw a sharp widening of the political differences between the SWP and the supporters of Pablo. In "Stalin's Role — Stalinism's Future" (reprinted here from the issue of *Fourth International* dated January-February 1953 actually published, however, after the May 1953 Plenum of the SWP National Committee), George Clarke projected the possibility that the disappearance of Stalinism in the Soviet Union would take place through a "sharing of power" by the bureaucracy with the masses. Organizational heat was added to these political differences by the fact that Clarke placed his article in the magazine without first discussing it with the editorial board.

[In the issue of *Fourth International* dated March-April 1953, Michel Pablo's "The Post-Stalin 'New Course'" followed the general lines of Clarke's article. Pablo, however, placed more weight on the possibility that the liquidation of Stalinism might take place through sharp "intrabureaucratic struggles." In the same issue, Morris Stein took issue with Clarke's views and, implicitly, with Pablo's.

[The first outbreak of political revolution in the workers states—the Berlin uprising of June 1953—produced further divergences, particularly over the role played by Soviet troops. The importance and dynamic of the concessions made by the bureaucracy in the course of suppressing the uprising was also the subject of political differences. The International Secretariat statement on the East German events is reprinted from the June 16, 1953, issue of *The Militant.* George Clarke's article in the issue of *Fourth International* dated March-April 1953 presents a parallel position. In the same issue of *Fourth International,* Clarke further developed his views on events in the Soviet Union since the death of Stalin.

[In the issue of *Fourth International* dated May-June 1953, the view of the SWP leadership on the East German events was presented in a lead editorial.

[A letter to the editors of *Fourth International* from an Australian cothinker is included in this section for the light it sheds on the conceptions that Pablo's views were inspiring in rank-and-file supporters of the Fourth International.

[The gulf that emerged in the evaluation of these important events eliminated all doubt that the differences over Stalinism that had divided the SWP also existed within the leadership of the Fourth International.]

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1. "Stalin's Role—Stalinism's Future," by George Clarke

No man ever more accurately expressed the utter bewilderment of bourgeois thought on the Soviet Union than Winston Churchill when he said that "it (Russia) is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma." Never was it more apparent that this mystery would remain forever unravelled than at the time of Stalin's death. On the contrary, his death seemed to shroud the thinking of our most eminent — and "practical" — statesmen in a new cloud of illusions. With an amazing alacrity, John Foster Dulles leaped straight into the occult. The age of Stalin has ended, he proclaimed, the era of Eisenhower begun.

There was no enigma, however, in Dulles' statement. It came straight from the Propaganda Ministry (Time-Life-Fortune) of the House of Morgan. If the "American Century" had fared badly since the end of the war, its advent was now assured with the passing of "that man." For Dulles, obviously, the Soviet Union and socialism had no separate existence apart from Stalin and the bureaucratic dictatorship. Logically, the end of the one was the end of the other. To him, the great economic achievements arising from the planned economy and making the Soviet Union the second industrial power in the world were realized solely by sheer force directed against an unwilling people. Similarly, the bonds that link the Soviet Union to China, to Eastern Europe, to colonial revolt in Southeast Asia, to the mass Communist parties of France and Italy are also maintained by sheer coercion. So now with the passing of the "great tyrannical unifier," the new world of 800,000,000 peoples would fall apart: Mao Tse-tung would take the road to a "Titoite" purgatory; the countries of Eastern Europe would snap the chains; and the Soviet peoples would probably revolt.

Let no one think that the above was merely an outburst of spontaneous rhetoric on the part of the Secretary of State. That is really how they think in Washington. It took only a few weeks for Dulles' rhetoric to become official state policy. Eisenhower opened his hapless "peace offensive" by instructing the new Soviet rulers that they were now in a position to do what Stalin had been unwilling or unable to do: to get out of Eastern Europe and Asia, to stop the flow of colonial revolt as though it were controlled by a faucet from Moscow, to permit the unification of Germany as part of the anti-Soviet military alliance. That's all. After that there would be peace.

Nevertheless there appears to have been a sneaking suspicion in the imperialist headquarters that what they call "the Soviet Empire" might not crumble to ruins very quickly. There was a thinly concealed frustration that they were in no position to hasten the process by an immediate military assault and so exploit any weakness or confusion occasioned by the change of rule in the Soviet Union. Eisenhower's "peace offensive" is obviously intended to do in part by diplomacy what cannot yet be attempted by more persuasive methods. It is easy to predict that this diplomatic stroke, which has no precise objectives, asks everything and gives nothing, will soon come to grief. Fundamentally, it is based on a historically and socially false premise. It is based on the totally false conception that Stalin like other dictators in the past was the keystone of the Soviet regime, which thus could not long survive his death.

Cromwell, Napoleon and Stalin

The Cromwellian regime, for example, lasted some six months after his death in September 1658, and the following year the Stuart Charles II returned to power. Napoleon's empire fell apart and turned against him after his defeat at Waterloo following a 14-year reign. The Bourbons returned to power in France. Reaction under the Holy Alliance triumphed in Europe. It takes no daring to predict that neither development will occur now after Stalin's death. The regime will not crack up in six months, or in many times six months. If an attempt is made to crush the regime in war, it will spell the doom of the capitalist not the socialist world.

This is not because Stalin was a greater figure than Cromwell or Napoleon, or even comparable for his conscious efforts and works on a historical scale. Precisely herein is demonstrated the superiority of Marxist thought

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Based upon a speech delivered on April 10, 1953 in New York City.

over all other. Great men may influence the course of history, but its main direction is determined by material (and class) forces beyond and more powerful than any individual, no matter how great. The social system which Stalin ruled will outlast him because it is far more powerful socially and economically than those dominated by Cromwell or Napoleon, and that is decisive regardless of the striking fact of genius on the one side and mediocrity on the other. Its enemies are far weaker materially and in a historical sense than those which beset the erstwhile rulers of England and France. The new bourgeois property forms were still in the infancy of development under Cromwell's anti-feudal regime, and were not too much further advanced under Napoleon, and particularly in the Europe conquered by him. In contrast, the socialist-type economic system of the Soviet Union now overshadows in strength and scope those of all other capitalist nations save the United States.

But the greatest reason for the durability of the Soviet regime is a political one, and it is this that extends its life span far beyond the mortality of any ruler. Regardless of political oppression, the rigors of an iron dictatorship, of poverty and burdensome toil, the Soviet regime rests upon new socialist property forms which have entered the consciousness of the masses not as a repetition of old exploitation in new forms, not as a change from feudal lords to capitalist profiteers, but as the road to the future, to the end of all exploitation of man by man. Not all the privileges and plundering of the bureaucracy has been able to undermine this historically justified idea. On the contrary, it is this idea which, with the growing cultural and material strength of the Soviet Union, is more and more undermining the basis for the existence of the bureaucracy.

The death of Stalin presages not the twilight and doom of socialism, but the beginning of the end of Stalinism. This forecast will occasion little joy in capitalist circles. For if the system that is evolving toward socialism is now strong enough to begin to correct its internal distortions, then it derives its strength for reform and change not merely internally but primarily from the irresistible power of the revolutionary proletarian and colonial movements in the capitalist world itself. It is in this sense — which we shall develop later — that the death of Stalin is an evil omen for world capitalism.

Three Decades — and Not a Tear

For those who understand the Marxist method and are able to grasp the real essence of the relationship between the Soviet system and the usurping bureaucracy and of the transitory character of this ruling caste, Stalin's role is no enigma. It was explained by Trotsky many years ago. Now in the few short weeks after his death, this analysis has been receiving an amazingly rapid confirmation.

Stalin's rule lasted longer than that of any other single figure in our time — an entire epoch. No other figure remained so long, so constantly in the public eye as he. It was said of Franklin Roosevelt that a generation had grown up not knowing there had ever been another President. But of Stalin, it could perhaps be said that two generations had never known another ruler, another leader of Russia. Lenin's regime lasted but seven years; Stalin's almost three decades. Yet the events following closely upon his death already indicate that never is so prominent an individual being more quickly forgotten. It is as though his memory were an evil thing to be conjured up in anger and hatred of monstrous, untold crimes, for cynically, wantonly inflicting endless suffering and death.

The funeral orations of the triumvirs who fell heir to the bureaucratic rule already spoke volumes on this score. They were far, far from that deeply felt eulogy that is so naturally accorded those who have rendered great services to humanity, who have illuminated the path of progress to be travelled. Malenkov, Beria, Molotov droned on in the same ritualistic way at Stalin's bier, making the same — and perhaps the last — obeisance to him they had made so often during his lifetime. Their dull, grey style, forcibly stamped on Soviet thought and speech by Stalin himself to maintain his pre-eminence, gave the nightmarish feeling that the deceased ruler was making his last pronouncement through the tongues of three living shadows. There was not a tear in their remarks, not an inspired word, not a cry of pain or anguish, not even a tone of regret — discernible only was fear of their own uncertain future. Nobody swore to Stalin as Stalin had sworn to Lenin when at his grave in 1924 he chanted in an almost medieval litany that he would be true, he would carry on . . . Everybody expected, demanded that Lenin's heirs continue his work. Nobody, to a certain extent not even the bureaucracy itself, wanted that of Stalin's successors. Their speeches seemed an apology for their long association with the deceased. Beria's reference to Malenkov's close links to Stalin had almost the sound of a slur.

On the other side of the world, Mao Tse-tung, in paying his last respects to the departed dictator, bowed in somewhat mock deference to the men who had assumed the title but seemed to be taunting them with Stalin. He seemed to be saying: I had to pay a certain price to him, to make a certain obeisance because he wielded so much power, held the reins so firmly. But which of you is his heir? I rendered to Caesar, that which was Caesar's. But now Caesar has no successor. Malenkov is official but he is not Stalin.

The Achievements and the Man

Closer to home, the *Monthly Review*, which has difficulty in distinguishing between criticism of the bureaucratic regime and attacks on the Soviet system, found itself obliged to memorialize Stalin with an apology. "One can argue," says an editorial (April 1953), *"that Stalin's methods were unnecessarily harsh and ruthless . . ."* But *"it is extremely difficult to believe that any of the other candidates for Lenin's position* (Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin) *could have succeeded as Stalin did."* Stalin himself also found this "difficult to believe" and that explains perhaps why he resolved the question by slander and frame-up, by murdering all "the other candidates" and many others. Nevertheless, says *Monthly Review, "whatever one may think of his methods, one cannot deny him his achievements."* This of course is the heart of the apology; the nub of the question.

Stalin's name is associated with the greatest social

achievements of our age: with the lifting of Russia, by the methods of socialist planning, from ancient backwardness to a foremost modern, industrial society; with the extension of the foundations of the socialist society to one-third of the world. Were these really his achievements, Stalin, despite all his ruthlessness and brutality, would enter history as one of the world's great immortals, as great or greater than Marx, Engels or Lenin, for what they projected in theory, or took merely the first step in practice, he would have carried out on a vast arena, solving hitherto unforeseen problems, overcoming titanic difficulties. In fact, were that the case, the four names would be indissociable, the fame of Marx, Engels, Lenin proved and vindicated by the works of Stalin.

This, to be sure, is one of the most complicated questions in modern history — perhaps in all history. How can the achievements of a regime be divorced from the man who held its reins? Or contrariwise, can these achievements be attributed to the very man whose entire life-work was carried on by "harsh and ruthless" methods in mortal antagonism to the very forces who consciously strove for these achievements and in the end made them possible?

A riot of conflicting answers arises from the quest to compress an unmanageable reality into convenient, simple formulas: 1. Stalin was the architect of industrialization, of the victory and spread of the revolution. 2. Stalin had nothing whatever to do with them. 3. The methods were bad, therefore the achievements are bad — they do not exist. 4. The methods were necessary, the results are good, therefore they are justified. The answers are like those given by the blind men about the elephant when they each touched it in a different part. The role of Stalin is only to be discovered by discarding the methods of the blind men of formal logic and empiric thought for the application of the Marxist dialectic of historical materialism to the concreteness of Russian conditions which gave rise to the phenomenon of Stalinism.

Strength and Weakness of Russia's Workers

The Russian working class, small numerically amidst a vast agricultural population living under conditions of semi-feudalism, but strong because of the concentrated organization of Russian industry and because of its socialist consciousness, proved powerful enough to overthrow a weak capitalism whose fate was tied to a rotting Czarist Empire. But the great revolutionary action of October 1917 did not immediately or automatically overcome the backwardness and poverty of Russia. Powerful enough to eliminate the fundamental social causes which produced this backwardness, the proletariat was still too weak to overcome the consequences of this backwardness which were bound to remain until a new economic structure could be created on a Russian and world scale. It could overthrow Kerensky, defeat Wrangel and Kolchak, hurl back the intervention of the imperialists, but by itself, without the aid of the more advanced working class of western Europe, it was too weak to prevent the rise of the most characteristic phenomenon of backwardness — the rule of bureaucratic overlords, headed by Stalin, on the back of the revolution. If Lenin reflected the strength and greatness of the Russian proletariat, then Stalin was the product of its weakness and of a society weighed down with the inheritance of an almost medieval past.

But the question does not end there. If it did, the Mensheviks who had predicted dire consequences if Russia dared to skip over the stage of capitalism, would today be an important current in the workers' movement instead of dopesters and scribblers whose knowledge of Russian permits them to furnish useful bits of information to the press and State Department. Stalin throttled the revolutionary wing of the Russian working class when he smashed the Left Opposition in the Twenties. With that defeat the proletariat as a whole was removed by a bureaucracy as the conscious, guiding force of the revolution and from all direct participation in the state and the economy. But the peculiarity of this development lies in the fact that the victory of reaction was not accompanied by a restoration of capitalism, that the revolution survived this terrible defeat. It not only survived but it even succeeded in making its agent in a distorted and unexpected way the very engineer of the triumphant reaction, Stalin himself. And precisely therein is the key to the enigma of Stalin and Stalinism illuminated and demonstrated again and again by the main chapters of the post-Lenin period of the Russian Revolution.

The Bureaucrats' Alliance With the Peasantry

The bureaucracy could not simply usurp the state power after Lenin's death, nor could it find sufficient support for this *coup d'etat* among the Russian workers, most of whom stood athwart its path in revolutionary hostility. It had to turn for aid to that class which had been the chief beneficiary of the democratic phase of the Russian Revolution, and which, as a capitalist formation, ran the risk of being the chief loser in its socialist phase. Lenin and Trotsky were deeply conscious that the Russian peasantry, like the peasantry in all previous revolutions, could very likely turn against their own revolution and become the tool of the new reaction. For that reason they constantly reiterated that the fate of the Russian Revolution depended on the alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry — and upon a struggle of the poor elements within the peasantry against its more capitalist sections. But they did not envisage the alliance of anti-revolutionary bureaucracy with the peasants, and particularly with its richer members. Stalin's alliance with Bukharin and Rykov was in its own indirect way the political consummation of that alliance. Within a few years the social force of this alliance proved powerful enough not only to overwhelm the revolutionary sections of the proletariat but to bring the peasantry to the very threshold of power. In 1928-29, the Soviet Union stood on the brink of capitalist restoration.

It was then that the revolution re-asserted itself, forcing Stalin to turn on his former allies, to make war on the very class that had brought him to power, to appeal to the proletariat for its aid in saving the revolution and to borrow bag and baggage from the program of the revolutionary representatives of the proletariat, the Left Opposition, whom he had just liquidated in the factional civil war in the party. The revolution turned to the left again. True

there was a coincidence of interest between a section of the bureaucracy (which stood to lose all by a defeat of the revolution) and of the Russian working class. But more important was what the events indicated of the power of the revolution: it was not the peasantry which triumphed over the bureaucracy but the proletariat which imposed its historic interests on this bureaucracy, even after its most legitimate representatives had been crushed and defeated.

Superiority Over French Revolution

In this decisive crisis was revealed the immense superiority, historically and socially, of the Russian *proletarian* revolution over the French *bourgeois* revolution of the 18th century. After the destruction of the plebeian base of Jacobin power by Robespierre, which opened the gates to the Thermidorean reaction, the French revolution never again moved left. The Thermidor was followed by the Napoleonic Empire which in turn was supplanted by a new rule of the Bourbons, ruling this time to be sure for the bourgeoisie and not for the shattered feudal nobility. The bourgeoisie, through the Thermidor, had definitively triumphed over all the plebeian forces — it no longer needed the revolution.

But the Thermidorean forces of the Russian Revolution, the Stalinist bureaucracy, were compelled in the interests of self-preservation to again arouse the plebeians of the 20th century, i,e., the disciplined, cohesive and socialist-conscious proletariat. It was the working class which was summoned to carry the major brunt of toil and sacrifice in the execution of the Five Year Plans; it was the most hardy and courageous elements of this class which poured into the countryside to implement the vast project of collectivization of agriculture.

The Bureaucracy's Stolen Privileges

Now having destroyed the peasant base, on which the Bonapartist regime in the Kremlin balanced itself against the working class, the bureaucracy sought once again to achieve its independence from the class it could neither live with nor live without. Once again it struck at the proletariat in the monster purges of the Thirties. In the process, there was created a kind of aristocracy of labor and a managerial and governmental caste enjoying exceptional privileges and a living standard incomparably higher than that of the masses. The caste had gained a certain stability, but it was a transient, crisis-ridden stability.

The new privileges, considerable as they were, could not be converted into property in land or the means of production; they could not be converted into capital, the prime source of wealth and power for a ruling class in the modern world. On the contrary, these privileges derived from a system of property relations, nationalized in form, socialist in essence and inexorably striving toward a greater egalitarianism, from a system, in short, that was the antithesis of the stolen privileges of the ruling caste. In fact, the bureaucracy, except for a few brazen indiscretions from time to time, has sought to conceal its favored position. To this day there are no statistics in the Soviet Union on comparative incomes. Unlike the *nouveaux riches* of the capitalist world, it dare not indulge in conspicuous waste; it must ever lie about its real situation, it must constantly explains that the inequalities are merely a phase of the transitional epoch, with the inevitable citations from Marx and Lenin.

The Balance Sheet: Promise and Fulfillment

We can now better assess Stalin's role and place in the post-revolution era. We are led unerringly to one conclusion: despite his physical association with the great works of the revolution, he must go down in history as a usurper, a hangman, hated and despised:

1. Stalin came to power promising an end to the rigors of civil war that marked the Lenin-Trotsky era, promising a slowing down of the revolution, the most gradual transition to socialism (wich would be built "at a snail's pace") and the harmonious collaboration of all classes with exceptional favors to the peasantry (this was the meaning of the endless refrain in the early days that Trotsky was "underestimating the peasantry").

Within four-five years, Stalin turned into the direct opposite, converting the Soviet Union into a vast battlefield of civil war for the collectivization of agriculture. More lives were lost in its panicky bureaucratic execution (of a correct program) through violence, economic dislocation, famine than in all the earlier years of revolution, counter-revolution, civil war against the White Guards and against foreign intervention. Thus Stalin's role in the monumental transformation of Russia, agriculturally and industrially, is characterized first by the betrayal of the promise on which he rose to power and second, for its barbarousness and total callousness for human life.

2. To create the socialist economic foundations that would save the regime from capitalist restoration, Stalin turned to the proletariat demanding tremendous sacrifices from it for industrial construction which were made with the greatest heroism, devotion and self-abnegation. Again Stalin had borrowed from Trotsky's program of "permanent revolution" but again it was applied in panic entailing the most frightful waste, incompetence and the consequent unnecessary suffering on the part of the people.

In the end, however, the proletariat discovered that the sacrifices had not been equally made by all sections of Soviet society, that a bureaucracy was battening off the new wealth created by economic growth, and finally that it had been shorn of all means of self-defense against the arbitrary power, the arrogance of this uncontrolled bureaucracy.

3. Stalin rose to power promising peace to a war-weary, revolution-weary Russian people. There would be "socialism" for them in "one country," there would be an end to Trotsky's "world revolution adventurism." This was all to be achieved by avoiding any revolutionary clashes with capitalism by making a state policy of international collaboration or "cohabitation" with world capitalism.

In the interim between the two wars, he succeeded in averting, damning up and even contributing to the suppression of the revolutionary clashes with capitalism on a national scale (in Germany, France, Spain). But he could not avoid the most fatal of all the clashes, that which involved the Soviet Union itself on an international scale in

World War II, and which was made possible in part by Stalin's "peace" policy itself. Far from the bringing of an era of durable "peace" and indefinite cohabitation of the two systems, as Stalin again promised, the war gave new and unprecedented impetus to the revolutionary encounters of proletarians and colonial peoples on two continents, and then once again came the ever impending danger of a far bigger conflict with world imperialism on a global scale.

In brief:

The "peasants' friend" became its most hated foe.

The "builder of socialism" became the defender of the new privilege.

The "man of peace" without revolutions became the man of war surrounded by revolutions he didn't want and tried to prevent. The last years of his life were marked not by "cohabitation" but by Cold War.

The Most Consummate Opportunist

Stalin cannot receive credit for being forced to do the very opposite of what he intended and promised. He can only earn eternal ignominy for using barbaric methods directly at variance with the aims to be achieved, and used for privilege-seeking, power-seeking purposes. He goes down in history as the most consummate, ruthless *opportunist* of all times. All suffered from this opportunism — the left and the right, the peasantry and the proletariat, various sections of the bureaucracy itself at different times, important battalions of the world proletariat. Stalin's role was fundamentally a barrier to the progress of the Russian Revolution in the post-Lenin era. Its achievements are consequently a victory over his opportunism — it was not he who led the revolution, but the revolution which impressed him unwillingly into its service, at tremendous cost to itself. The honor for the achievements will one day be accorded to the men Stalin liquidated because it was their program, their prescience which made these achievements possible.

Stalinism — Doctrine of Reactionary Epoch

The death of Stalin prefigures the end of Stalinism. This applies uniquely to the Georgian tyrant and not at all to the great revolutionary figures to whose succession he forcibly, falsely laid claim and which he forced an entire state and people to recognize. Marxism did not die with Marx; nor Leninism with Lenin, nor Trotskyism with Trotsky. In their cases, the mortal man was only the physical frame for immortal doctrine and works. But if the ideas of these towering figures became more powerful, more acceptable after their death it is because their genius consisted in being able to divine the future through analysing the past and understanding the present. They were, so to speak, ahead of their times, which means they were in tune with human progress.

Stalinism, on the other hand, was already dying before the demise of its foremost spokesman. That was because it was not a doctrine, not a system of ideas, not a universal world-outlook, above all, not a science. If the world philosophy can be sufficiently distorted, Stalinism might be called a philosophy of conservatism and defeatism. Like Stalin himself, it was the product of a specific epoch, the rationalization of a temporary phenomenon, the making of a virtue out of necessity. Far from foreseeing the future, it tried to enclose the past into the present, and to perpetuate the present into the future. It was out of tune with human progress, standpat, regressive, reactionary.

Defeats, the backwardness of Russia, its isolation and encirclement by a still powerful capitalist world brought Stalinism into being. It gradually came to the conclusion, then made it a state doctrine, that the victory of the socialist revolution was impossible anywhere else in the world. Any attempt at revolution, they believed and decreed, would lead only to defeat and then to war against the Soviet Union. The duty of the Communist parties was therefore restricted to placating or pressuring their bourgeoisie, and to wait — to wait until after socialism was completely built in the USSR, to wait until the end of that historic period when socialism would prove so attractive, so superior a system that capitalism would fall of its own weight. But since the USSR was encircled by mortal enemies, endangered all the time, there had to be an iron discipline in the country, there had to be a bureaucracy for this function, to protect and supervise the masses and thus to shepherd them into socialism (and naturally, it expected to be properly rewarded).

That was the epoch of crushing defeats from China to Spain. It was crowned with the triumph of Hitler and the Nazi conquest of Europe. It was the epoch when the Soviet Union was stained with the blood of revolutionists as the night of Stalinist terror descended over the bureaucrats' Socialism in One Country. That epoch lasting almost twenty years came to an end with World War II.

The War Changes Everything

Surprised by the war, and particularly by the attack of his erstwhile ally, Adolf Hitler, Stalin wanted no more than the defeat of Germany and Japan — these were his total war-aims, all McCarthyite raving to the contrary notwithstanding — and the resumption of the pre-war collaboration with "peace-loving," "democratic" capitalism. The goal was attained, but it proved more than Stalin had bargained for.

The defeat of the two main bastions of reaction in Europe and Asia, the exhaustion of British and French capitalism, the disruption of their colonial systems opened the floodgates to the greatest revolutionary torrent in history. It passed through the very channels the Kremlin had so laboriously, so villainously constructed to divert the tide — that is, through Communist parties themselves. The Kremlin denounced, exhorted, pleaded, sabotaged, made secret deals with the enemies of the revolution, but there was no damming the tide; it came on irresistibly. The contrast with the pre-war epoch is overwhelming.

In 1924, shortly after Stalin's ascent to power, there was a revolutionary crisis in Germany induced by the effects of the Kaiser's defeat in World War I, the depredations of the victorious Versailles powers, by raging inflation, by economic stagnation. At this juncture, Stalin sent a discouraging communication to the young, inexperienced German Communist Party seeking to dissuade it from

bold, revolutionary action. Such, he admonished, could only lead to defeat, and, in any case, the Russians were too weak to come to their aid if their successful action should be subject to military intervention from the imperialist states. The effects of the letter were to create confusion, uneasiness and restraint in a situation where clarity and audacity were prerequisites. The opportunity was missed —and eventually became one of the causes that paved the way for Hitler.

Twenty years later, in an interview in Moscow, Stalin gave the same type of advice to Tito whose partisan forces were fighting a civil war in Yugoslavia. A year or two later, and then again in 1948 he gave the Chinese Communists the benefit of the same wisdom. (The pertinent facts of these incidents have now been made public by Tito. They are quoted elsewhere in this issue in a review of Vladimir Dedijer's biography of the Yugoslav leader.) The Yugoslavs listened intently to Stalin's advice, and the Chinese even agreed. *Then they went back home and . . . did the opposite — led their armed forces in victorious struggle against reactionary enemies and conquered state power.*

In the interim there developed another unexpected turn of events, particularly for Stalin, in Eastern Europe. He began, at the termination of the Second World War, by attempting to maintain the entire area as a military buffer zone of friendly states, occupied or protected by Soviet troops; and also as an area that could be utilized for political bargaining and commercial transactions with western capitalism. He was obliged, only a few years later, to reverse this policy completely and thus to uproot capitalism root and branch in one-third of Europe. Next to the Chinese Revolution, the creation of these new, deformed workers' states became a chief cause of imperialist preparations for World War III, which Stalin's entire anti-revolutionary policy had sought to avert.

China Shakes the World and. . . Stalinism

Sic transit gloria mundi! Thus ended two myths — as unquestionable for two decades as Papal Bulls!

1. Stalin's infallibility: If communists fought for power, they couldn't win, among other reasons because he wouldn't help them, and certainly because he'd help them lose. He tried to help them lose in Yugoslavia and China — but they fought anyway, and won.

2. Socialism in One Country: This was the theory that there could not and should not be revolutions anywhere else in the world until the USSR had entered the realm of communism; and that therefore the working class and colonial peoples of the world were merely accessories to the Kremlin.

Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe called the theory into question.

China! China shook the world, and put an end to the theory forever. Without Stalin's help, agains this advice, despite his sabotage and secret deals with Roosevelt, Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek, the Chinese Communist Party under Mao Tse-tung overthrew capitalist rule over one-fifth of the world's population, undermining imperialism beyond repair.

When Stalin signed the Sino-Soviet Treaty in 1950 binding him to the defense of the Chinese Revolution against any attack — the first time he had ever agreed to defend anything but the Soviet Union and the bureaucracy — he officially signed the death warrant of his most precious theory. Not only was another revolution given equal footing with that in the Soviet Union, but added to the treaty either as a secret clause or a separate understanding was the agreement that henceforth Mao Tse-tung would be empowered with the right of *CODIRECTION OF THE WORLD STALINIST MOVEMENT.*

Stalin's speech at the 19th Congress of the Russian Communist Party last October, which received little attention in the capitalist press, was in effect a *last testament* and a public admission of the bankruptcy of his theory and practice of Socialism in One Country. He went to considerable pains to prove that the Soviet Union (meaning his Bonapartist clique) had aided the struggle for socialism by defeating Germany and Japan in the war. He admitted that the Soviet Union was dependent on the workers of the world. His plea for their help in the event of war was motivated on the grounds that by so doing they would in reality be aiding their own struggle for socialism.

So universally recognized was the demise of Stalin's theory that the new Soviet rulers cast it into the grave as much a cadaver as their dead leader. Not one of the three funeral orators even made passing reference to the theory that had once been called an earthshaking contribution to Marxism. But all three gave Stalin credit for "proletarian internationalism," which he had fought like an enraged beast during his lifetime.

Changes in the Soviet Union

Since the end of the war, the world has changed as much inside the Soviet Union as outside. Stalin had seized power over the Soviet state in a backward country with an illiterate people, only a small minority of whom were industrial workers. Today the Soviet Union properly boasts of one of the largest working classes in the world, of a comparatively cultured people, an educated youth, technicians, scientists, (despite all the artists still in uniform). The foundations and *raison d'etre* of the bureaucratic regime are being steadily undermined by the constant creation of an abundance of the very qualities which the bureaucracy had once enjoyed as a tiny minority and for which it commanded such a high price for its services. Thus, if for the sake of argument, we were to grant that Stalin had made this world, then it was unmaking him and Stalinism before his death.

Already at the 19th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in Malenkov's report and in Stalin's booklet on the problems of the Soviet economy there was a sharp reflection of these changes in the Soviet Union which took the form of a subdued clash between the new proletarian and intellectual critics and their bureaucratic overlords. Basically, despite the utmost care to disguise this criticism in language that would pass the censors in a police regime, the criticism revolved around three primary questions: the standard of living; the privileges of the bureaucracy and inequalities in income; the iron dic-

tatorship — a theme obviously discussed as is apparent from the constant attacks against those expounding Marx's conception of "the withering away of the state." (For more extended treatment of these questions, the reader is referred to studies by Ernest Germain and Michel Pablo on the Congress in the last issue of *Fourth International.*)

At the Congress, the Kremlin seemed prepared to make some concessions to the masses and its critics by the fiercest verbal assaults against bureaucracy heard in many a year, by an attempt to renovate the Communist Party as an instrument of control against certain sections of the bureaucracy, and by granting certain rights to the rank and file — within very strict limits, naturally — against some of their more arbitrary, arrogant masters. Although the cause and intent were clear, the proposals were more than somewhat vague. But before the new program could even begin to go into operation, the Kremlin seemed suddenly to change its mind, and the stage was being set for a new vast purge initiated by the arrest of the nine doctors, followed by the typical screaming denunciations of "bourgeois nationalists," "swindlers," "deviationists," "the scum of old oppositions," and with the Jews beginning to figure as major scapegoats. It appeared that a policy of concessions was an untracked wilderness for the bureaucrcy while the purge was a well-trodden path.

Into the midst of this impending purge, there broke Stalin's death. At once all bets were off, all signals changed or changing. The problems remained the same as before his death: the conflict between the parasitism of the bureaucracy with the needs of the nationalized economy; the conflict of the masses and the new intellectual strata with the bureaucracy; the pressure from all strata of Soviet society for greater democracy and freedom. But the relationships had now altered within the bureaucracy, and thereby, to a certain extent, between the bureaucracy and the people.

Position and Problems of the New Regime

The new rulers, none of them inheriting Stalin's position of unquestioned power, none viewed by each other and the bureaucracy as a whole as a court of last resort, each fearing the other and all fearing the masses — they drew back from the purge as from a plague. Obviously none would entrust the execution of the purge to the other, as it might very well mean his own execution; and none was strong enough to force it without the agreement of the others. The more compelling motive that decided the course of the Stalin succession was its relationship to the Soviet masses. The new regime had first to consolidate its position, to win a measure of support for itself among the people. Above all, it had to pacify discontent, else all the oppositional forces gathering before Stalin's death but then restrained by the apparent strength of the regime might now break loose because of its apparent weakness.

Malenkov had apparently been bestowed with the high title, but it was also apparent that he could not play the role of Stalin. For if the conditions, internally and internationally, that made it possible for Stalin to continue as the supreme arbiter were being undermined before his death, then the circumstances were even more unfavorable to attempt to build up a successor for that position. Consequently, the new regime was obliged to recognize that the monolith no longer gives the same appearance of omnipotent power, that it can no longer act in the same way as in the past. The "iron unity" of the bureaucracy under a single head, has now been supplanted by a coalition of representatives of the various sections of the bureaucracy: party, state, army, secret police, economy. The new talk in the Soviet press about "collective leadership," the diatribes against the evils of "one-man leadership" are a reflection of the existence and needs of this coalition.

Its first need was to gain support for the coalition as a whole, while each section of the bureaucracy secretly is seeking to gain support for itself as against the others, and for this purpose it was essential that the new regime present an appearance of benevolence to the masses. In this, the new rulers have not been averse to casting off the "Stalin tradition" as if it were an old rag. This began immediately at the funeral. All three pretenders for power promised an improvement of living conditions — there was not even the vaguest hint of such a promise at the 19th Congress. Beria went one step further and promised the safeguarding of the rights of Soviet citizens — the keynote at the 19th Congress was vigilance and more vigilance (i.e. coercion and repression). No sooner was the corpse disposed of than began the series of measures which some journalists compared to "the 10 days that shook the world." This is undoubtedly a tremendous exaggeration, but they were correct in an intuitive feeling that the new measures were pregnant with the most significant change.

Four Steps That Startled the World

Stalin had enlarged, extended and diffused the dominant organisms of the regime apparently to permit his heir-apparent, Malenkov, better possibilities of single-handed control. *The first act* of the new regime was to combine and reduce the size of these leading committees so as to thwart Malenkov and divide the power among several. This was followed by Malenkov's resignation from the powerful party secretariat, and then by the return of Marshal Zhukov, "the hero of Berlin," whom Stalin had sent into obscurity — thus further diffusing the power by bringing the army into a more prominent position.

The second act of the regime was to fulfill its promise for an amelioration of living conditions by a drastic reduction in prices. The burden of Stalin's economic "masterpiece," which only a few weeks before had been advertised as the greatest contribution to socialist thought since Marx, was that any real improvement in the standard of living had to wait until the advent of communism.

The third act was to reverse the direction toward a new purge, taken after the 19th Congress under Stalin's guidance, by the proclamation of a general amnesty. True, the amnesty measure stopped short of those sentenced for "counter-revolutionary" crimes (which naturally includes the genuine revolutionary opponents and critics of the regime), and the newspapers immediately issued the usual warnings against "Trotskyists and Bukharinists." But it must be remembered that the new regime was seeking support to protect itself, not committing suicide.

The fourth act and most startling of all the measures

was the release of the imprisoned doctors who had been given a one-way ticket to "liquidation." More important even than their exoneration was the accompanying official admission that a frame-up had been perpetrated, that confessions had been extorted by coercion, that anti-semitism had been used as an official method. It was an unprecedented action, a direct blow at the very foundations of Stalinist rule — at the infallibility of the regime, at its barbaric method of settling differences with political opponents and of maintaining power. It raised doubts about the Moscow Trials and about the Kostov, Rajk and Slansky trials in Eastern European countries; it raised doubts about Stalin's methods of dealing with the national question which Malenkov, Beria and Molotov had sworn to uphold and continue in their speeches at Stalin's funeral.

Finally, the indictment of high police officials for persecuting the doctors, regardless of the maneuvers it served in the clique struggle at the top, reversed the process begun after the 19th Congress which took the form of a police hunt of "dissolute intellectuals."

Masses Observe Cracks in the Monolith

Undoubtedly the masses — who have developed that acute sensitivity of change of all peoples living in a dictatorship — saw in these measures the first crack in the monolith, its essential weakness, the differences, antagonisms and clique struggle for power. They probably speculated that the amnesty decree was a blow against Beria who had been responsible for the imprisonments over the last five years covered by the decree. They probably reckoned that the vindication of the doctors was a blow against Malenkov (and Stalin) who had charged Beria and the security organs with "lack of vigilance" at the time of the doctors' arrest. These signs prefigure the end of the Stalinist dictatorship. They announce the coming entry of the Soviet masses onto the political arena. When the top bureaucrats, to settle the conflicts in their own ranks, are compelled to appeal to the masses for support, then its inevitable counterpart must be an attempt by these masses to utilize the conflict among the bureaucrats to put an end to all bureaucratic rule.

Trotsky wrote in 1929, when it appeared that the wealthy peasantry was gaining the upper hand in the Thermidorean coalition, that the film of history was unwinding backwards toward a capitalist restoration in the USSR. Today, it can be said that its direction is reversed and is now unwinding toward socialist democracy in the USSR. Not at once, to be sure, and not rapidly. There will probably still be many ups and downs, many conflicts between the masses and the bureaucracy, new outbreaks of violence, coercion and probably even purges, and the entire process in all likelihood will pass through a Third World War. *But its direction is indisputable, its outcome is inevitable — not the restoration of capitalism, but the return of socialist democracy on a far higher level.*

"Es schwindelt" (it makes one dizzy) Lenin said to Trotsky soon after October, in remarking about the enormous transformation that had brought them out of the obscurity of exile to the helm of the first workers' state. *"Es schwindelt"* to contemplate the vast changes opening now which the generation of Marxists today shall still see in their lifetime.

New Relations in Anti-Imperialist Camp

What the Russian workers are beginning to see about the new regime, although they are not yet able to act upon their conclusions, can also be seen in other parts of the anti-imperialist camp, and this is beginning to determine a new attitude to the Kremlin. It was of considerable symbolic significance that Mao Tse-tung was the only leader of the bloc of workers' states who did not go to Moscow to pay homage to the dead leader and directly establish his relationships with the new ones. He seemed to be saying that his debts were not so large that they could not be discharged by a subordinate that there was no single leader powerful enough with whom to negotiate, that he would deal with all of them together and with each of them against the other.

But on the contrary, the new Kremlin rulers seemed to feel far more constrained to make public display of their friendship for revolutionary China and Mao than he to them. They were openly recognizing China's position of co-direction that Stalin had already acknowledged in fact. All of the funeral orators singled out China for special, laudatory mention. Malenkov forged the photograph of the signing of the 1950 Sino-Soviet Treaty to eliminate all other participants but he, Mao and Stalin.

Even more substantial in concessions to Mao was the new trade agreement with the Soviet Union which is extremely favorable to China. And finally — it was China that took the lead in the new peace offensive. Previously it was Malik who had made the peace offering on Korea; then it was Vishinsky who rejected the Indian proposal before the Chinese could speak. This time Chou En-lai made the proposals which were then seconded and supported by Molotov.

These are no isolated, episodic events. They are signs of a new relationship of forces in which the Kremlin no longer holds single, undisputed leadership; they are part of a process which must eventually and inevitably pass through the rest of the new anti-capitalist world, into Eastern Europe and that must "liberate," as Pablo wrote *(Militant,* April 6) "the centrifugal tendencies . . . in the leadership of the Communist parties in vassalage or tied to the Kremlin."

The Coming Vindication of Trotskyism

Trotsky predicted that the victories of the revolution in other parts of the world would bring about the downfall of Stalinism. But because these victories have thus far occurred in backward countries and under the leadership of Stalinist-type parties, the process is taking different forms than Trotsky envisaged but the content is the same. The rise of new workers' states, the spread of the colonial revolutions — joined to the modernization of the Soviet Union — is having the effect of loosening the bonds of the Stalinist monolith internally. And this must eventually react to loosen the bonds of the monolith on a world scale.

Will the process take the form of a violent upheaval against bureaucratic rule in the USSR? Or will concessions to the masses and sharing of power — as was the long course in the English bourgeois revolution in the political relationship between the rising bourgeoisie and the declining nobility — gradually undermine the base of the bureaucracy? Or will the evolution be a combination of both forms? That we cannot now foresee. *But that this process means not the end of socialism, but its great renaissance — that is certain.*

Now there can no longer be any doubt that history will provide a supreme vindication for the long, indomitable struggle for the ideas and program of Trotskyism, the science of working class victory. Whatever its form, whatever its direction, whatever the unforeseen twists and complications of the reality — it will come.

This is to be affirmed not only in revolutionary optimism — for which there was never more reason in the hundred-year history of Marxism. It is affirmed as an incontrovertible verity, a scientific truth beyond argument.

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2. "The Post-Stalin 'New Course,'" by Michel Pablo

The following article is translated from Quatrieme Internationale, a periodical published in Paris

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In the space of the few months since Stalin's death, the scope of the "new course" being inaugurated by his successors has become such that even the most incredulous of the doubting Thomases have now been obliged to recognize the reality of the "sharp change" occurring in traditional Stalinist policy. This is true internally as well as on the foreign field. A new policy is gradually shaping in more precise form in the USSR itself, in its European satellite countries, in relations with the capitalist world as well as with Yugoslavia.

Naturally there is an interdependence and interaction between these various spheres where the "new course" is now undeniably developing. In contrast with the almost total surprise caused by these "new" facts in all thinking political circles in the working-class or capitalist camp, our movement sees in them the most striking confirmation of its general views on Stalinism, and particularly of the analysis it has made over a number of years on the consequences that "expansion," the world revolutionary upsurge, the technical and cultural advances in the USSR would have on Stalinism.

On the other hand, the significance which Stalin's death could have in the processes long germinating in the USSR was immediately and thoroughly grasped by our movement. We underscored the fact that in reality Stalin died at a time when the objective bases of Stalinism had already been irreparably undermined and its decline begun; that there could not be a second Stalin, that is, a successor playing the same historic role; that Malenkov faced the prospect of remaining only a candidate for the Stalin succession, and no more; that the internal situation in the USSR and its evolution could prove a factor of great importance for the turn of post-Stalinist policy.

Events have confirmed our prognoses and justified our optimism.

Weeping over the sad fate of the workers' movement and of socialism, depressed by the perspective of a long world reign of an immutable Stalinism extending over an entire historic period, the Cassandras are now distressed and worried. Have we not seen some of them find consolation in the service of the western "democratic bourgeoisie" and even of American imperialism, the "lesser evil" to "Soviet totalitarianism"?

But let us return instead to the facts of the "new course" and establish its real scope, its meaning, its perspectives.

* * *

It is not difficult to derive from the welter of political actions, events and writings which have occurred since Stalin's death the lines indicating the direction of the "turn."

In recent years, the Stalinist political structure had accentuated the preponderance of the Great Russian bureaucracy at the expense of the Soviet working masses as a whole, of the other nationalities in the USSR and at the expense of the satellite countries of Eastern Europe. The high-tension areas, which also constituted the weak points of the regime, where a break could occur were the relations with the working masses, the nationalities and the buffer-zone countries.

Stalin's successors are now acting in a way to give the impression that they want to ease the tension in these three spheres, and in a certain sense they are acting with effectiveness.

Take the question of relations with the working masses. What causes the discontent of the working masses in the USSR? While their material conditions have been improving absolutely in conjunction with the economic progress of the USSR, they have remained relatively poor as regards their needs as well as regards the share received by the bureaucracy, especially its upper strata; it arises also from their political conditions which are subjected to an excess of bureaucratism and police control despite bureaucratic declarations that the workers constitute the ruling class of the nation. Working conditions in the factories and on the collective farms, the pressure of Stakhanovism, piece work and the statutes of the penal code have been especially onerous. The contradictions between the social, proletarian and socialist character of the USSR, its economic and social foundations, the economic and social progress attained on this foundation and the bureaucratic and police regime instituted by Stalin became more and more glaring and intolerable.

Not less important was the tension which prevailed and still prevails between the various nationalities which make up the USSR and the Great Russian bureaucracy

which has been a particular bulwark of the Kremlin's power. Some of these national groupings, like the Ukrainians and those of the Baltic countries still preserve old and powerful cultural and revolutionary traditions. They have always constituted active arenas of propaganda and agitation against the central Great Russian power which wanted to dominate them, denationalize and Russify them.

Following the second world war a new element of disintegration entered the Stalinist regime: the step-by-step incorporation of "the buffer zone" into the Soviet orbit. Some of these countries, like Czechoslovakia, certain parts of Hungary. Eastern Germany, boast a high cultural level, and especially a very advanced proletariat politically and technologically. Others like Poland have been noted for their deep-rooted nationalism which conducted long revolutionary struggles against Czarist rule. The Kremlin's attempt at the beginning to plunder these countries purely and simply so as to fill urgent and specifically Soviet needs, and then to impose on them its own methods of "socialization" and to Russify them has met with steadily growing resistance.

Stalin's Method Less Effective

Taken in the complex of all these difficulties, centrifugal forces, contradictions, tensions, the Kremlin apparatus directed by Stalin tried to cope with them until his death mainly by force, by the rigidity and monolithism of the system. Any relaxation, any faltering threatened to blow up the entire system. But at the same time the relationship of forces between the apparatus ruling by sheer force, terror, monolithism, and the masses became more and more unfavorable to the apparatus. Two main reasons joined together here: the world revolutionary upsurge in process since the Second World War, the economic and cultural progress of the Soviet masses themselves.

It became extraordinarily risky to attempt to persist with the same rigidity as in the past in the reign of terror and monolithism represented by Stalin's regime. Even during his lifetime, as was observable most clearly at the 19th Congress of the Russian CP and in the preoccupations revealed in his last work "Problems of Socialism," there were attempts to slightly alleviate the tension and adumbrations of much more important changes in an early future.

His death catalyzed the development.

Those who say that everything that is now happening is in reality merely the execution of Stalin's testament by his successors are obviously wrong. For the general impression which emerges from the "new course" is that of the liquidation of Stalinist tradition in a number of important spheres, including, as we shall see, in that of his own "cult" and even his name.

It is much more probable that long before his death his successors were conscious of the need of a whole range of radical measures; that they had exercised a certain pressure on Stalin so that he himself initiated some of these measures; and that when he died — naturally or otherwise* — they hastened to put them into effect. They were afraid of being overtaken by an explosion of the masses who had been encouraged by the death of the man embodying the despotic and bureaucratic regime in their eyes.

Concessions to the Workers

The following measures have been taken to date by Stalin's successors for the purpose of improving the relations of the working masses and the regime: A new reduction of prices, the most important since 1947, in articles in common consumer-goods merchandise; this price reduction was supplemented by placing essential goods for sale on the market for the first time, and by the speeding up of the production of the means of consumption as well as new and old housing construction.

The theme of the "welfare" of the Soviet masses, as a permanent concern of the State and the Plan, has assumed an importance in the Soviet papers it never had under the old Stalinist regime. The Soviet papers now devote an important place to describing of difficulties Soviet families encounter in finding lodging, in comfortably furnishing their apartments, in obtaining cheap and good-quality utensils and other articles. They provide great detail on all these problems and conclude that "this cannot go on." (*Liturnaya Gazeta*, June 26, 1953.)

It's the *tone* and the *theme* of these feature stories which mark a break with the Stalinist area.

In addition, the new state loan of 15 billion rubles, which under the conditions of the regime resembles forced taxation, was reduced by half this year and is supposed to contribute particularly to the development of "consumers' goods industries."

Other measures have been taken affecting the improvement of working conditions as well as the democratic rights of the masses. The amnesty along with the promise to liberalize the penal code which were announced simultaneously with the sensational exoneration of the doctors, "the white-coated assassins," in reality is intended to affect the victims of the coercive regime which prevails in the factories and on the collective farms and has been used to "discipline" labor and to extort the maximum work possible; that is, it covers the broad masses of ordinary workers.

The exact number of those released from concentration camps is not known but even conservative bourgeois journals like *The Economist* (June 13, 1953) estimate it at "several hundreds of thousands." The first official reference to the liberated prisoners was made by Vice-Minister of Justice who requested local officials and

*The allusion here is to persistent reports that Stalin met a violent death in a kind of palace revolt in the Kremlin against an impending purge which was linked to the arrest of the doctors. One such report was publicized by the Alsop brothers who draw upon a **Pravda** announcement of the "untimely death" of a Major-General Kosynkin, commander of the Kremlin guard which appeared two weeks before the news of Stalin's illness. Stalin was supposed to have been assassinated after the Kremlin guard was overpowered. The plot is laid to Beria. — Ed.

trade unions to find work for persons benefitting from the amnesty.

The theme of "the constitutional rights of Soviet citizens" now replaces in Soviet papers that of "revolutionary vigilance" of the Stalinist era. Formerly the writers of these features provided a certain type of assistance to the agencies of repression, to the judges and police by calling attention to and often by accusing state officials of the lack of "revolutionary vigilance." The change now consists in the fact that the writer becomes the attorney for the unjustly accused. During the doctors' affair and later of the Georgian leaders the party and the government openly attacked "criminal activities" of the judicial and police apparatus. Now there are frequent attacks in newspaper reporting and features directed against subordinate personnel of these agencies.

New Attitude on National Question

In the sphere of relations with the national minorities, Stalin's successors while adhering to the "Leninist-Stalinist" doctrine in this sphere have already taken a series of measures which are squarely and palpably opposite to those applied during Stalin's lifetime. A first indication of this change was the vehement denunciation of all racist, chauvinist propaganda at the time of the exoneration of the Jewish doctors.

The new leadership yielded to the pressure brought to bear by the various national minorities on the central Great Russian regime of the Kremlin so as to lessen the tension in this sphere and to avert serious explosions. It started a purge of the party and government apparatus in many of the Federal Republics, replacing Great Russian officials appointed by Stalin himself with native cadres. This is the general meaning of the measures taken in such sensitive spots as the Ukraine, the Baltic countries the Far Eastern Republics bordering on China, Georgia and Bielo-Russia.

The most significant of these measures were those involving the Ukraine and Lithuania. First in the Ukraine, there was the sudden unexpected reappearance of the political scene of I. G. Petrovsky, old Bolshevik, the First Peoples' Commissar for Internal Affairs and former President of the Ukraine who was disgraced during the great purge of 1936-1938. He had escaped death but was relieved of all functions and probably arrested. Stalin's death was necessary for *Pravda* to again mention his name in connection with the award of "The Order of the Red Flag of Labor" bestowed on him on his 75th anniversary!

This event heralded other changes in the upper circles of the Ukranian apparatus. Soon after, in fact, came the announcement of the replacement of G. L. Melnikov, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party, and of his elimination from the Political Bureau of the party principally for his erroneous national policy. A very important figure in the Soviet hierarchy, Melnikov was accused of having tried to "Russify" the Ukraine and especially the western areas (belonging to Poland) for one thing, by the compulsory introduction of the Russian language into the schools. He was also censured for his excessive zeal in imposing collectivization of agriculture in these areas.*

To understand the full importance of this measure, both the rank of the censured person who had been appointed by Stalin himself should be kept in mind as well as the policy followed in the Ukraine during Stalin's lifetime when the emphasis was placed on "the nationalist deviations" of the Ukranian intelligentzia. Similarly with the events in Lithuania where the policy of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party was criticized for like extremes of "Russification" and where several Great Russian officials were replaced by native cadres.

Moreover there now appears more and more frequently in the Soviet press articles which carry a refrain denouncing "nationalism" and "chauvinism" which is far different from that of Stalin's lifetime. The most striking example in this sphere was undoubtedly the article by P. N. Fedoseev, which appeared in *The Communist*, June 25, 1953, principal theoretical organ of the Russian C. P. Fedoseev had been removed from his position as editor of *The Communist* last December after a bitter criticism by M. Suslov, a Stalinist flunkey, who had accused him of having at one time propagated the ideas of N. Voznossensky.**

Now rehabilitated, Fedoseev writes in his article that it is now necessary in the USSR to struggle "against the survivals of chauvinism and nationalism" which poison "friendship between peoples." He denounces the way some Soviet historians "attempt to prettify the reactionary policies of Czarism." Further on he protests against any attempt to "fence off the Soviet people from the culture of foreign lands" and adds that "the culture of any people, great or small, is viewed by us as a contribution to world culture . . . Contemptible adventurers have repeatedly attempted to touch off the flames of national hatred in the Soviet Union, which is throughly foreign to Socialist ideology."

Still, the time when "Soviet culture" and especially "Great Russian" culture outclassed all others and when all the inventions of modern times were credited to "the Russian genius" is not so far behind!

Relations With Eastern Europe

Finally, there is the sphere of relations with the satellite countries of Eastern and Central Europe. One after another, although undoubtedly lagging behind the tempo of events in the USSR itself, these countries are aligning themselves with the "new course."

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*It should be noted that all those now removed from their positions or censure have not been arrested or brought to trial nor even characterized as "imperialist agents" or "criminals." They are merely replaced by others in their positions and accused of more or less "serious" or "gross" "errors."

**Voznossensky was the economic brain of the Politbureau until 1949 when he fell into disgrace. Fedoseev's rehabilitation may signify an early rehabilitation of Voznossensky himself.

In Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Eastern Germany, an amnesty on the Russian model has just been granted. Little by little the press of all these countries is beginning to pick up the new emphasis of the Soviet press on the "welfare" of the people and on "the rights of citizens," on the same "laws" and the same "discipline" for leaders and masses.

The extremes of industrialization and collectivization are beginning to be recognized and the term "NEP," as a necessary policy of retreat in some cases, is now becoming fashionable with others besides Walter Ulbricht (German Stalinist leader). It is now clear that all the "NEP" measures taken in Eastern Germany last June 10th, several days before the big events, were initiated by Semyenov (Soviet Commissioner for Germany) under the instructions of the Kremlin and contrary to the policy followed until then by the leadership of the SED (Stalinist Socialist Unity Party). There is no doubt also that the very substantial concessions given the Eastern German masses after the June 17th events were also initiated by the Russians, this time probably in agreement with the leadership of the SED.

The idea of revising the plans in the direction of expansion of the production of the means of consumption, which is apparent in the USSR itself, is also gaining ground in the satellite countries. The time has came everywhere for a "reconsideration" of the policies followed in the economic as well as in the political and cultural spheres.

Attacks on the Leader Cult

Changes of such scope naturally cannot remain limited and in reality they affect they very nature of the regime as it was shaped during Stalin's lifetime and personified by him. By entering on the "new course," his successors could not avoid the need of calling into question the character as well as the personnel of the regime, the cult and the name of the "Chief" himself. And that is how it has happened also.

Malenkov was obliged to relinquish the post of party secretary and to content himself with being President of the government so as not to monopolize positions and to emphasize the team and not the personal character of the new leadership. Repeated articles in *Pravda* and *The Communist* have attacked the "leader cult," the impossibility of "infallibility," its consequences of "servility" and "corruption," and praised the collective character of the leadership.

The method of teaching history has also been called into question. It is no longer required that such teaching begin with or be based on the biography of "great men" but rather on an understanding of objective conditions and the role of the masses. Those who always refer to "appropriate quotations" and utilize them indiscriminately, even to explain the Five Year Plan, are becoming the butt of ridicule.

The spheres are numerous in which there are scarcely concealed attacks against the cult, against the extravagant praise and the ossified byzantine mode of thought of Stalin and his era. But just his name alone is actually less and less mentioned in the public proclamations of the new leaders as well as in the press. It would be difficult to attribute such a plunge into oblivion to chance. It speaks too much of repudiation which for the moment, it is true, still remains an indirect one.

Changes in Foreign Policy

The changes in Russian foreign policy have been in large measure determined by the turn internally in a twofold sense: a) as genuine changes which extend to the foreign sphere the new outlook internally on the relations with the masses and the national minorities; b) as a means of attenuating the tension with imperialism even if only temporarily, to avert an early war with imperialism so as to normalize the internal situation in the USSR and the buffer-zone countries on the basis of the "new course."

The first meaning is indicated in the more "democratic," more "socialist" way of viewing relations with countries like Turkey and Yugoslavia, by abandoning nationalist, annexationist demands toward the former, by normalizing diplomatic relations with the latter and by removing the quarantine placed upon it.*

The second meaning is manifested in the concessions made on Korea, Austria, Eastern Germany, in the many cordial and appeasing gestures, in the new tone of the diplomatic notes addressed to the capitalist countries and in the articles in the Soviet press concerning them.

The Dynamic of the New Turn

Thus, we believe that these various manifestations of the post-Stalinist turn, even set down in this summary way, cannot fail to be impressive and to clearly indicate its meaning. Naturally it would be fundamentally and dangerously erroneous to conclude that the new leaders have reformed themselves and that they are successfully undertaking a "cold democratization" of Stalin's bureaucratic and police regime. It is the pressure of the masses which constrains them to act this way and it is the constantly changing relationship between the masses and their own rule which will determine the subsequent development of the "new course."

Stalin's successors, because of their special position as subordinates of the Despots and free of the chief responsibility, have the merit only of having better sensed than he the enormous pressure, the subterranean explosive forces in Soviet society as well as in Eastern Europe. To survive as the Bonapartist leadership of the privileged Soviet bureaucracy, they are now trying to ease the tension and to thus consolidate their own rule by a series of important concessions. They are proceeding in this not directly, frankly, democratically but bureaucratically. Their aim is to avoid by these methods new serious explosions and if possible to "peacefully" build a new floor

*It should be noted regarding the turn of attitude toward Yugoslavia that since May 1, 1953, the Cominform paper has not published any article against Yugoslavia. During Stalin's lifetime, there was practically not a single issue of this paper which appeared without the customary and ferociously anti-Titoist article.

for an equilibrium favorable for the bureaucracy. However, it is more difficult for them than ever to control the entire process and to dominate it at each step in the present global relationship between the revolutionary forces within and without the USSR and the "buffer zone" and the conservative forces of the bureaucracy.

The dynamic of their concessions is in reality liquidatory of the entire Stalinist heritage in the USSR itself as well as in its relations with the satellite countries, with China and the Communist Parties. It will no longer be easy to turn back.

In reality events will oblige them as is being demonstrated in Eastern Germany, and partly in Czechoslovakia, to quicken and extend the concessions to keep the impatient masses in the other buffer-zone countries and in the USSR itself from taking the road of action. But once the concessions are broadened, the march forward toward a real liquidation of the Stalinist regime threatens to become irresistible.

What form will it then take? Will it be that of an acute crisis and of violent interbureaucratic struggles between the elements who will fight for the status quo, if not for turning back, and the more and more numerous elements drawn by the powerful pressure of the masses?

The timetables of the war will play an important and perhaps decisive role in the entire first period in one direction or the other. In any case what is now clear is that the decline of Stalinism in the form of the iron grip of the Soviet bureaucracy over the Soviet masses, the buffer-zone countries, the Communist Parties, is henceforth speeded up, and that the renovation of socialist democracy in all these countries, as in China, as well as the renaissance of the international workers' movement, is now on the order of the day.

In the years visible ahead, the junction of the ideas and the forces of the Fourth International with the revolutionary elements until now organized or influenced by Stalinism will realize in part this first stage of this renovation. It is toward this that we should work now with the greatest determination and the most robust optimism.

July 1, 1953

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3. Editorial Note to Correspondence in the March-April 1953 Issue of Fourth International

We call the readers' attention to the following exchange of letters between Comrades M. Stein and George Clarke.

Two vital questions are posed. The first concerns the Marxist definition of Soviet economy; the second involves the inevitability of political revolution by the Soviet workers against the Kremlin bureaucracy.

In his letter M. Stein criticizes Clarke's formulations on the nature of Soviet economy as "socialist in essence" and directed by "methods of socialist planning," not because these are "loose" terms but because they represent a departure from the principled position of Trotskyism; distort Soviet reality; reinforce illusions fostered by the Stalinists; and pave the way for false political conclusions.

Both the imperialists and the Stalinists, each for reasons of their own, seek to identify the Kremlin regime with "socialism" and "communism" and its bureaucratic planning with the socialist method. The Trotskyists, as genuine Marxists, have exposed the Stalinist lies in this connection along with the imperialist attempts to exploit the Kremlin's deceptions against the struggle for socialism.

It is wrong to characterize the Soviet economy as "socialist in essence," as the Stalinists do, because it is actually a transitional economy, "a contradictory society halfway between capitalism and socialism" (Trotsky.) Among its other features, it combines bourgeois norms of distribution with production on the basis of nationalized industry; in agriculture, as Trotsky pointed out, collective farms "rest not upon state, but upon group property."

Planning, to be sure, is "socialist in principle" as against the anarchy of capitalist production. Such planning was made possible by the achievements of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

Socialist planning is for the benefit of the masses. It takes place through their direct participation and democratic control, promoting the most rapid development of the productive forces and aiming at reducing and eliminating social inequalities as quickly as possible.

The bureaucracy's method of planning is the direct opposite. It is carried on to benefit the privileged minority, excludes the producing and consuming masses from participation, and impedes the growth of the productive forces. That is why the founding program of the Fourth International, as part of its program of political revolution against this bureaucracy, called for "a revision of planned economy from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers!"

Much more is involved in all this than "terminological hair-splitting," as Clarke says in his answer. A view of the USSR which sees its economy as "socialist in essence" and the planning likewise as "socialist" leads to one set of political conclusions. The traditional Trotskyist analysis leads to an entirely different set.

Our program stands for the inevitability of the political revolution in the USSR. Comrade Clarke denies in his reply that he is in any way discarding this position. He claims to be simply "analyzing more concretely" this "concept of the political revolution."

What did this "analysis" consist of in his article in the Jan.-Feb. Fourth International? Instead of setting forth in a clear and unambiguous way the inherent and unavoidable need for the mass uprising against the Kremlin bureaucracy, he offers it simply as one of several variants of development of a "political revolution." That is not all. He then counterposes the diametrically opposite variant of the progressive reform of the bureaucracy. These are two mutually exclusive variants of "political revolution."

What kind of a guide to action is this counterposing of a variant of reform to our program of political revolution? The one insists upon the political expropriation of the bureaucratic rulers by the Soviet masses; the other, as Clarke tells us, envisages the "sharing of power."

But Clarke's disorientation does not end there. His "more concrete" analysis foresees a range of other variants made up of combinations of reform and revolution. What could possibly follow from this coupling of two mutually exclusive political concepts if not the discarding of the "concrete" Trotskyist concept of the inevitability of the overthrow of the bureaucracy by the masses?

The idea advanced by Clarke that the Kremlin bureaucracy is capable of "sharing power" with the Soviet people challenges both the program of political revolution for the Soviet Union as well as the Trotskyist concept of the nature and role of this parasitic caste. This idea runs counter to reality.

The bureaucracy needs its totalitarian apparatus of terror and repressions precisely because it cannot share the power required to maintain its privileges, income and unbridled rule. Its police regime acts to oppress the masses, keep them politically expropriated, and deprive them of the slightest chance of intervening in political life. It leaves the masses no alternative but to take the road pointed out by the Trotskyist vanguard.

Clarke does not say by what ways and means the Kremlin despots will "share power" with the masses. Through what existing governmental and party institutions can the bureaucrats share power? Through the completely bureaucratized party? Through the secret police or the Army? The masses will gain a say in the country again only through the revival of their own mass organizations which will signalize, not the "sharing of power" with the Kremlin gang, but the inception of the political uprising against it.

The June 1953 uprising of the German workers against the Stalinist regime is the most striking confirmation to date of the irreconcilable conflict between the bureaucracy and the masses. One of the main lessons taught by these "new events of today in their actual process of development" is that the bureaucracy cannot "share power" with the workers. The workers engaged in an uprising; they demanded the overthrow of the regime and the establishment of their own democratic organs of power. The bureaucracy, for its part, responded with miiltary force and police measures. The concessions and promises of concessions pursued the same aim as the naked repressions, namely, to prevent the German workers from emerging as an independent political force.

What kind of guide to action in the next stage of the struggle in East Germany would be Clarke's idea that the bureaucracy could or would "share power?" Or that the Soviet workers should draw such a conclusion from the East German events? We say, on the contrary, that Clarke's proposition must be rejected as false and fatal. The political task of the workers in the Soviet Union, as in East Germany and elsewhere in the buffer zone, is the overthrow of the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy.

Comrade Clarke will not find in Trotsky's analysis and program or in the "new events of today" any support for his multiple, self-contradictory variants of the socialist regeneration of the Soviet Union.

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4. Letter to Fourth International *by Morris Stein*

August 1, 1953.

Editor:

In an article by Comrade George Clarke entitled "Stalin's Role — Stalinism's Future" (Jan.-Feb. 1953 *Fourth International)* repeated reference is made to the "socialist" character of Soviet economy. Thus, at one time, the author refers to "the socialist-type economic system of the Soviet Union;" at another, "the Soviet regime rests upon new socialist property forms;" and again, "a system of property relations, nationalized in form, socialist in essence." In addition, the Kremlin's planning is characterized as 'the methods of socialist planning."

To Trotskyists this is a new definition of the Soviet economic system and of the Kremlin's method of planning. As a matter of fact, Leon Trotsky polemicized precisely against such formulations put forward by the Stalinist theoreticians.

Here is what he said: "It is perfectly true that Marxists, beginning with Marx himself, have employed in relation to the workers' state the terms *state, national* and *socialist* property as simply synonyms. On a large historic scale, such a mode of speech involves no special inconveniences. But it becomes the source of crude mistakes, and of downright deceit, when applied to the first and still unassured stages of the development of a new society, and one moreover isolated and economically lagging behind the capitalist countries.

"In order to become social, private property must as inevitably pass through the state stage as the caterpillar, in order to become a butterfly, must pass through the pupal stage. But the pupa is not a butterfly. Myriads of pupae perish without ever becoming butterflies. State property becomes the property of 'the whole people' only to the degree that social privileges and differentiation disappear, and therewith the necessity of the state. In other words: state property is converted into socialist property in proportion as it ceases to be state property. And the contrary is true: the higher the Soviet state rises above the people, and the more fiercely it opposes itself as the guardian of property to the people as its squanderer, the more obviously does it testify against the socialist character of this state property." *(The Revolution Betrayed,* pages 236-7.)

This is not a question of mere terminology. From Trotsky's analysis of social relations in the USRR flowed his political conclusions concerning the USSR. Trotsky was fully aware and repeatedly stated that the extension of the world revolution would undermine the rule of the Kremlin bureaucracy. But he excluded the possibility of this bureaucracy's peacefully "growing over" into socialism, or reforming itself out of existence.

Precisely because of the specific character of this parasitic caste, Trotsky said it must be smashed by the masses in order to regenerate the Soviet state, and therewith open up the possibility for the withering away of the state.

On page 87 of "The Revolution Betrayed," Trotsky wrote: "All indications agree that the further course of development must inevitably lead to a clash between the culturally developed forces of the people and the bureaucratic oligarchy. There is no peaceful outcome for this crisis. No devil ever yet voluntarily cut off his own claws. The Soviet bureaucracy will not give up its positions

without a fight. The development leads obviously to the road of revolution."

This same line is incorporated in the foundation program of the Fourth International, which calls for a political revolution against the Kremlin bureaucracy. It states categorically: "Only the victorious revolutionary uprising of the oppressed masses can revive the Soviet regime and guarantee its further development toward socialism."

Clarke, in his article, not only sees the Soviet economy as already "socialist in essence," but he also puts a question mark over this Trotskyist political position. He writes: "Will the process take the form of a violent upheaval against bureaucratic rule in the USSR? Or will concessions to the masses and sharing of power — as was the long course in the English bourgeois revolution in the political relationship between the rising bourgeoisie and the declining nobility — gradually undermine the base of the bureaucracy? Or will the evolution be a combination of both forms? That we cannot now foresee."

Comrade Clarke's designation of Soviet economy as "socialist in essence" is introduced without any explanation. He discards the Trotskyist position on the inevitability of political revolution by the working class against the Soviet ruling caste without any substantial motivation.

If Comrade Clarke believes that the accepted programmatic positions of Trotskyism on these fundamental issues are no longer valid and require revision, he should not have introduced such serious changes in so offhand a manner.

Comradely,

M. Stein

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5. Reply by George Clarke

Editor:

Comrade Stein's criticism is compounded of terminological hair-splittng, pettifoggery and bad faith, deriving apparently from the conception that the programmatic positions of Trotskyism constitute dogma rather than a guide to action.

It is obvious from any disinterested reading of my article that I used the term "Socialist property" as a synonym for the new property forms of the Workers State, for nationalized or statized property, as Marxists have done time and again. The quotation from Trotsky that Stein employs is misdirected, and possibly misunderstood. Trotsky was polemicizing against the Stalinists. Here is the way the quotation truncated by Stein actually begins: "The new constitution — wholly founded, as we shall see, upon an identification of the bureaucracy with the state, and the state with the people — says ' . . . The state property — that is, the possessions of the whole people.' This identification is the fundamental sophism of the official doctrine." No wonder Stein's argument fails to hang together. Trotsky was polemicizing against the identification of the state with the Stalinist bureaucracy. Stein is polemicizing against an article the entire first section of which is devoted to proving the basic antagonism between the Stalinist bureaucracy and "Socialist property."

As a matter of fact, Trotsky himself repeatedly employed the same expression. He clearly saw no objection to the term, "Socialist methods" or "Socialist property forms" in characterizing the basic property relations in the USSR, so long as it was made clear that the bureaucratic excrescence which had grown is in antagonism to the property forms.

In the very book quoted by Stein, *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky wrote on page 57: "The application of *socialist methods* for the solution of *pre-socialist* problems — that is the very essence of the present economic and cultural work in the Soviet Union." (Trotsky's emphasis.) On page 250 he stated: "The predominance of socialist over petty-bourgeois tendencies is guaranteed, not by the automatism of the economy — we are still far from that — but by the political measures taken by the dictatorship. The character of the economy as a whole thus depends upon the character of the state power." On page 244, Trotsky wrote: "This contrast between forms of property and norms of distribution cannot grow indefinitely. Either the bourgeois norm in one form or another must spread to the means of production, or the norms of distribution must be brought into correspondence with the socialist property system."

Stein's purpose, however, is not to correct some allegedly loose phrase in my article, but to make the charge that I am discarding "the Trotskyist position on the inevitability of political revolution by the working class against the Soviet ruling caste." This charge has no merit whatsoever. I am discarding nothing. I am trying to apply our program.

What is happening is that the concept of the political revolution held by world Trotskyism for almost two decades is now for the first time due to find application in life. It is necessary for Marxists to analyze more concretely the meaning and application of this programmatic position. Trotsky himself recommended it in the very work which Stein quoted. Those who would flee in panic at every attempt to analyze the new events of today in their actual process of development would convert Marxism into dead scholasticism.

George Clarke

6. Note To Discussion Articles in March-April 1953 Issue of Fourth International

The June uprising of the East German workers against the Kremlin's satellite regime has, like every great revolutionary event, tested the validity of every political force in the world working class movement, most notably that of Stalinism and Trotskyism. At the same time the developments in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death punctuated by the Beria purge have aroused world-wide attention.

The two articles by Comrade George Clarke, published herewith, present his views on the meaning and consequences of these events.

His editorial associates hold to a different analysis and appraisal of these events which will be printed in the next issue of this magazine.

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7. "Shake-up in the Kremlin," by George Clarke

Writing about events since Stalin's death a scant four months ago is almost like describing a scene from a fast-moving train. Change has been heaped on change with such rapidity as to allow little time to assimilate all the details or the full importance of any one development. But what cannot be mistaken, even viewing history-in-the-making from within, so to speak, is the direction it is taking. In a speech delivered some three months ago we stated that the film of history in the USSR "is now unwinding toward socialist democracy in the USSR. Not at once, to be sure, and not rapidly. There will probably be many ups and downs, many conflicts between the masses and the bureaucracy, new outbreaks of violence, coercion and probably even purges, and the entire process in all likelihood will pass through a Third World War. But its direction is indisputable, its outcome inevitable — not the restoration of capitalism, but the return of socialist democracy on a far higher level." (See P. I., Vol. XIV, No. 11, p. 12)

Elsewhere in this issue Michel Pablo chronicles the amazing series of measures initiated by the new Soviet rulers in the USSR and the border states which constituted the first steps in this direction and which, as we pointed out, have had "the effect of loosening the bonds of the Stalinist monolith . . . " For the first few months, the impression was created that a reform administration was in the saddle, that it would peacefully liberalize the regime from the top. Isaac Deutscher came to the quick conclusion in an otherwise intelligent, topical book on post-Stalin Russia that a kind of bureaucratic Fabianism was developing which would take the USSR through gradual change and transition to socialist democracy. In his search for the most comforting solutions, Deutscher overlooked the most important factor — the intervention of the masses into this process, he underestimated the other significant factor — the conflict within the bureaucracy itself, and he failed to see the connection between the two. There was to be no long argument over this question. Within a few weeks history rushed in to make the needed correction.

The first corrective came in Berlin and in all of Eastern Germany when an industrial working class asserted its place in the process by massive strikes and demonstrations that forced a tottering regime to grant unprecedented concessions. The second was the arrest of Lavrenti Beria, the gathering purge of his henchmen throughout the territories of the USSR, and the sudden prominence of the high army command openly throwing its full weight in support of the purge.

The two developments are internally connected, like one link of chain to another. Let us briefly retrace this swift train of events. Cognizant of the vast discontent prevalent in the USSR even before the death of Stalin, who had repressed it with an iron hand, his successors could find no other means to cope with this discontent than a series of reform measures, which by a certain liberalization of the regime, would more firmly ensconce them in power. The limits of this reform program were set at the borders of Great Russia. Sweeping changes were promised in the funeral orations of the three main figures of the new directorate, but beyond renewed declarations of "friendship" the status quo would remain in the satellite countries.

Once set into motion, however, the new trend began to develop a momentum of its own and quickly swept beyond the prescribed borders. Georgia, the Ukraine, the Baltic countries, and other Russian republics with their explosive national problems, came within the scope of the "new course." The long-established Stalinist policy of Russification was vehemently denounced, the top administrations of the states were thoroughly shaken up. On July 10th the "new course" was proclaimed for Eastern Germany, and after the big struggles of the following week it made its appearance in Hungary, and partially in Czechoslovakia and Rumania.

Was this new policy the common decision of the entire directorate or was it an attempt by Beria, partly in response to pressure from below, to strengthen his personal machine in the struggle for power in the top circles? It is too early yet to answer this question. But most likely it was a combination of both factors. What is clear is that the new regime, regardless of its apprehensions could not proceed to a policy of concessions without also attempting to appease the explosive discontent among the non-Russian peoples. It knew it was playing with fire but it could not inaugurate the new reign with a contradictory policy of "liberalism" for the Great Russians and undiminished repression for the Ukranians and the other nationalities. Is it too extreme to believe

that the attempt to pursue such a policy would have produced events similar to those in Germany and Czechoslovakia? Is it unreasonable to assume that the masses in these areas, unalterably hostile to the Great-Russian rulers in the Kremlin, encouraged by the weaknesses revealed in the central power after Stalin's death, goaded by the failure to receive any concessions would have found their way to some form of action?

In any case this is precisely what occurred in Eastern Germany. The shift of Soviet occupation command from General Chuikov to the civilian Semionov aroused considerable speculation as to weakness and differences in the Kremlin; the restriction of the June 10th "new course" to the middle class, the church and the peasantry while intensifying the speed-up in the factories spurred the working class to its stirring, heroic struggles of June 16-17.

Two questions, fraught with the greatest dangers for the top bureaucracy, remained unanswered after the East German revolt whose suppression was complemented by the granting of substantial concessions to the workers. and then extending some of them to Hungary and Czechoslovakia. First, would the German events become an example for all Eastern Europe and eventually for the disaffected areas in the Soviet Union. Second, was Beria committing the most unpardonable of sins in the bureaucratic world, that of arousing the masses in order to build his own personal machine?

We do not intend here to discuss the far-reaching ramifications of the clique struggle in the Kremlin. The cliques, however are not arbitrary formations of personal followers of contending aspirants for power but represent distinct segments of the bureaucracy each with its own specialized interests. The conflict among them was temporarily halted, or at least muted, to prevent "panic" and "disarray," as the official announcement put it after Stalin's death. It broke out again as a reaction to the German events and the dangers of playing too fast and loose with the tinder box which is the national question in the USSR. That is the meaning of the principal charge levelled against Beria, that he was "stirring up hostility" among the various peoples of the USSR and of fostering "bourgeois nationalism." It also explains the promotion of the notorious Hilde Benjamin to the post of Minister of Justice in Eastern Germany, an action that symbolizes the mailed fist under the silk glove.

In their recoil at the brink of the disastrous possibilities created by the reform policy, the other quarrelling members of the directorate seem to have momentarily consolidated their forces. They appear to be attempting to rigorously limit concessions so as to alleviate living conditions but to prevent any direct, independent intervention of the masses in the process; and to regain some of Stalin's monolithic control by dealing more decisively with officials who have shown "weakness" in the face of popular opposition.

They cannot go too far or for too long along this road — not without provoking the greatest convulsions. That is indicated by the eclecticism of the present zigzag where new slogans and policies still mingle with old ones, and when it is still not clear whether the emphasis is to be on concessions or repressions, or how the balance is to be struck between them. The revolutionary climate, however, in the world at large militates against the simple re-establishment of the Stalin autocracy. The new confidence, and in all likelihood, the new independent organization gained by the workers of Eastern Germany from their battles and — yes! — from their partial victory, encouraging similar movements in other countries militates against it. No matter how sweeping the new purges, if the bureaucracy now dares venture on such a perilous road, it cannot create a new Stalin, that is, a recognized empire who alone could bring "order" out of the ensuing chaos. On the contrary, such a purge would have the oposite effect from that of the Thirties when the Kremlin carried out its bloody work amidst reaction in the world and passivity at home. Today the bureaucracy could not go through such a crucible without weakening itself fatally.

The political revolution that will eventually bring into being not a capitalist restoration but a revival of socialist democracy is already forshadowed by two major trends now observable: conflicts within the bureaucracy and the intervention of the masses. The attempt of the bureaucracy to appease the masses with concessions has brought the masses onto the arena with their own demands whose logic is the death of bureaucracy. The intervention of the masses is provoking a struggle in the bureaucracy, when stripped down to its essentials, it will be revealed as a conflict, between those determined to continue the policy of reform and those who want to return to the policy of repression. The conflict cannot any longer be decided within the bureaucracy itself. There is now a "third man" to be reckoned with — the masses, whose presence is ever more keenly felt, whose demands become ever more articulate and insistent. This is the new force that will prevent the post-Stalin rulers from reconsolidating the monolith, that will sow the deepest divisions among them.

One section of the bureaucracy, because of its training, its attachments, because it is therefore more susceptible to pressure from below and to the needs of Soviet society — and, in the interest of sheer self-preservation — may attempt in the ensuing struggles to mobilize the masses for their own bureaucratic aims. In the course of that struggle the masses will devise their own program which will signify the end of all bureaucratic rule.

More likely is the possibility that goaded by their discontents, encouraged by the more apparent weaknesses of the regime, the masses will utilize the divisions on the top and the consequent greater freedom of action to launch their own independent struggles. They will find spokesmen reflecting their needs and aspirations and draw a section of the bureaucracy behind them in the struggle to re-establish workers' democracy.

Barring the outbreak of war which would postpone the process and give it new forms, we believe these to be the most probable variants of the developing political revolution. This corresponds, in our opinion, to a scientific description of the bureaucracy. It is not a class but

a caste. It owes its existence not to a special role it plays in the process of production, such as ownership of property or of capital, but rather to a historically episodic, transitory relationship of forces.

True, its privileges are considerable, but these consist purely of the objects of personal consumption and hence do not provide the cohesion that derives from ownership of the means of production. True, its power is enormous, as we know. But this power is based on the weakness of the proletariat which at a given moment lacks sufficient strength numerically, economically, culturally to prevent the usurping privilege-seekers from seizing control of the instruments of rule. In an epoch of revolutionary crisis the relationship of forces and strength becomes reversed. At such times it is the heterogeneity *even* of propertied ruling *classes* that becomes uppermost and manifests itself in indecision, in a proliferation of programs and parties. For a bureaucratic caste, this must be infinitely more true.

Naturally, we cannot yet speak with all the necessary concreteness of the laws of proletarian *political* revolutions which are a new phenomena in history and whose specific features will become fully clear in the unfoldment of the events themselves. Trotsky's dialectic approach to the problem bears repetition. Writing in 1936 on the eve of the great purges, he said the following in answer to the Webbs whose views were not altogether dissimilar to Deutscher's today:

> "Will the bureaucracy itself, in whose hands the power and the wealth are concentrated, wish to grow peacefully into socialism? As to this doubts are certainly permissible. In any case, it would be imprudent to take the word of the bureaucracy for it. It is impossible at present to answer finally and irrevocably the question in what direction the economic contradictions and social antagonism of Soviet society will develop in the course of the next three, five or ten years. The outcome depends upon a struggle of living social forces — not on a national scale, either, but on an international scale. At every new stage, therefore, a concrete analysis is necessary of actual relations and tendencies in their connection and continual interaction." **(Revolution Betrayed, pp. 48-49.)**

The rise and fall of bureaucratic leaderships is not, however, a new phenomena in the workers' movement, and something can be learned from studying some of these past experiences. While not exact, therefore, because they deal with castes in a workers' movement and not in state power, analogies with such developments in trade unions and working class parties can throw an important light on the question.

There is, for example, the case of the powerful bureaucratic machines of the Social Democracy built up in the epoch before the 1917 Russian Revolution. Its retainers were united by considerable privileges acquired over a number of decades and deriving from a relatively unchallenged control of a vast workers' movement. Their reaction to the upsurge sparked by the Bolshevik Revolution can be described in two stages. In the first, the German Social Democracy, under Noske and Scheidemann, met the workers' uprising head-on and suppressed it. But as the upsurge continued for a number of years, a differentiation began to occur and the bureaucracy divided and broke up. Under the sustained pressure of the masses, sections and in some cases even entire groupings came over to the Russian Revolution and to the communist movement. For some of these elements, the revolutionary developments turned out to be a far stronger motive force than their personal privileges and power. For others, the entry into the revolutionary camp was considered the best maneuver for the moment to ultimately regain their past perquisites. And, indeed, when the upsurge subsided, many returned to the fleshpots of class collaboration. But the process as a whole caused the irrevocable decline of imperialist social democracy and the rise of the then revolutionary communist movement.

What is important in this analogy is not any exact parallel to be drawn with the process of break-up and overthrow of a privileged bureaucracy in a workers' state. It is rather the underlying social similarity in both cases of the dominant labor-based caste which makes it far more subject than any ruling class to internal corrosion and division under the tumultuous movements and pressures of the masses in a revolutionary period. The analogy thus permits a better insight into the dynamics of the political revolution. It indicates at least some of the channels the awakened masses will, by their very appearance on the political scene, create and then seek to exploit for larger aims. Above all it provides confidence in the certainty of their ultimate triumph in re-establishing socialist democracy.

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8. "The June Days in Review," by George Clarke

We wish here to set forth, without attempting any elaborate descriptions, some of the principal features of the momentous East German events of June 16-17. It is from these characteristics, we believe, that can be discerned some of the reasons for the deep and continuing effects of these events on the USSR and all of Eastern Europe; and some vision can be gained of what is ahead in the coming struggle against Stalinist rule throughout the Soviet bloc.

1. The Social Nature of the Movement

There had been considerable haziness, and not a few illusions among the imperialists, as to the form and aims a movement of opposition to the Stalinist clique would take. The general hostility among the East German masses was well-known. It had been kindled by a ruthless regime employing the most brutal methods. There was hatred for the Soviet occupation, for heavy reparations and the dismantling of factories whose equipment was shipped to the USSR, for the amputation of national territory at the Oder-Neisse line in the interests of Poland, for the forcible eviction of millions of peoples from their homes to make way for Polish resettlement.

On the other hand, it was clear that the regime was exhausting its credit among those sections of the population which had profited from the social transformations carried through in Eastern Germany.

The hated Junker had been driven from his estates, and the land was divided among the peasantry. But the popularity thus gained was being undone by a program of forced collectivization, by exorbitant demands for crop deliveries to the state, by the shortage of consumer goods created by the diversion of industry to heavy goods and war production.

The youth had benefitted most from the elimination of the caste of Prussian officials, creating innumerable openings for them in the government, judiciary, etc., and by the creation of unprecedented opportunities in technical training and higher education. This capital was being exhausted by the arbitrary methods of the police regime and the low standard of living.

The factories had been nationalized, and in the changeover from private ownership a considerable number of workers had been drawn from the ranks into the echelons of plant managements, technicians, foremen, etc. But this was more than counteracted by the harsh, bureaucratic regime in the factories, by the constant war against any independence for the unions, by the speed-up and the shortage of foodstuffs and consumer goods which had become aggravated in the last few months as a result of the acceleration of the heavy industry program.

Regardless of the accuracy of their political reasoning, it is therefore entirely understandable why there should have been so much speculation — and hope — in imperialist circles that the movement in Eastern Germany, when it arose, would be predominantly nationalist, pro-capitalist, anti-Soviet and probably guided by middle class elements.

Participants and Demands

But their illusions were to be completed shattered. The movement of June 16-17 was overwhelmingly working class in nature and took the classic forms of strike actions and demonstrations. Capitalist correspondents have admitted there was no sign of pro-Bonn pro-Western sympathy. Even the slogan for German unification and free elections was not accompanied by the demand for a return of eastern territories which, however justified, might have indicated a pro-Western nationalist trend. In some cases, Walter Sullivan, *N. Y. Times* correspondent writes, workers making the demand for "free elections," have "only the reconstitution of the East German government in mind." There was no demand for any change in the forms of property ownership, or anything which could have been construed as a desire for a return to capitalism.

The first reactions of the Stalinists on the one side and the imperialists on the other constitutes a revealing admission as to their real conception of the character of the movement.

On the heels of the demonstrations and strikes, when the regime attempted to assuage the movement by substantial concessions, Grotewohl, Ebert, Mayor of East Berlin, and others freely admitted that while provocateurs might have been involved, the action was caused by justified grievances. A good part of their "self-criticism" and admission of "errors" was that they had been blind to this dissatisfaction.

"We too are responsible for the situation in East Germany — not only Western provocauteurs," Premier Grotewohl told the workers at the Karl Liebknecht plant on June 23. **"The arsonists could not have had such success had there not been seeds of discontent among the people."**

Ditto Friedrich Ebert speaking to 800 miners at Gera: **"One cannot only speak of agents and provocateurs; one must not forget that our people had good ground for dissatisfaction and distrust."**

The best picture of the character and demands of the movement is given by Pierre Gousset writing from Berlin to the Paris neutralist weekly, *Observateur*. On the morning of June 16, 6,000 workers downed tools on the Stalinallee construction project in a spontaneous demonstration to demand the revocation of the 10% increase in production norms and marched to the seat of the government demanding an audience with Grotewohl and Ulbricht. Minister of Mines Selbmann came out in their place. Selbmann, who is described as having the appearance and mannerisms of a worker got up on a table to harangue the crowd:

> "I voted against the increase of (production) norms at the May 28th session of the Council of Ministers. The increase has not been introduced in my department. I will insist that the government revoke the measures which were incorrectly adopted at that session. Go back to work calmly and put your trust in me."
>
> But the workers interrupted him:
>
> **"We no longer have confidence in you. We want guarantees."**
>
> The dialogue continued as follows:
>
> —But I. I have myself been a worker for a long time.
>
> **—You have forgotten that. You are no longer our comrade.**
>
> —How could I forget it, I a communist worker, and for so long a time?
>
> **—We are the real communists, not you.**
>
> Selbman was left speechless. An unknown construction worker forced him off the table and got up in his place and delivered a calm and dignified speech in the opinion of witnesses I questioned, and formulated the demands of the workers in four points:
>
> **1. Immediate revocation of the 10% increase in working norms.**
>
> **2. Immediate reduction by 40% of food-stuffs and of primary consumer goods in state stores.**
>
> **3. Leaders who committed serious errors should be dismissed; the party and the unions must be democratized.**
>
> **4. We must not wait for the Bonn government to take the initiative for the real reunification of Germany. The East German government should start immediately by eliminating all barriers separating the two Germanies. The country must be unified by secret, general and free elections and a workers' victory must be won in these elections.**
>
> The worker ended his speech by stating that Selbmann's attitude proved that he is incapable of granting the workers' demands and that if Grotewhol and Ulbricht refuse to face the workers, a general strike should be called in all Berlin to support these demands. With that, the demonstration ended.

Gousset also reports that on the following day at a monster mass meeting held at the Walter Ulbricht stadium and attended by thousands of metal workers from the Hennigsdorf steel mills, speakers demanded the resignation of the government, some of them calling for its replacement by a "metal workers' government." Ac-

cording to Gousset's report again, there was not a single word said at the meeting favorable to the Bonn regime.

"Provocateurs" and Imperialists

Subsequently, and in accordance with the Moscow line, the German Stalinist regime has been denouncing the June events as the work of "fascist provocateurs in the pay of western imperialism." The charge would not be worth discussing were it not that it contained a grain of truth — but no more than a grain. It is true that on the second day of the action, a considerable mass of people poured over from western Berlin to join the demonstration. Among them were unemployed and lumpenproletarian elements and fascist types belonging to a fascist youth organization. Responsible observers agree that the burning of buildings and red flags, the breaking of store windows and looting, and other violent and provocative acts was primarily their doing.

But these were merely incidents, discordant notes out of keeping with the main tenor of the action which from beginning to end was an attempt by the workers to gain satisfaction for their grievances and secure greater democratic rights. This is indicated by the extension of the strike movement, in no less vigorous character, to other East German cities where "imperialist provocateurs" would hardly have had the time to penetrate. It is further indicated by the continuing nature of the action: first in the slowdowns or threatened slowdowns to force the release of arrested leaders; and second, in the demand for free elections to a new convention of East German unions.

The reaction in imperialist circles is equally significant. Instead of springing to action, the Adenauer government was paralyzed by the events. It become more hostile than ever to any real effort for German reunification. The State Department far from launching a military or diplomatic offensive, has confined itself to a few declarations of sympathy, charity, and support — for the Bonn Government. At best it saw in the events the possibilities of slowing down the Soviet "peace" drive, of putting a little new cement into the rickety structure of its western alliance, and of giving the *coup de grace* to Churchill's project for a top level parley with Moscow. Essentially it viewed the East German developments, while trying to draw the maximum advantage from them, with distrust and suspicion. The *New York Times* summed it up best in its editorial statement that *"Such regimes can only be destroyed by conquest from the outside, as the German, Italian and Japanese governments were in the Second World War, or by 'palace revolutions' which may or may not pave the way for democracy."* Imperialism needs Sygman Rhees and Chiang Kai-sheks for its wars against workers' states, and despite the occasional provocateur there was not a glimmer of their existence in Eastern Germany. It cannot find any real contact with an anti-capitalist workers' movement in opposition to Stalinist rule which by its very nature is irreconcilable with imperialism. (It is not surprising that the American radio RIAS, in West Berlin did not broadcast the general strike call during the evening of June 16.)

One final word on the character of the June events. There is absolutely no evidence to indicate any prior planning or political organization, except of an elementary type. Many observers, seizing on this or that incident, have been led astray on this point by their failure to understand the highly-developed sense of organization and discipline traditional among German workers. It was this that manifested itself in the June days and afterwards and not allegiance or adherence to any old or new political party.

Walter Lippman, unable to find any western sentiment in the movement, stated that most of the workers were Social Democratic trade unionists. Undoubtly if there is some truth in this estimate it consists in this: that as of today the East German workers would probably vote overwhelmingly social democratic in the (improbable) event of all-German elections. It would be their way of expressing their desire for a unification of the German labor movement and for the unification of Germany on a working class basis. It is not unlikely also that the most radical wing of the united socialist movement would also come from among the East German workers because of their experiences with socialist property forms and organization on the one hand and with fighting bureaucratism on the other.

But all this is still music of the future. Meanwhile it is clear that, imbued with renewed confidence from their massive June actions, the elementary movement is rising to a higher level. The isolated factory group is finding links with others in the same city and in other cities. This is apparent in the unification of demands after the demonstration, as for example the freeing of all arrested strike leaders and free union elections. Most important is the fact that the epoch of fear and passivity has come to an end. The workers have tested their own strength, they have seen the glaring weakness of the regime, the conviction is gaining ground that they can be master in the house. Thus is the next stage of the struggle being prepared.

* * *

2. The German Workers and the Russian Occupation

It is deeply significant that the demand for the withdrawal of the Russian troops or the ending of the Russian occupation was absent from the June events. Except for unconfirmed reports in the sensational press here that someone shouted "Ivan Go Home!" there is no linking of any such demand being raised in any of the dispatches of more responsible journalists in the European and American press which I have carefully checked. This was not a sign that the East German population wanted a continuation of the occupation, or that there was any sympathy for the Kremlin overlords. *No, is was rather a shrewdly calculated popular maneuver, instinctively arriver at, to exploit the seeming differences between the Kermlin and its German puppet rulers, and not to fight on too many fronts at the same time.*

The period preceding the June events was filled with many changes and even more rumors. The civilian Sem-

ionov replaced General Chuikov as head of the occupation command, a change which appeared to parallel those occurring in Moscow since Stalin's death. Then on June 9th came the proclamation of the "new course," that is, of a softer and more liberal policy to the peasantry, the middle class and the church. The air was filled with "self-criticism" although only a few weeks before Ulbricht and his cohorts were barking out their commands that the building of socialism had "to be speeded up" regardless of sacrifices. Ulbricht, it was believed, was on the skids.

"The feeling," says Pierre Gousset, "was getting around that the Soviet authorities were 'scuttling' the SED (the Stalinist Party — GC). This was the central theme of West Berlin propaganda in the newspapers and on the radio. The June 16th events strengthened this impression. Thus the psychological conditions were created for the explosion on the 17th."

So strong was this impression that Georges Blun, bitterly anti-communist Berlin correspondent of the Swiss *Journal de Geneve* opined that the June 16th building workers demonstration, which had occurred without the slightest interference from the police or Soviet troops, was "teleguided and desired" by the Russian command. His unsubstantiated conclusions notwithstanding, it was the fact of non-intervention that was carefully assimilated by the workers.

Fraternization at the Boundary Line

This was reinforced the following morning when the workers pouring out of the big locomotive workers and electrical equipment plants in the Hennigsdorf suburb started to march into central Berlin. To avoid walking an extra 15 kilometers they crossed directly through the French sector. Blun describes the scene when they came to the border line of the Soviet zone: *"Between Hennigsdorf and the French zone, 50 armed Russian soldiers tried to stop their advance but they had to yield and to lower their guns which had been raised to firing position. The women (demonstrators) cheered them, kissed them and showered them with flowers as though they were a victorious army returning from the wars."*

The same pattern was continued with some variations when the street battles began later in the afternoon. Pierre Gousset says that he heard "only praise for the exceptional discipline and restraint of the Soviet soldiers. Inflamed youth clambered onto the tanks and thrust sticks into the mouths of the guns. But not a shot was fired by the Soviet soldiers."

This report is confirmed from a number of politically divergent sources.

Two young German workers, participants in the June events, openly pro-Western in their sympathies, who addressed the Congress of the International Federation of Trade Unions at Stockholm, and were interviewed by *Newsweek:* (July 20, ,1953)

> "The language barrier," they said, "made it almost impossible for us to communicate with the Russian soldiers. But we could see they were puzzled by the riots of workers against a 'workers' government.' The Russian officers in the tanks waved at us cheerfully at first.
>
> (There is a photograph in Newsweek showing just such a scene—GC). But when the stones started to fly they ducked into their turrets and began breaking up the crowds."

Finally, there is Cesar Santelli writing in the Paris daily, *Le Monde:*

> "What has not been underlined in my opinion, according to evidence gathered from non-suspect Germans, is that the injured were much less the victims of Russians guns (most of which, I am assured were fired into the air) than of blackjacks, revolvers or machine guns wielded by fanatical young party functionaries or by certain elements of the **Volkspolizei** who were trying to save their own skins (many of them later ditched their uniforms and guns and went over to the other side of the barricades)."

What is remarkable about all these accounts is that they reveal that despite the pitched encounters which finally occurred with Soviet troops, despite the hostility thus aroused, the main aim of the demonstration remained unchanged. It was directed at the overthrow of the East German government, for democratic rights, and was not extended for the present to include direct opposition to the Russian occupation.

This will surely come at a later stage. But for the present, what was revealed was one of the stages of the political revolution when the workers ingeniously contrive to exploit the rifts among the various strata of the bureaucracy, and to limit their struggle and objectives to what is possible at the moment so as to raise their movement in a better position for the coming struggles.

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9. International Secretariat Statement on the East German Uprising

June 25 — The International Secretariat of the Fourth International today issued the following declaration on the events in East Germany and the present general situation in the European "People's Democracies" and the USSR.

On the basis of information and precise reports sent to us from a number of different sources including our own members active in Berlin and the East German zone, and on the basis of the programmatic considerations and political line characterizing our world movement founded

by Leon Trotsky, we are in a position to give the only objective analysis of the recent events in East Germany and to draw from them conclusions and perspectives which concern the entire international working class movement.

FALSE EXPLANATIONS

Up to now the press and the direct or indirect pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist spokesmen have sought to explain the events as a revolt of the German working masses against "the Communist regime," against the USSR in order to more vigorously resume their propaganda for the counter-revolutionary war they are preparing. Behind these events they have tried to mask their own difficulties, their crimes and their plans for a reactionary and counter-revolutionary war which has nothing in common with a genuine defense of the material, cultural and political interests of the working masses of the whole world.

The cries of indignation from the Social Democratic leaderships sound no less false. Almost unreservedly arrayed by the side of the capitalists in all their foul enterprises of colonial wars or of anti-Soviet war under American leadership, as defenders in practice of the capitalist status quo and disrupters of working class actions, they are in no position to preach sermons to their competitors in bureaucratism, the Stalinist leaderships.

On the other hand the press and spokesmen for the Kremlin, the satellite governments in the European "People's Democracies" and the Communist Parties in the world, upset, taken by surprise and gripped with fear by the gigantic uprising of the working masses in East Germany, have plunged into a series of contradictory, embarrassed and deceitful statements which well illustrate their bureaucratic nature.

THE WHOLE TRUTH

Only our movement, the Fourth International, under whose banner thousands of people have fought in the Soviet Union and on all continents to avert the Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration in the USSR and in the workers movement influenced by the Third International, can understand the profound meaning of the events now going on and tell the unvarnished truth, the whole truth to the workers.

Workers and poor peasants of the entire world:

In East Germany, at Berlin, Magdeburg, Leipzig, Halle, Rostock, Wismar, Meersburg, etc., there has just been projected the political revolution of the working masses of an economically and culturally developed country, Germany, against the bureaucratic and police regime established in the name of socialism under the auspices of the Soviet bureaucracy and by its native imitators.

This beginning of political revolution by the German workers, together with their Czech brothers the most advanced in the entire domain controlled by the Soviet bureaucracy, has nothing in common with any alleged sympathy of these workers with the capitalist regime at Bonn or the "democratic" capitalist countries of the West or with American imperialism, their supreme patron. It is an authentic revolutionary workers movement, very conscious of its path and its methods of action.

ANTI-CAPITALIST

It is resolutely opposed to capitalism, and at the same time it is against the political expropriation of the working class, against a bureaucratic and police regime which deprives the workers of control and direct administration by themselves of the anti-capitalist state.

Its historical significance is colossal and enormously progressive.

The reactionaries of Bonn, London, Paris and Washington have nothing to hope for from such a movement.

It is not directed back to the rut of a capitalism which has been historically abandoned in an irrevocable manner, but toward an expansion of genuine proletarian socialist democracy. It is the herald of a new, post-Stalinist, anti-Stalinist era, where the matured revolutionary forces in the capitalist world as well as in the Soviet Union itself and in the "People's Democracies" will emerge clearly to the surface and will conquer. It takes its place in the world revolutionary upsurge which is steadily changing the relation of forces between capitalism and the masses in favor of the latter and the relation between the bureaucratic leaderships and the masses likewise in favor of the latter.

To understand what is happening and will happen in East Germany, as well as in Czechoslovakia, the "People's Democracies" and the USSR itself, it is necessary to take into account the following facts:

CRISIS OF STALINISM

In all these countries the Soviet bureaucracy established during Stalin's lifetime a bureaucratic and police regime opposed to the aspirations, interests and needs of the broad masses. Their discontent was great and growing greater, stimulated by the world revolutionary upsurge. Stalin's death precipitated the crisis in the Soviet Union and the "People's Democracies." His successors, more aware than he was of the extreme tension now prevailing, entered upon the road of reforms and concessions in order to allay the tension and give a firmer foundation to their regime on a more popular basis. It is also for this reason, the better to handle their own internal situation, that they have very likely undertaken a policy of formal concessions to imperialism in order to decrease the tension with the latter and if possible to gain time.

But their concessions did not come quickly enough and were not made in a direct and frank manner. The impatient and exasperated masses passed to action.

In countries where their cultural level is the highest and where general conditions were most favorable, as in Czechoslovakia, and especially in East Germany, the political revolution of the working masses against the bureaucratic and police regime inspired and managed by Stalinism has already begun.

WORKERS REGROUP

In these two countries, the mass actions which took place in May and June, following Stalin's death, are the culmination of a long process of renewal of consciousness, of reorientation and even of organizational regroupment in the ranks, of the most advanced elements of the working class.

It is now certain that since 1949 in these two countries there has been the assertion of an organized working class resistance against the bureaucratic methods of intensifying labor in the factories and against police control over the workers. The workers have succeeded in opposing these measures, in forming resistance groups in the factories and trade unions, in winning over to their cause the lower organisms led by the bureaucracy itself—for example, factory or departmental committees. All the legislation and methods of work promulgated by the bureaucratic leaderships (collective contracts disadvantageous to the workers, the arbitrary increase of work norms) without any compensation on the plane of wages, housing, food or working conditions, have met with a bitter and more and more organized resistance from the workers.

EAST GERMANY

If this resistance was able to break out in a more ample and impressive manner in East Germany, that is to be explained by the following considerations:

(a) The working class of this country is traditionally among the most developed and best organized in the entire East European zone.

(b) It is farthest from the Soviet Union and the closest to the West.

(c) It has been the most abused from the first by the armies of Soviet occupation because they belonged to a conquered "enemy" nation.

(d) Special conditions have precipitated the developments in this zone: There has recently been an acute economic crisis, food was neither plentiful nor cheap, consumption goods were lacking and expensive, the rate of rebuilding workers houses was not up to the pressing needs.

The concessions made on June 10 in Eastern Germany were directed to the middle classes and completely neglected the workers who instead had to "increase the norms of labor."

WHAT SET IT OFF

The conciliatory measures taken by the Kremlin and the Soviet authorities since Stalin's death have aroused hopes of a relaxation of the bureaucratic and police regimes throughout the "buffer countries."

The recognition by the leadership of the Socialist Unity Party of its previous "wrong" course, added to the previous consideration, operated to encourage the masses, catalyzing their energy and precipitating their action.

The setting created by the whole of these considerations explains the events in East Germany. They broke out as an unalloyed working class movement against the bureaucratic and police political regime, in the strictly anti-capitalist framework of the social regime. In Berlin, the intervention of dubious and disruptive elements, open provocateurs of reactionaries, where the demonstrations of the East and the West met, at certain moments did pervert the anti-bureaucratic and anti-capitalist working class character of the masses. The propaganda of the bourgeois press and politicians and of their reactionary agents has subsequently attempted to swamp the essential in the episodic and secondary.

But it was the demand clearly expressed by the workers, as well as the motives behind their strikes, their street demonstrations and their meetings, which express and illustrate the genuine class character of their movements against the legislation and the bureaucratic methods of work, for the improvement of their material living conditions, for the democratization of the party and the trade unions, the liberation of political prisoners, that is to say, those workers who undertook the defense of the interests of the working class. In certain places there were added demands for secret, general and free elections in all of Germany to guarantee a working class victory in these elections.

If the capitalists have nothing to hope for from such a movement and, upon consideration, really feel tremendously disturbed by this colossal upsurge of genuine revolutionary forces on all planes, the Soviet leaders and those of the various "People's Democracies" and the Communist Parties could no longer falsify or ignore the profound meaning of these events. They have been obliged to continue along the road of still more ample and genuine concessions to avoid risking alienating themselves forever from support by the masses and from provoking still stronger explosions.

From now on they will not be able to stop halfway.

They will be obliged to dole out concessions to avoid more serious explosions in the immediate future and if possible to effect a transition "in a cold fashion" from the present situation to a situation more tolerable for the masses. But the workers ought to have confidence only in themselves.

Only their organized action guided by a clear and precise political program can put an end to the bureaucratic regime without harming the anti-capitalist social conquests or playing into the hands of the capitalist reaction which is preparing counter-revolutionary war.

REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM

Here is the program of the political revolution which is now on the order of the day both in the Soviet Union and in the "People's Democracies":

Genuine organs of people's power, democratically elected by the working masses, exercising effective control over the state, at all levels, including the government.

Real democratization of the Communist Parties.

Legalization of all working class parties.

Complete independence of the trade unions in relation to the state, including the workers' state.

Democratic elaboration of the economic plan by the workers and for the workers.

This is the program that the Fourth International has always defended and that the masses, taught by their own experience, are spontaneously taking up today. Let them persevere along this road, and, far from weakening the anti-capitalist regime in the Soviet Union and the "People's Democracies," they will consolidate it and fortify it. Only in this way will they render it invulnerable to the attacks of the capitalists and their agents.

Down with capitalism and its projected counter-revolutionary war!

Long live working class democracy!

Long live the socialist rebirth of the Soviet Union, the "People's Democracies" and the international working class movement.

10. "The East German Uprising," by the Editors of Fourth International

The emergence of the East German masses as an independent socialist force on the world political arena caught by surprise the diplomatic chancelleries of world capitalism, the puppet rulers in East Germany and the Kremlin masters. All the intelligence services — those of the imperialists as well as that of the Kremlin, let alone Ulbricht's secret police — had no inkling of what was in store. Symptomatic of this ignorance is the fact that the first demonstrations of the construction workers were generally misunderstood. It was taken for granted that these demonstrations took place under official auspices, presumably staged by the regime to serve its own purposes. Police regimes always appear impregnable and omnipotent until the revolutionary masses appear on the scene.

The fact is that the movement of the East German workers, beginning with a number of scattered and short-lived strikes in various towns, advanced to a new stage with huge strikes and demonstrations in Berlin on June 16 and 17 and then erupted into a nation-wide general strike and insurrection. This political uprising of the German workers laid bare the irreconcilable conflict between the working masses and the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy. The relations and conditions which produced the East German events are not limited to East Germany; they prevail throughout the buffer-zone countries and within the Soviet Union itself. East Germany thus foreshadows the revolutionary developments and struggles that lie ahead in the Stalinist-dominated countries.

Previous reports of working class ferment, discontent and opposition had come from Czechoslovakia and other East European countries. The German workers under the Stalinist rule went the furthest and their actions assumed the broadest scope and sharpest expression primarily because they are the most advanced workers in Europe, richest in socialist traditions, organization and combativity. Their action demonstrated the necessity for a political revolution against Stalinist rule which was predicted years ago by Leon Trotsky.

The basis of Trotsky's prediction was his analysis of the nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a privileged minority. It has expropriated the Soviet workers politically, consumes and wastes a lion's share of the national income, perpetuates inequality and is unable to maintain itself except by totalitarian terror. This regime collides head-on with the needs, interests and aspirations of the masses. The workers require the broadest possible democracy, otherwise it is impossible for them to defend their interests and move forward onto the socialist road. The workers need the decisive say in the management and planning of the economy and the distribution of the national income.

This irreconcilable conflict in the Soviet Union was extended into the satellite countries with the advent of Stalinist rule. Now it has flared for the first time into the open in East Germany. That is the essential meaning of the East German events as it will be recorded in the annals of history.

Scope of Movement

First and foremost it is necessary to understand the scope of the movement. The German revolutionary socialist periodical *Pro and Contra* reported that involved in the struggle were not only the workers of East Berlin but the overwhelming majority of the working class in the entire area. When the struggle in East Berlin had already started to slacken, the workers in the other industrial centers moved to the fore. "As early as the first morning hours of June 17 the flame of revolution had leaped over to the industrial centers of Central Germany and touched off explosions in this high-tension area," stated *Pro and Contra* in its July 7, 1953 issue. Affected was every major industrial city: Halle, Merseberg, Magdeburg, Erfurt, Gera, Leipzig, Dresden, Jena, Chemnitz. From these cities the movement spread to "the middle-sized and smaller industrial centers."

The working class had sensed the colossal potential inherent in itself . . . Since 1923, there has been no action of the working class which comes even close to approximating the power of this one. Neither the petty bourgeoisie nor the peasants can lay claim to an essential part in the insurrection," concluded *Pro and Contra.* These are the undeniable facts.

The rapidity with which this movement unfolded, its power and unity can be attributed only to the irreconcilable opposition of the working class as a whole to the regime and all its agencies, beginning with the ruling Stalinist party. This opposition, building up gradually through a molecular process and as if waiting a signal, exploded to the surface when the East Berlin workers took the initiative.

This was far from an "elementary" movement. It

started with economic demands (abolition of 10% increase in production norms, demands for reduction in prices, etc.) but it was not confined to these demands. Virtually from the beginning the workers raised political demands (dismissal of the most hated bureaucrats, free elections, democratic unions, unification of the country by the joint action of workers in both zones, etc.). In their totality these demands represented much more than a movement to reform the bureaucracy or its regime. For example, a demand for free elections under certain conditions could amount to nothing more than a reform demand. But under the Stalinist regime this, as other political demands, was a revolutionary challenge to the police state. The masses could gain their demands only by a victorious overthrow of the regime and replacing it by the workers' democracy. The nature of the regime determined the nature of the struggle. The masses engaged in a political revolution. The Kremlin rulers, on the other hand, engaged in a counter-revolution.

In the course of the struggle, the masses demonstrated in action that they *rejected* — and sought to eject — the regime, its party, its trade unions, in brief, the bureaucracy and all its agencies.

This repudiation of the Stalinist regime, the Stalinist party, the bureaucracy as a whole, comes as a climax to the countless crimes Stalinism has perpetrated over the years in Germany. What was at one time the most powerful party in the Communist International remains today nothing more than an administrative apparatus resting on Russian bayonets. This is the new interrelation between the masses and the Stalinists which has been established in Germany.

The methods employed by the regime against the insurgent workers were typical of the methods of all counter-revolutionary regimes: a) the use of armed force; b) promises of concessions; c) police action against the advanced elements and d) a campaign of slander against the movement.

The armed forces used to suppress the revolution were formidable. Some 300,000 Russian troops, including armored divisions, were deployed against the workers. The size of this armed force is, in its own way, a gauge of the scope and power of the uprising. It has been said that the armed forces did not do much shooting and in some instances even fired over the heads of the insurgents. If this is supposed to show that there was something merciful about the intervention of the Kremlin troops, it misses the mark completely. Confronted with workers in revolt, military commanders prefer to accomplish their ends with a minimum of bloodshed.

The Russian commanders knew that excessive bloodshed might only provoke the unarmed masses to fight all the harder. They knew, for example, the consequences of Bloody Sunday in St. Petersburg (Jan. 22, 1905) when Czarist troops fired on unarmed workers and caused the revolution to sweep over the entire country. The counter-revolutionary role of the Kremlin troops consisted in their confronting the unarmed working class with a display of overwhelming force, which saved the shattered regime from decisive defeat. The revolution was thereby blocked, and the workers who entered the political arena were compelled to retreat.

The promises of concessions similarly differ in no essential respects from the ruses employed by other counter-revolutionary regimes under similar conditions. Let us recall that the Russian Czar made extravagant promises of concessions in 1905 in order to create the illusion that his regime would reform itself.

Actually the German Stalinist regime never went far in its concessions. Their promises were confined to measures to improve living standards. but at no time were any democratic rights granted. One official, the Minister of Justice, Fechner, said on June 30th that "the right to strike is constitutionally guaranteed. Members of strike committees will not be punished for their activities as strike leaders." A week later Fechner announced the arrest of 50,000 strikers and was dismissed from his post and expelled for his expression of "liberalism." This one case tells the story of the real connection between the concessions, repressions and purges.

The touchstone of concessions for Marxists is whether or not in their totality they give the workers an opportunity to assert themselves politically, permit their voices to be heard and create a fissure in the totalitarian system which can then be extended. In a word, the test is whether the workers' struggle for power is enhanced by the concessions. In East Germany the promises of concessions were intended for the opposite purpose, namely, to enable the regime to continue holding the workers by the throat.

Typical Methods

The immediate aim was to divide the revolutionary ranks. To separate the "softs" from the "hards" among the insurgent masses so that the police could deal more quickly and effectively with the "hards," that is, the most militant, resolute and class-conscious elements. Far from representing the dawn of a new era in East Germany, that is, the beginnings of self-reform of the totalitarian regime, these promises of concessions were kept down to a minimum and combined with military and police repressions in the methods of the counter-revolution.

The slander of the movement as a "fascist adventure" is something which the Stalinists have typically made their own. They cannot imitate the capitalists who, as is well known, do not hesitate to denounce even spontaneous movements for elementary demands as "Communist inspired." Even when completely false, such denunciations constitute only partial frame-ups. Because it is true that every struggle of the masses, even for elementary demands, contains in it a potential socialist challenge to the capitalist system. As one Prussian Minister of Internal Affairs long ago said, "Every strike discloses the hydra-head of revolution."

But the defamation of the East German uprising as Fascist-inspired is without a grain of truth. It is a frame-up of the basest sort. The movement was anti-capitalist through and through; its aim was to establish a democratic workers' power. Expressed in this charge is the

bureaucracy's fear that the East German events have torn away the Kremlin's mask of passing itself off for "workers' representatives." The Stalinist bureaucracy dares not admit that it has been openly challenged by the East German working class in their bid for power. By slandering the uprising as fascist, the Stalinist bureaucracy pursues above all the aim of retaining its demagogic disguise.

The immediate aim pursued by this slander is to serve as a cover for further repressions. If the state is indeed threatened by such formidable "fascist" forces, it means that terror against the "fascist underground" must be intensified. It means an even greater growth of the police state, more terrible repressions. By his call to "strengthen" the secret police issued in the middle of September, Grotewohl has expressed precisely this need. That is the logic of the slander.

In this case the charge of fascism is hurled at the working class which was itself the worst sufferer from fascism. The German workers fought Nazism bravely before Hitler's rise to power and could have won the fight were it not for the betrayal of the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaders. These workers had endured 12 years of fascist rule and as a result when the Russian troops first marched in they were greeted as liberators. Given half a chance by the Stalinists, they could have become staunch supporters of the regime. It is the harshest condemnation of the Stalinist overlords that their tyranny imposes such intolerable living and working conditions, coupled with a total absence of democratic rights, on the workers as to leave them no resort other than revolution to break the chains of Stalinist enslavement.

But that is not all. The infamous slander of fascism means that the Stalinists have lost hope of winning over the German workers. They propose to resort to more terror to maintain themselves in power. This is further borne out by the purge of that section of the East German bureaucracy that favored or is suspected of favoring a softer attitude. It is borne out most of all by the sweeping firings and arrests of worker-militants in the factories since the open struggle subsided.

Divide Ranks

Although the workers had to retreat, from all indications they have been neither crushed nor cowed. On the contrary, having measured strength with Grotewohl's government, they remain in a militant and confident mood. They continue to voice demands, particularly for the release of political prisoners and renewed strikes in some places to reinforce their demand.

The regime was openly defied by hundreds of thousands who went to West Berlin for food packages. The Stalinist leaders fear another uprising and are taking "preventive" measures to forestall it. While seeking to refurbish their repressive apparatus, they are making promises of improvements in living conditions such as an end to rationing within a year.

But no matter what measures they take, the basic causes which provoked the uprising will not be eliminated. The workers will be impelled to rise again. The struggle launched on June 16 can end only with the downfall of the Stalinist dictatorship.

In the very first open test of forces the regime exposed itself as lacking any support among the masses. It was opposed by a united working class and saved only by the intervention of foreign troops. Concessions, even if forthcoming, cannot possibly save the regime because it is alien to the needs and aspirations of the masses.

All Political Tendencies

There has been much speculation about the political complexion of the insurgent German masses. The fact is that in their political composition the masses represented all the political tendencies within the working class. There were Social Democrats, there were also many members of the Communist Party, along with members of the SAP, an old split-off from the German CP, and there were Trotskyists. The touchstone of the mass uprising is that they were all united in action. But at the same time it is perfectly correct to say that in its aims and tendencies the insurrection expressed the Trotskyist program.

The worker members of the CP, the SD and other parties and groups actually broke in action with the parties and programs they had adhered to. The political revolution against the bureaucracy is not inscribed in the program of any party other than the Trotskyist party. The Trotskyists are the only ones who have correctly analyzed the nature of Stalinism and elaborated the methods of struggle against it.

As far back as 1936 Leon Trotsky proclaimed "the inevitability of a new revolution" against the Stalinist regime. The Transition Program, the foundation document of the Fourth International adopted in 1938, calls for this revolution. The 1940 Manifesto of the Fourth International — *The Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution* — states that "The preparation of the revolutionary overthrow of the Moscow ruling caste is one of the main tasks of the Fourth International." This was reaffirmed in 1951 by the Third World Congress of the Fourth International. The East German events have not only brought with them the verification that this political revolution is historically necessary and inevitable, but they have demonstrated the forms and methods it must take.

The test of forces in East Germany revealed not only the remarkable power of the workers but also what is lacking to bring that power to victory. The revolutionary perspective opened by the June events is bound up with the unfolding struggle of the workers throughout the East Europe Soviet zone. East Germany was the most advanced expression of the mass upsurge in all of Eastern Europe. At the same time the East German events posed the burning question of the unification of the entire German working class, East and West, on a new plane.

To realize the great revolutionary possibilities opened up by these events the organization of a revolutionary party of the German proletariat becomes imperative. In outlining the conditions for a successful political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy, Trotsky said in 1934 "We must set down, first of all, as an immutable

axiom — that this task can be solved only by a revolutionary *party*." Today this is truer than ever. And the cadres for such a party have already made their appearance and demonstrated their capacity in the crucible of the general strike uprising of June.

The iron necessity for a revolutionary socialist party — that is, the Trotskyist party — has been confirmed once again by historical events. We are confident that the German workers, both in the Eastern and Western zones, will begin drawing this lesson from the East German events.

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In the light of the foregoing, we wish to make a few remarks on the discussion article on the East German events in the March-April issue of *Fourth International* by Comrade George Clarke. His presentation plays down the counter-revolutionary role of the Kremlin as well as of its puppet regime. He takes careful note of the moderate conduct of the occupying forces, but fails to characterize and bring out their counter-revolutionary part in blocking the workers' bid for power.

Further Comrade Clarke's presentation minimizes the scope and meaning of the East German events. Nowhere in this discussion does he bring forward the inescapable necessity of the mass uprising to get rid of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Nor does he assert the need of the revolutionary socialist party in order to lead such a mass uprising to victory.

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11. Letter to the Editor of Fourth International *by Win Brad Jr.*

Australia
October 29, 1953

Editor: *Fourth International*
Dear Comrade:

It was very distressing to see in the March-April issue of the *Fourth International* an example of confusion unparalleled perhaps in Marxist thought since 1939, as was manifested in two contributions — Editorial Note, Letter from M. Stein. All over the world, particularly in Australia, and America the lights are going out and yet in this period of gloom a young person looks to find strength in men whose intellect he has already regarded as of the first order.

For the last few months I have followed the SWP debate which is concerned, fundamentally, no matter what the side issues, in the basic question of our time — the role of the Soviet Union. Most of what was written was laughable, but now after reading the issue of *Fourth International* in which the debate is reflected in the three-cornered contentions of George Clarke, Morris Stein and the Editor, I do not feel like laughing any more.

Leon Trotsky died in 1940 — 13 years ago. A new generation, of which I am a member, has arisen since who will build socialism on a world scale. This new generation most probably can't even remember when Leon Trotsky was alive. We cannot remember for we were hardly born the days of the Moscow Trials, the days of the Popular Front and the United Front. We have only a very dim recollection of the Second World War and the only period we know is the period since the war and the only thing we're really conscious of is that the final showdown between the old and the new orders — capitalism and socialism, will occur before we are middle-aged.

To prove and to base an argument on the quotation of a man who died 12 years ago — no matter how brilliant the man, how profoundly correct his ideas, without any resort to the world since 1945 does not satisfy us. Leon Trotsky wrote for a particular period and for a particular set of circumstances. As Marxists we accept as a fundamental principle that absolute truths do not exist but that truth is determined by a definite time, place and circumstances. And what may be true at 12 o'clock at Sydney in time of a depression may not be true at 5 o'clock in New York in a period of boom. Twelve years is a long time, particularly in this century and the period of 1933-41 is not the same as the period 1945-53. You condemn the Stalinist cult of leader worship, and yet you practice the very same thing. Instead of blindly accepting every statement of Trotsky's as the absolute truth, let us understand the methods by which he arrived at his conclusions and let us relate Trotsky's analyses to the present day situation.

Both you, editor, and M. Stein have scored G. Clarke for negating some of the particular points of Trotsky's analysis. Beware that you do not stifle the development of one who is trying to resolve today's problems in the light of the present day situation.

Whether you realize it or not, by blindly taking a statement wrenched out of context to prove your point that the Soviet Union cannot be defined as a socialized economy, you have come to an impasse, for if fundamentally the S.U. does not possess a socialized economy nor fundamentally a capitalist economy, or a feudalist economy or a slave economy, it must have an economy which is none of these, an economy which is part socialistic, part capitalistic — in fact, most probably something like state capitalism, or a managerial society, and now we're back to John Strachey of the *New Statesman* or Burnham of Science and Style.

The first Marxist book I read was *In Defense of Marxism* and the one thing I learnt was to look at the class basis of a society in an analysis of that society. In the Soviet Union I see the great truth of the means of production, distribution and exchange controlled and scientifically planned by a bureaucracy which is, however, in the last analysis thrown up from, dependent for its very existence upon, and its historical mission determined by the Russian people and the Russian proletariat.

I wonder if you read the articles you print in the *Fourth International* before you go to press, for I don't think you would have written so much nonsense and sought refuge in so many quotations if you had read and understood the first article in the March-April issue — that by Pablo on the Post War "New Course." This article is written by a man who uses the very minimum of quotations from

a period never to return, but instead proves his argument by constant reference to the world in which the new generation is developing. Pablo shows that as the productivity of the Soviet Union under a planned and controlled economy rises more and more, the common Russian person begins to inevitably receive his share in this increased productivity, although due to bureaucracy, by no means his fair share. Nevertheless his standard is rising and as this standard of living rises, the very conditions which determined the need of the bureaucracy are being done away with. Thus the base of the bureaucracy is being slowly undermined. Now there are Trotskyists, who may call themselves that, who perhaps have never heard the name of Trotsky and within the Russian C.P., within the Russian bureaucracy there are men and women who are changing with the changed conditions. And it will be these men and women who will lead the struggle for democracy within the Soviet Union.

Morris Stein states that "the Soviet bureaucracy will not give up its position without a fight." But what is the position of the bureaucracy? A position determined by them? No, it is a position determined by the Russian proletariat and the international proletariat. As the Russian people's position, which is determined by the economic system under which they live, so the bureaucracy's position alters, and those in the bureaucracy who cannot bring themselves into line are dropped by the wayside—like Stalin's influence and Beria.

Pablo shows that the bureaucracy is making concessions to the Russian people, that from within the bureaucracy shall arise the elements that will cause its abolition. There shall never be the violent upheaval in the abolition of the bureaucracy as there was in the abolition of capitalism, and when it comes down to quibbling about the degree of violence by which this political revolution will take place—well, as far as I am concerned, there are far greater problems in the world than that to be solved.

Since the war Pablo has given brilliant analyses of the changing world situation. Like all the great truths, like Dalton's Atomic Theory and Heraclitus' theory of state of change, Pablo's analyses are profoundly simple. Yet in America you seem to not really understand the bureaucracy and you seem determined to bring in every complexity and side issue imaginable.

Surely Pablo has meant that the final fundamental struggle between socialism and capitalism is imminent—it will happen before I am middle-aged. In this struggle the world will be polarized into two main camps—those who are fighters for the destruction of the capitalist system and the building of socialism, and those who will fight to retain socialism. Russian bureaucracy, although it will try every dirty means it knows to prevent itself from being involved in the Third World War will be affected by the process of polarisation and will, along with the rest of the world be forced to determine whether it will completely sell out to capitalism or will support the fight for socialism. Because Russian bureaucracy is not in a strong position to sell out anything really important, not China, not Malaya, not Indochina, not Russian people, and because of its class basis and because it has preserved the nationalized economy in Russia through a catastrophic war, Pablo says it will take the side for socialism.

Ask yourself one question, as Pablo once asked me: "Is your main aim the destruction of capitalism?" If it is, then we support and encourage any force including the Stalinists that will destroy this foul system.

Let us get the question of Stalinism in perspective—try to see the world as this new generation sees it; delegating the before-war days to the background. Do not hide behind quotations which were only meant to be used at a particular time and period, and for God's sake, in this most important period of man's history, don't waste time, energy and paper on questions that have been solved, but instead reserve that time, that energy and that paper to plan the destruction of capitalism.

Yours fraternally,
Win Brad Jr.

SECTION VII: DEEPENING COMMITMENT TO "ENTRYISM OF A SPECIAL TYPE"

["Our Integration in the Real Mass Movement, Our Experience and Perspectives" was submitted by the International Secretariat in June 1953 for a vote at the upcoming Fourth World Congress. It is reprinted from SWP *International Information Bulletin,* September, 1953.

["From the Third to the Fourth World Congress," by Michel Pablo, written in October 1953, included a major attack on the policies of the SWP, which he accused of "yielding to hostile class pressure in the United States" because of its intransigeant attitude towards Stalinism. It was written as a contribution to the precongress discussion.]

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1. Our Integration in the Real Mass Movement, Our Experience and Perspectives

The Building of Genuine Mass Marxist Revolutionary Parties to Assure the Victory of the World Socialist Revolution

The tactic defined by the Third World Congress and later by the Tenth Plenum of the IEC is based in the first instance *on the appreciation of the profoundly revolutionary character of the period and the evolution of the relationship of international forces fundamentally favorable to the revolution.* This is the case despite the

orientation and the concrete march of imperialism toward war.

This orientation and march to war can no longer occur on the basis of the relationship of forces favorable to imperialism because of a series of defeats inflicted on the proletariat and the colonial masses (as was the case before the Second World War).

For this reason the Third World Congress deemed that even the outbreak of war could not now signify a decisive and lasting setback to the class struggle, an act of even temporary strengthening of imperialism, but quite the contrary it would signify its impotence to cope with the rising forces of the world socialist revolution in any other way. The war would carry the class struggle to its paroxysm.

If, despite these conditions and perspectives unfavorable for imperialism, it continues nevertheless its orientation and its march toward war, this is due to its organic inability to deal with its difficulties in any other way; it is due to the historic impasse of imperialism. It is also due to the fact that its essential power resides in American imperialism which, unlike all other imperialist powers, still retains exceptional economic and social vigor (although it is being undermined by more explosive contradictions than ever within a relatively brief period). This strength is quite exceptional from the relative as well as the absolute point of view (in relation to the entire past of capitalism).

Under these conditions of a fundamentally revolutionary period, with the relationship of forces evolving fundamentally in a favorable way for the revolution, despite the orientation and the concrete march of imperialism toward war, the Third World Congress and afterward the Tenth Plenum of the IEC outlined a tactic of *penetration and as total and deep-going an action as possible inside the real mass movement of each country.*

In defining this tactic we have taken account of supplementary considerations which flow at one and the same time from the character of the period, the relationship of forces, the orientation and the march of imperialism toward war and from the effects of this situation on the international working-class movement and upon our subjective forces.

While our strategy, as the only revolutionary Marxist tendency, is the conquest of power by the proletariat and the triumph of the socialist revolution on a world scale, our tactic must take into account the concrete objective and subjective conditions so as to create the most timely and the most effective possible regroupment of conscious revolutionary forces larger than our own, and to form in the fusion with them big Marxist revolutionary parties.

In the final analysis our tactic is aimed at the creation of such revolutionary parties which are indispensable for the rapid and complete victory of the world socialist revolution.

But we envisage their creation concretely as part of the process of the movement of the class itself in each country, in the course of its maturing politically through its concrete experience, which will be assisted on the one side by the favorable objective conditions of the period, and on the other side by our own participation in the real class movement, with the aid of our program, ideas and our activity.

We neither can nor do we wish to leap over the stages, which are fixed for each working class partly by the specific characteristics of capitalism of the country (its concrete economic, social and political physiognomy) and the political and organizational traditions of the proletariat, as well as by the character of the period.

We neither can nor do we desire to conquer the political confidence of the class and of its vanguard by in any way remaining outside its mass formations which, regardless of their level of development, express its actual political movement, or by the exclusive means of counterposing to them from the outside our program and our activity (as mere models).

We wish to do more, *we want to fuse in action with the class movement at its present level.* We repeat: *In action* and not *in program.*

On the contrary, in the sphere of program, ideas, political line, this work of the Trotskyists among the masses, among their movements and their many formations, should be more clearly defined and strictly demarcated than ever, should be free of all confusion, of any alteration arising from reformist, centrist or Stalinist pressures.

The present mass work of the Trotskyists (the only work which genuinely deserves this name) would have no meaning if the Trotskyists who are now organized on a world scale in a single international party, the Fourth International, and in separate organizations as national sections of the Fourth International in each country, did not preserve to the highest degree their theoretical and political principles, did not constantly develop their Marxist revolutionary line and did not find the means, regardless of the mass work they are carrying on, to express and to openly defend through their organs and appropriate publications, the complete program and line of revolutionary Marxism, of Trotskyism, of the Fourth International.

The principal difficulty in the past of the workers' movement, including that of the Leninist beginnings of the Third International, consisted in rooting out the doctrinaire sectarianism among truly revolutionary Marxist tendencies which opposed or in any way resisted complete and unreserved participation in the real mass movement.

But in general, the principal difficulty in the history of the workers' movement on the plane of tactics has proved to be that of finding a healthy balance between the necessary and absolutely justified rigor in program and the genuinely Marxist revolutionary line of the vanguard on the one side, and its activity among the masses which should be free of all sectarianism as well as all recourse to bureaucratic command on the other.

The most difficult but also the most necessary rule to carry out for the existence, the development and the final triumph of the revolutionary Marxist tendency is that of acting completely within the class, completely with the class, by constantly and at every stage of this close connection giving expression as the vanguard to the general, historic and conscious interests of the class as a whole.

It is no exaggeration to declare that with the tactic we have worked out at the Third World Congress and which we are now applying that our movement is in the process of applying this rule with a comprehension never before equaled in the history of the entire working-class movement.

We take the class as it is in each country, with its pe-

culiarities, we study its natural movements, we discern in them the progressive features, and we adopt our tactic accordingly.

The form matters little to us; the class content often deformed, concealed, latent or even potential, is, however, of decisive importance. But to discover this requires a high level of political maturity of which our movement has generally given proof.

Thus we are, for example, the only ones who have been able to correctly analyze the character of the numerous movements of the exploited masses in the colonial and semi-colonial countries through which their political maturity necessarily develops; and far from ignoring or condemning them, we have accorded them all the importance they deserve, and, if such should be the case, integrating our forces within them and following from within the development of the masses to a higher level (this is the case whether we are dealing with the progressive content of Peronism insofar as it is an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist movement of the masses, of the Bolivian MNR, of Ibanism in Chile, or of the Vietminh Resistance Movement, etc.).

We also are the only ones who have understood and deliberately chosen as our principal sphere of work in the class, the movement and the formations influenced either by a reformist leadership, or by a Stalinist leadership, in those countries where the principal movement of the class is now under such influence.

As regards these above-mentioned types of work, our corresponding tactic toward them was determined not only by the mass character of these movements and formations, but above all by the consideration that these movements and formations under reformist or Stalinist influence would not be able to escape from this influence in the present conjuncture, in the absence of any perspective for a general and lasting compromise, and as long as the "cold war" would continue and the perspective of an early war would remain valid.

The chronic crisis of these movements and formations, which has its roots in the fundamental contradictions between the radical, even revolutionary aspirations of the masses, and the opportunist, treacherous policy of their leadership, far from being overcome, will tend to become more acute. But it will remain an internal crisis since in the opinion of the masses it is necessary to face the perspective of a general and decisive and relatively early showdown united in the ranks of the big traditional organizations.

Moreover, we said, that the reformist or Stalinist leaderships of the important mass movements and formations would be obliged to avoid moving clearly or fundamentally against the prevailing current, to relatively radicalize their policy (in relation to their previous course) in this objective atmosphere. This factor will contribute to preventing the crisis from taking a centrifugal organizational form that would lead to important splits and give rise to important regroupments outside these movements and formations.

All of this has been amply confirmed by the development of all mass organizations, reformist as well as Stalinist. We cite among the most striking examples in this connection, those of the Labor Party and Bevanism, and that of the French Communist Party, in the light of the crisis that was caused by the Marty-Tillon affair which occurred without any organizational breaks and with the CP regaining its broad influence. Are there any reasons to believe that the recent evolution of the international situation will in any considerable way alter these considerations and these perspectives? None whatever.

The inter-imperialist differences, stirred up by the difficulties which imperialism as a whole is meeting in preparing its counter-revolutionary war, by the fears it feels, as well as by the diplomatic maneuvers of the anti-capitalist states ("Peace" offensives) can hinder, complicate, impede the war plans and affect the time-intervals and the means of unleashing the war, but cannot result in a genuine easing of the situation, in a relatively prolonged "co-existence," in a general and lasting compromise.

The objective basis for that is lacking. For the anti-capitalist states, which are still influenced by the Soviet bureaucracy, the basis of such a compromise consists in "co-existence" on the foundation of the present division of the world. For imperialism — and particularly for the decisive imperialism of the United States — it consists, as a beginning, in the reintroduction of the capitalist system in the colonial revolution as well as in the European "People's Democracies." Thus the climate of the "cold war" will be transformed either into a hot war pure and simple which will become general, or into the isolation and, in the final analysis, the certain defeat of American imperialism by the revolution at home without its recourse to a major international war.

Of these two foreseeable variants resulting from the "cold war" in the next few years, the one that is by far the most probable in practice, and upon which it is still necessary to count, is the unleashing of the counter-revolutionary imperialist war. As of now, this variant becomes *possible* since imperialism, being seriously rearmed, runs the risk of getting caught in a complete economic and social crisis as well as of finding itself faced with a definitively unfavorable relationship of international forces should it hesitate in the next few years to plunge into war.

For this reason, our tactic especially toward mass movements and organizations under reformist or Stalinist influence still remains perfectly valid and necessary.

Following the broad outline of what has been written since the Third World Congress on our tactics, we present in broad form these guiding ideas so as to help in their thorough assimilation by the whole of our movement:

1. The tactic of the International for penetrating the real mass movements is developing in three directions —

a. Independent.

b. Entry into the movements and formations under reformist influence.

c. Entry of a special type into the movements and formations under Stalinist influence.

2. In each case it is only *essentially* such (independent, entrist or entrism of a special type), that is to say, it is the main orientation directed toward the main sphere of work according to the peculiarities of the workers' movement in each country.

The choice of a principal sphere forms an essential part of the conception of our tactics because we are concerned not with putting all possible spheres of work on the same plane and of carrying out our work eclectically, but of *deliberately* choosing a main sphere and of concentrating our maximum forces in it.

Having said that, it is not excluded that minor forces

be placed in secondary spheres of work or even in spheres which at a given moment may lead occasionally to rapid and relatively important gains for us (in relation to our present forces).

3. The tactic consists not only in selecting or being able to choose an essential sphere of work but of elaborating a line of conduct there conforming to the peculiarities of this milieu and corresponding to the numerical and political level of our forces. The tactic should aim at linking us with the masses of this milieu; attempting first of all to establish ourselves as the best militants of this milieu; making ourselves then known as the extreme left-wing elements who are trying to acquire a distinct political physiognomy, little by little, in accord with favorable opportunities and possibilities; and thus *in the long run* making ourselves known as the left tendency par excellence of these circles. If it would be an error to jump prematurely, to act impatiently, in a rigid doctrinaire manner and without tactical finesse, it would be no less dangerous in the long run to become imprisoned in an attitude that fails to distinguish us from the political features of the average political physiognomy of these circles or even of their extreme left-centrist tendencies.

4. Our tactic nowhere aims at transforming the traditional reformist or Stalinist movements and formations as a whole, or as such, into revolutionary Marxist parties.

We continue to consider this eventuality as extremely improbable and we have to guard against sowing any illusions on this subject, even indirectly.

We consider all these movements and formations as *a sphere of work,* as channels through which the majority political movement of the class is now passing, as places that we utilize to make contacts with the class in the present stage of its organization and political consciousness, and nothing more.

We work there in order to activate the politicalization of the class, in order to link ourselves to its most advanced elements, in order to break loose the revolutionary forces (which in any case could only emerge from these circles) which (in accord with still unforeseen tempos and forms) will build the genuine revolutionary Marxist parties of tomorrow.

5. In all those cases where we are active mainly within reformist or Stalinist movements and formations, it is imperative, if not at the beginning at least after a first stage of integration, to envisage and to realize the publication of a genuinely revolutionary, Marxist, Trotskyist periodical which openly defends the full line and program of the Fourth International. Such a periodical should not be confused with periodicals which are not completely Trotskyist which we already publish or which we are attempting to publish particularly within reformist or Stalinist movements and formations. We refer here to the issuance of completely or essentially independent periodicals that we will try to publish and keep alive by our own means (or if possible with the assistance of others who are sufficiently close to a revolutionary Marxist point of view, and are not hostile to Trotskyism).

From the same point of view, the work of thoroughgoing revolutionary, Marxist, Trotskyist education should be considered as a permanent central task of our sections along with the publication of the largest quantity possible of Trotskyist literature (works of Leon Trotsky, pamphlets and books applying our complete line on timely political questions).

6. Our entire tactic acquires its most profound meaning because it is situated within the framework of our revolutionary perspective. We proceed from the appraisal that we are living in a profoundly revolutionary period characterized by a relationship of forces which is developing fundamentally in favor of the revolution and which is moving toward a decisive and final struggle in a relatively brief period (without any practical possibilities of decisive retreat or of a prolonged stand-still) with all the consequences this connotes, which have already been analyzed, on the state of mind of the masses now organized in large formations under reformist or Stalinist influence as well as on the policies of these leaderships. For these reasons we give priority to our concern with and our efforts at rapid and total integration wherever the masses are, together with all the reservations required for our completely independent action where we act as completely independent groups.

If the character of the period, and its consequences within the present working-class movement and its perspectives of development were different, our activity within mass movements and formations under reformist influence and even more within movements and formations under Stalinist influence would not have the same character as we give it today.

For in reality entrist work, or entrism of a special type, acquires its full meaning only when placed within present conditions and perspectives which are such that the masses continue to remain organized in these movements and formations, and within their midst essentially develop their inevitable and speeded-up radicalization and through which they will conduct the first stages of their decisive struggles of tomorrow.

7. The International cannot and does not pretend to indicate in its documents and resolutions all the tactical forms to be followed in every country. This is the work of each national leadership which should be capable of providing a concrete content to the general lines of policy and tactic outlined by the International.

No general indication by the International exempts national leaderships from making the necessary effort to grasp the peculiarities of their own national situation at a given stage and to adjust their tactics accordingly.

* * *

On the basis of all these considerations and after the experiences of the various sections with the tactic outlined by the Third World Congress and the Tenth Plenum, we have now come to a point where it is possible to derive a number of lessons; to better set forth certain features; to single out certain tendencies which, should they fully develop, could prove erroneous in the future; and to get a better view of the future evolution and perspectives of our tactic.

First of all there is the independent work, that is in countries and cases where reformism and Stalinism do not constitute important political forces in the working-class movement and consequently, are not major obstacles to the formation and the development of revolutionary Marxist parties.

This category embraces organizations in *Latin America* generally and notably *Bolivia,* the *African colonies, Switzerland, Greece, the United States,* and *Ceylon.* In *Switzerland,* however, a more intense work toward the socialist movement and formations should be seriously contemplated. In *Greece* the present complete illegality as well as the organizational dislocation of the movement under Stalinist influence, determines that the Trotskyists undertake a kind of eclectic independent activity toward any legal or semi-legal formation around which important mass currents are polarized.

For a number of these organizations essentially independent work does not mean that they can act from now on in a straight line without temporary tactical detours precisely as though they were genuine revolutionary mass parties. Rather, it signifies an orientation toward this end which could be realized without major detours of entrist work in a reformist or centrist organization built up in the meantime. Under certain conditions of development this perspective appears to us as most probable at the present stage and in order to maintain these conditions we throw the very decisive weight of our own action in this direction.

But on the other hand there is little likelihood that, even where reformism and Stalinism do not now constitute major political obstacles, the movement of the political maturing of the masses will develop in a direct line towards its polarization around our present nuclei.

A more or less prolonged activity is necessary which revolves essentially around this or that milieu which at the present stage polarizes the mass movement, regardless of its level.

This applies, for example, to the Peronist movement in *Argentina,* or the Ibanez movement in *Chile,* as well as to other movements of a special type, often still led by the petty bourgeoisie, under a confused revolutionary national democratic program, which at the present stage attract the masses in such countries as *Columbia, Venezuela, Brazil,* several countries of the Middle East and the African colonies.

On the other hand the perspective in the United States that the first wave of mass politicalization may be concretized in the formation of a labor party based on the trade unions naturally still remains essential. In such a case an entrist tactic within this organization by the Trotskyists would be called for.

However in all these cases, the tactic of essentially independent work at the present stage is expressed by the distinct independent existence of the Trotskyist organization with its independent press and its direct political appeals to the masses.

The manner of acting practically as the revolutionary Marxist party of the masses depends on the concrete conditions in each country, on the precise political conjuncture, and naturally on the forces available.

In each concrete case it is necessary to establish a healthy, reasonable balance between objective and subjective possibilities and, in the final analysis, between agitation and propaganda.

So far as Bolivia especially is concerned, where the experience and possibilities of independent work were pushed further than elsewhere with such remarkable and promising success, the main thing to be noted is the following: In all cases where our organizations are called upon by revolutionary developments in their respective countries to actually play from now on their role as genuine mass revolutionary parties, they will only be able to successfully carry out this task to the degree that they succeed in forging a solid organization in struggle which is profoundly rooted among the working class and the poor peasantry.

The conquest of the masses for the revolution cannot be made simply around program and ideas, regardless of how broad the influence of the party is, but through the organization and day-to-day mobilization of the masses by members of the party recruited from their ranks and living in their midst. Strengthening, proletarianizing the party, training new cadres, transforming the entire organization into an instrument of struggle, becomes an essential task in all cases where the quality and the role of the party becomes at a certain moment the condition of victory.

These comments are also valid for the Ceylonese organization and which must knit together its organizational structure, temper itself, proletarianize and politicalize itself.

In the *United States* the Trotskyist organization is now subjected to the effects of an economic situation favorable to the bourgeoisie and from a reactionary political atmosphere, accentuated by the victory of the Republican Administration. This is in sharp and striking contrast with the rest of the world. Its essential task consists in coping with the present difficult stage with the greatest tactical ingenuity while in no way sacrificing its future possibilities. This means that while all possibilities for activity and recruitment should be ingeniously exploited, so as to break out of isolation and stagnation, no matter on how modest a scale (according to conditions of time and place), it should maintain and strengthen its presence within the big trade union organizations, the CIO in particular, in whose crucible there is still being forged the political destiny of the great American masses, and of exploiting therein to the maximum every chance, every possibility of trade union activity, of agitation and of mobilization of the masses even for their most elementary demands or for the extension of trade union organization or of its better functioning.

A healthy, reasonable relationship should be maintained between propagandist and direct agitational activity, work in the trade unions and work in any milieu offering opportunities or contact with advanced elements, and of immediate recruitment. Herein is the test of the ingenuity, the flexibility and the capacities of its leadership.

In regard to the perspectives of development in the United States, if uncertainty can still remain for some time concerning a change in the economic and social conjuncture, which is now favorable to the bourgeoisie that benefits from it, the impasse toward which this bourgeoisie is moving internationally can no longer be placed in a remote future. If the difficulties which American imperialism is now encountering internationally impede its war plans and cause it to hesitate and postpone the unleashing of the war for a period, then economic and social crisis threatens to break out in the United States.

If on the other hand these difficulties plunge Washington into war, the international relationship of forces which

is so unfavorable to imperialism will quickly make itself felt with the same results so far as the domestic situation in the United States is concerned: a social crisis of an even more acute character.

This means that in any case the perspective of impasse toward which American imperialism is now inevitably moving within a relatively brief time interval, as well as the consequences which flow from this, should constantly clarify the orientation of the American organization.

The "These on the American Revolution," adopted by the organization at the end of 1946 have not been invalidated, although they have still to be realized. They constitute an essential document in the programmatic arsenal of the American organization. There should not be the slightest decrease in the unshakeable confidence which all members of the SWP should have in the capacity of the Trotskyist-Bolshevik nucleus, patiently created through long effort in that country, to serve as the basic nucleus of the revolutionary Marxist mass party of tomorrow and to block the road to any centrist non-revolutionary-Marxist, provisional leadership of the masses.

* * *

Regarding work toward movements and formations under reformist influence:

A number of our organizations, among them those in *England, Germany, India, Japan, Canada, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Holland* (and, in perspective, for all our organizations and groups in Scandinavia) have plunged into this work seriously and with remarkable success.

Without succumbing to mere activism or opportunism they are carrying it out on the whole, intelligently and with flexibility.

However, as the first phase of integration in these movements and organizations has been more or less accomplished, it is necessary in all these cases in a general way to soon publish and assure the existence of a completely Trotskyist theoretical organ, that is, one which fully develops our line and which seeks every occasion to mention the name and work of Leon Trotsky, the name, the existence and the program of the Fourth International, and to draw attention to them. Naturally such a publication should not be confused with periodicals which are not fully Trotskyist and are published or will be published inside these movements and in order to promote the work within these movements.

Parallel to this task the publication programs of all these organizations should be developed with the aim of publishing works of our Trotskyist literature in the language of their countries as well as the writings of our national leaders on the problems of the working class movements of their country.

In addition the revolutionary Marxist and Trotskyist education especially of their cadres and members in general should be conceived of as an essential, permanent task which should be carried out by means of classes, schools, seminars, systematic and organized lecture series.

The question of recruitment poses a problem for almost all of these organizations. If this question had to be subordinated at the first stage for the primary task of integration and security, it is also obvious that later on the expansion of work necessitates a larger membership; in any case it cannot be projected, maintained and carried out without augmenting the Trotskyist fraction as such.

The idea of being able to influence and even lead a broad mass movement without a relative increase of the Trotskyist fraction will prove totally inoperative and can give rise to a false conception of entrist work as a whole.

The attention of certain organizations should be drawn to the following special recommendations:

In *England,* the task of our organization is to organize around a lively, timely and completely revolutionary Marxist organ all elements who are now moving actually or potentially from reformism, centrism, Stalinism, toward full revolutionary Marxist positions.

The understanding of these conceptions is being greatly facilitated, and will be even more so in the future by the entire development of the English workers' movement itself which is immersed in the more and more markedly favorable international revolutionary situation.

In *Germany,* the organization should resolve as quickly as possible two important questions: The building of an effective leadership team whose nucleus will be responsible for daily activity, an improved circulation and self-financing (to an increasing degree) of the magazine, the principal medium of Trotskyism in Germany.

In *India* the problem is to put life into the Socialist Party, to root it among the working masses of the country, particularly the organized masses, as well as among the peasant masses by imbuing in it a combative spirit, arming it with a clear line on all important foreign and domestic questions. This will open the real possibility, even an unhoped-for chance, to channelize through it the rising revolutionary mass movement of the country and to block the road to any subsequent progress of the CP or the PSP. "S.A." can contribute enormously to these tasks by taking shape not so much as a discussion organ on eclectic themes but as an instrument for party building centered around the urgent problems of the working-class and peasant movement of the country, and of the problems of the coming Indian revolution.

Regarding work towards movements and mass formations influenced by Stalinism:

We are going through a new experience in this sphere in which the most noteworthy results have been obtained up to now in *France, Italy* and *Vietnam.*

Although work in this sphere began relatively late, with limited forces (especially in France as a result of the split), without sufficient preparation and especially without previous experience in this new field of work, the results obtained up to now have been conclusive and satisfactory.

As was expected, it has already been proved that this work is possible, that it permits a rapid integration of our elements who were previously isolated, into the movement and formations which, in all these countries, polarize by far the majority of the active masses and for the first time permits their transformation into leaders of working-class sectors which are incomparably more important and more promising than any of those in the past.

It is now also proved that the principal difficulties in this sphere of work do not arise so much from obstacles put in the way of our integration by the Stalinist leadership (at least for all our elements who were not known nationally as being among the outstanding Trotskyist

leaders). The principal difficulties have rather arisen from the youth of many of our members and especially from inexperience in how to conduct themselves tactically in this new field as well as in real mass work.

Despite these obstacles, which are primarily of a subjective kind, a large number of our members in these countries have already been able to integrate themselves, to carry out the responsibilities of leadership on different levels, to adjust themselves in their individual conduct. This has also already led to a very perceptible transformation of the general internal atmosphere of our organizations in these countries.

Particularly interesting are the results obtained in trade union work and in the activity of our members in factores; the new tactic permitted them to effectively break out of isolation, to link themselves to broader masses of workers influenced by the Stalinists and to be designated to various trade union posts.

In *Vietnam* our members have easily been able to find their way toward integration into more and more responsible posts within the broad movement of the masses struggling for their national and social liberation.

It was almost inevitable that in the first stage, which aimed at the integration of our members and in their proving themselves the most capable and active members, the activity of the independent sector should have been slowed down.

But everything that has been said pertaining to entrist work within mass movements and formations under reformist influence is even more valid for entrist work of a special type.

Entrist work proper cannot acquire its full significance unless it is constantly clarified by the work of the independent sector. Consequently, the question of establishing a healthy and reasonable relationship between the two sectors is very important and should be constantly reviewed by the leaderships. In particular, publication activity of our organizations carried out through the most frequent possible issuance of their fully Trotskyist papers and magazines, through the publication of Trotskyist books and pamphlets, as well as their broadest distribution possible is a task which cannot be slowed down in any way whatever. On the contrary, it should be consolidated and further developed. Only the outbreak of war would cause a change of such a relationship between the independent and entrist sectors which would be much more marked in the favor of the latter.

In addition, to the degree that entrist work develops and roots our members more deeply in circles influenced by the Stalinists and brings them to positions of higher leadership, they will feel a growing pressure at the same time from these circles which has to be fought by constantly raising the theoretical and political level of our members, and in reality by their transformation into genuine Trotskyist cadres who are completely trained in the programmatic principles, line and perspectives of the International.

Only such a training, only such a transformation of our organizations carrying on entrist work into real cadre organizations can immunize our militants from any corrupting reformist or Stalinist influence.

* * *

The International as a whole is now experiencing the most important progress since its birth. It is in the process almost everywhere of marching along with the real movement of the masses, of distinguishing itself from this movement only as a conscious vanguard, as its revolutionary Marxist conscience.

By persevering on this road the International is preparing within the framework of our precise revolutionary perspectives its definitive triumph.

We reply as follows to those who object that our tactic dissolves us into the various movements and blurs if not effaces the perspectives of the International as such:

The Fourth International was launched after the historic events, culminating in the defeat of the German working class without a struggle before Hitler (1928-33), demonstrated that it was then absolutely illusory to conceive of a revolutionary Marxist theoretical regeneration of the Third International dominated by Stalinism, that is by the ideology of the Soviet bureaucracy.

The launching of the Fourth International was not an arbitrary act, but a necessity which flowed from the logic of the events, which corresponded to the new needs. It represented the clear formulation and the practical defense by fractions of conscious revolutionary Marxist militants on five continents of the program of revolutionary Marxism, which had been betrayed and abandoned by the Stalinists.

This program, moreover, has not remained static, elaborated for all time. On the basis of a number of principles of revolutionary Marxism formulated by Marx and Lenin and then by Trotsky, it is being constantly elaborated, it is developing, it is being enriched by the new revolutionary experiences of the masses and of new world developments. But if it is to remain as such, that is to say, if it is to remain alive, constantly incorporating new elements, it has to exist not only as an intangible text elaborated by this person or that but as a collective theoretical and political activity of a world proletarian revolutionary vanguard effectively participating in the movement and in the real struggles of the masses.

Hence the necessity of the Fourth International is conceived not only as a program but also as an organized vanguard of the international proletariat without which the program runs the risk of remaining a dead-letter and ossifying.

Moreover, the usefulness and the effectiveness in action of limited groups of revolutionary militants should not be minimized even at the present time when they still represent small minorities of the class and of its political formations.

The Fourth International has acted not only as a program, as a living force capable of continuing to elaborate the program of revolutionary Marxism, but also as a political force acting at the present time, spreading correct ideas, catalyzing the revolutionary energies of the class in specific spheres where the entire class can be enlisted, facilitating progress toward genuine revolutionary Marxism on the part of still confused centrist elements in the entire proletarian vanguard.

It suffices to view the daily activity of the sections of the Fourth International throughout the world in the past to perceive the perfect correctness of this appraisal of the role of the Fourth International. We have disseminated cor-

rect ideas, we have contributed toward catalyzing the revolutionary energy of the masses at a given stage, in a given country, in given factories, in given trade unions; we have contributed toward facilitating the evolution of confused centrist elements of the vanguard toward revolutionary Marxism (as for example in the results of past entrist work).

But the role of the Fourth International is not even limited to that. To the degree that the world revolutionary upsurge continues to spread and moves toward the world victory of the proletarian revolution and of socialism, *the program and organization of the International will be validated.*

The world victory of the proletarian revolution and of socialism cannot be conceived as the arithmetical sum of partial victories obtained through *centrist* programs and formations. It will be *the victory of full revolutionary Marxism.*

The objective revolutionary process, the extreme aggravation of the crisis of capitalism, a kind of self-decomposition, can here or there facilitate the seizure of power, the victory even of a centrist party. But the world victory of socialism cannot be conceived of as the effect of partial, conjunctural, exceptional victories of such a type.

In reality the quality of the program, of the ideas, of the leadership of the revolution have to change, have to draw closer to a revolutionary Marxist program and leadership so that the revolution, encompassing more culturally and economically developed regions and masses, can triumph and consolidate itself.

In this sense the evolution toward the world victory of the revolution and of socialism is drawing closer to the Fourth International. It is drawing closer first of all in the sphere of program and ideas. For the program and the ideas of the Fourth International are none other than *those of revolutionary Marxism applied to our epoch.*

Despite empirical waverings and errors, anyone who seriously takes part in the revolution is obliged to more or less come over to this program and these ideas. The development of the colonial revolution and the victory in China in particular is a masterful demonstration of the correctness of the Trotskyist revolutionary Marxist theory of the Permanent Revolution. Thus the Chinese CP has found itself and is now obliged to bend its policy in practice in a manner which approximates the fundamental positions of Trotskyism.

The recent developments in the USSR and the buffer zone since Stalin's death are another masterful illustration of the program and of the ideas of the Fourth International regarding the USSR, the Soviet bureaucracy, the nature and the future of Stalinism

We can say that the logic of the international situation, of its development, is Trotskyist, Fourth Internationalist.

At a higher stage of the world revolution, now inevitable, the conversion of still-confused centrist programs and ideas into genuine revolutionary Marxism, that is to say, into complete Trotskyism, will appear still more clearly. In this sense the inevitable victory of the program and the ideas of the Fourth International is inseparable from the world victory of the revolution.

But what is to be said of the Fourth International as an organization?

Naturally the world victory of the revolution will not be the exclusive work of the present national nuclei of the Fourth International but of their close fusion with broader revolutionary forces. From this fusion there will arise new revolutionary mass parties of tomorrow, as well as a new form of the world party, of the International.

In this organic process, our contribution is simultaneously that of *program, ideas and cadres.* Despite their limited number, the Trotskyist cadres constitute important nuclei, in some places already even decisive ones for the formation of mass revolutionary parties. And this is not only because of their ideas but also and perhaps even more because of their already serious integration into the real mass movement of each country.

Wherever the mass movement is in some way independent, where neither Stalinism nor reformism constitute a major obstacle, the Trotskyists should play and already play (as in Bolivia, in Latin America in general, in Ceylon, etc.) the role of the real revolutionary mass party upon which the victory of the revolution in these countries depends in the next years.

Elsewhere they operate within the real movement of the masses influenced by the reformists or the Stalinists as conscious elements catalyzing both the revolutionary energy of the broad masses and the molecular processes which are at work in the consciousness of the most advanced elements.

Therefore we can say in summary that the role of the Fourth International consists now as in the past in maintaining alive, in constant development, the program and the ideas of revolutionary Marxism, in catalyzing the revolutionary activity of at least certain sectors of the class through the daily activity of its members rooted in the real movement of the masses in each country, in aiding the ideological progress of other and still confused elements of the vanguard so as to bring out from them the broadest revolutionary forces for the building of mass revolutionary Marxist parties in these countries, of leading the struggle from today on in certain countries at the head of the masses for the conquest of power and the victory of the revolution.

Therefore the Fourth International on the plane of program as well as of action appears as the most conscious organized force which will the most effectively contribute to the complete world victory of the revolution and of socialism.

This victory, on the other hand, as it is realized, will identify itself with the victory of the Fourth International.

June 1953

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2. "From the Third to the Fourth World Congress," by Michel Pablo

October, 1953

Why has the Third World Congress been an event in the history of our international movement? Because with the help of events (especially the triumph of the Chinese revolution, the new upsurge of the colonial revolution and the war in Korea) as well as the experience and maturity acquired by our movement in all its activity, especially since the last war, we succeeded in fully setting forth a series of fundamental conclusions—which had already entered into our thought—for our orientation, our perspectives, our action in the real movement of the masses.

To appraise the achievement of the Third World Congress at its just value, we must compare it with what we previously said, with the way in which up to then we understood the essential factors in the objective situation, in our perspectives and in our activity amongst the masses for the construction of the revolutionary Party and the triumph of the Revolution. We shall be led to return to this comparison later in the development of the international discussion. For the moment it will suffice to recall on what specific questions we progressed at the time of the Third World Congress:

a. On the change in the global relation of forces between capitalism and imperialism on the one side and the Revolution under all its forms on the other, evolving favorably for the latter.

b. On the acceleration of the war preparations of imperialism in order to cope with its difficulties and in the last analysis the threat of the Revolution with armed force.

c. On the class character of the war being prepared by imperialism.

d. Of its rapid transformation, within such a global relation of forces, into an international civil war, into Revolution.

e. On the position of our movement taken toward the Soviet Union, the other anti-capitalist states and Stalinism in general.

f. On the repercussions of such a relation of forces, of such an evolution toward war (war of such a character) within the organized workers' movement.

g. Notably on the repercussions within Stalinism.

h. On our tactic for building the Marxist-revolutionary mass Party under these conditions, in this given period with these given perspectives.

Let us dwell a little more on each of these points.

The Question of the Relation of Forces

The basis of all politics, that is to say, of all conscious subjective action, is a correct appraisal of the *objective conditions*, that is to say, of the whole of the *factors external* to ourselves, to ourselves the Party (or the nucleus of the Party as we still are in most cases). Among these external factors there is also included more especially the state of the working class and the colonial masses, their mentality, their degree of consciousness, their present political organization.

The fundamental, elementary movement of the class is determined by the totality of *these given objective conditions*. Primed in its development and impelled by these objective conditions, the class raises itself to consciousness of the historical conditions in which it is operating and the aims it has to achieve. Herein is the process of historical creation, through the struggle of the classes (product of the objective conditions of capitalism) of the Revolutionary Party.

This latter thus created, intervenes in its turn in the class struggle as a factor which determines it in part, accelerates or retards it (according to whether it follows a correct or wrong policy), and even intervenes as a decisive factor to assure victory, transforming a pre-revolutionary period into a revolutionary one, or a revolutionary one into insurrection, with a specific aim: the conquest of power.

When the mass Marxist revolutionary Party already exists, its functioning is an active factor in the whole of the situation, constantly acting both on the objective conditions characterizing the state of the economy, politics and the international relations of the bourgeoisie as well as on the mentality and consciousness of the masses.

But the concrete case for our international movement is one where such parties do not as a rule yet exist, or where it is precisely the problem to create them. Our principal ally in this task is the existence of objectively favorable conditions propelling the masses into struggle despite the absence of mass Marxist revolutionary parties and despite the obstacle of the traditional reformist and Stalinist leaderships.

Hence the necessity and importance of a correct appraisal of the objective conditions and of their result on the terrain of the class struggle, that is to say, of the relation of global forces between capitalism and the Revolution.

What is called the equilibrium of the capitalist regime is made and unmade by determining forces other than that of the mass revolutionary Party. Neither economic crises, nor wars, nor the first phases of the Revolution are phenomena determined by the preceding existence of the mass Marxist-revolutionary Party. All these phenomena are caused by the laws of the operation and evolution of the capitalist regime and their repercussions on the masses determining the fundamental elementary class movement of the latter.

The Third World Congress has specified that *the relation of global forces* between the forces of Reaction and the Revolution are *evolving favorably for the latter and will remain so during the entire present period and up to the war.*

This is what *fundamentally* marks off the present period from that which immediately preceded the last war. And this is what in its turn essentially modifies the conditions and perspectives for the creation of genuine mass Marxist-revolutionary parties.

On the eve of the last war the equilibrium and stability (to be sure relative) of the capitalist regime were quite different from now. The capitalist and imperialist regime dominated the world except for the USSR. This latter was still only at the beginnings of its industrialization and the internal relation of forces between the masses

and bureaucracy was clearly in favor of the bureaucracy. The colonial domain maintained itself almost intact, firmly subjected to the control of imperialism. The metropolitan proletariat, because of a series of major defeats in Italy, Germany, Spain, France, was in full retreat. Trotsky said: "We are living" in a period of "colossal reaction."

The present period, which is preceding imperialism's regroupment of its forces in order to restore its equilibrium and to prevent by war a more ample development of the world Revolution, is fundamentally different. Eighthundred millions, almost one-third of humanity, live under an anti-capitalist regime which has irreparably undermined the equilibrium of capitalism. The USSR is no longer that of the Thirties. In itself it represents a gigantic force, with its 42 million proletarians, its industrial production which will soon equal that of Germany, England and France combined, and the still unexhausted, immense possibilities — despite its bureaucratic administration — of its nationalized and planned economy.

In Asia the New China is already emerging as a world power which has been capable of victoriously coping with the attempts of the most powerful imperialism, American imperialism, to crush it through the Korean war before it could consolidate itself. What remains of the colonial domain of imperialism in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America is in full revolutionary crisis.

The metropolitan proletariat, despite the ground lost here and there since the end of the war, because of the treacherous policy of its traditional Stalinist and Social-Democratic leaderships, has nowhere been beaten in any decisive fashion, not even in the United States — the citadel of world reaction.

In Western Europe in particular a new revolutionary upsurge is in progress.

The global relation of forces between the capitalist regime and the Revolution in all its forms — anti-capitalist states, colonial Revolution, revolutionary workers' movement in the advanced countries — is incontestably favorable to the Revolution and there is no possibility that it can change around to its opposite in a decisive manner in the years ahead.

Compared with that of the eve of the last war, the global relation of forces is essentially, fundamentally different.

Whoever wants to understand what the *new* element of the present period consists in ought above all to understand to the very bottom the modifications which have been effected *on the terrain of the global relation of forces between capitalism and the Revolution, resulting from the new objective conditions* (despite the absence of genuine mass Marxist-revolutionary parties). The notion of the *global relation of forces* (in the last analysis the relation of forces between the classes) is established as a conception of the *average* on *the world scale* and for *an entire period.* Here and there the bourgeoisie, at a given moment, has scored, scores and will score victories (partial victories, will make advances since the development of the class struggle never follows a direct and uniform line. This is an elementary observation.

But what is the question here is *the global average,* that is to say on an international scale, *for an entire period,* of the evolution of the relation of forces. For that is what counts in the last analysis, the struggle and its outcome being *world-wide* (today more than ever), and is not split up into national sectors arithmetically and mechanically added one to the other in order to form the organic whole of *the world* and of *the international situation.*

The Third World Congress has not denied the efforts of imperialism — and the partial results obtained along this line — to change the relation of forces in its favor before unleashing the war and precisely in order to be able to launch it in the best possible conditions. On the contrary it clearly indicated on what precise points imperialism concentrated its efforts; that at least a relative stabilization of certain positions appeared indispensable to it. But at the same time the Third World Congress clearly indicated that imperialism would inevitably encounter in this effort to stabilize its positions in preparation for war an increased resistance from the masses, *which would prevent it from crushing them beforehand in any decisive way.*

According to the Third World Congress, the entire period before the Third World War, far from being an empty period from the viewpoint of revolutionary events or marked by decisive defeats of the proletariat, even on certain restricted sectors, would on the contrary be a period of inevitable revolutionary resistance of the masses, maintaining *in its totality,* on a global scale, the relation of forces *favorable to the Revolution.*

Events up to now have only brilliantly illustrated this conception of the world evolution.

On the Acceleration of Imperialism's War Preparations, Its Character and Its Transformation

Certain people have extracted from this observation the conclusion that the war of imperialism would then become impossible. They still have in mind the old schema that imperialism passes to preparation for war and above all to its unleashing only after having crushed the proletariat and colonial masses in a decisive manner.

This was true in the past, before the last war, when that was still possible and when it was above all a question of *inter-imperialist* wars.

Today capitalism in its whole, independently of its internal, inter-imperialist contradictions which are entirely real and at moments relatively important, confronts the threat of Revolution in all its forms (let us repeat them): anti-capitalist states, colonial Revolution, revolutionary workers' movement of the advanced countries. War, armed struggle is its ultimate means of struggle against the world Revolution on the march — if one excludes the hypothesis that it can surrender without a struggle.

We have a permanent illustration of this notion of the war against the Revolution and the dialectical conjuncture of war-Revolution, in the consistent attitude of American imperialism in particular, the most conscious, the strongest, the most capable of reaction, which fights with arms in hand every actual or potential new step of the Revolution in the world: in Korea, Turkey, Greece, Iran, Vietnam.

American imperialism is constantly confronted with the advance posts of the world Revolution and strives to halt it by the most brutal violence. American imperialism did not enter upon "the cold war" after feeling itself strong — the first wave of the European revolution from 1943

to 1947 having been conquered because of the treachery of the Stalinist leadership in particular — but once it realized how much the global relation of forces issuing from the war was unfavorable to it, how much the line of division between the Kremlin and itself had become unacceptable, how much the Kremlin despite everything was holding strictly to it, and how profoundly the capitalist equilibrium had been broken.

American imperialism went into the "cold war" after having realized that, despite the treacheries of the Kremlin, the existence of the USSR, the new anti-capitalist states, the rising colonial revolutions and of the revolutionary workers' movement were feeding the World Revolution with forces which were escaping from strict control of both Washington and the Kremlin and in their dynamic were menacing the capitalist system to its very foundations.

The "cold war" was the inevitable and unique reply of imperialism to the basic disequilibrium issuing from the Second World War which has been aggravated incessantly. For no matter what disposition the Kremlin had to compromise, the relations between imperialism and the Revolution, of which the anti-capitalist states are an essential part, can less than ever be even provisionally regulated on any such basis: the compromise for the Kremlin consisting — as has become more and more clear — in a *status quo* on the basis of the present division of the world which is unacceptable for imperialism.

The accelerated preparation for war by imperialism, the extension of its air and naval bases throughout the world, its rearmament, the regrouping of all the forces of reaction into a Holy Alliance from Syngman Rhee to Franco is not being accomplished thanks to and because of a stabilization of the capitalist regime itself resulting from a series of decisive defeats of the proletariat and the colonial masses. Quite the contrary. It is being carried on under the sign of a struggle for "survival," as the expression of the blind alley into which capitalism has arrived, as the sole means of dealing with its difficulties, with its disequilibrium, with the threats of further inevitable advances of the revolution.

What is involved is the preparation under *new conditions*, unknown in the past, of a war of a *new* class character. It is likewise necessary to understand that down to the very bottom. From the class character of the war in preparation, war on the part of the united forces of imperialism against the Revolution, the Third World Congress set forth *the perspective of its rapid transformation into international civil war, into Revolution.*

On the Specific Question of our Movement in the Face of the Soviet Union, the Other Anti-Capitalist States and Stalinism in General

The Third World Congress, placed before this appraisal and these perspectives of the international situation, correctly believed it imperiously necessary to redefine in clear terms our principled position toward the USSR, the European "Peoples Democracies," China and the revolutionary movements headed by the Stalinist or Stalinized leaderships of the Communist Party. It unequivocally declared for the unconditional defense of all these anti-capitalist states against imperialism. It recognized them, as well as the colonial Revolution and the revolutionary movement of the proletariat in the advanced countries, as an integral part of the world proletarian Revolution expressing itself in all these forms and forces. It categorically rejected any idea of "a third camp," "a third force," etc. between the united forces of imperialism and the whole of the above-mentioned forms and forces of the Revolution. It thereupon insisted upon the necessary distinction between the elements entering into the current conception of Stalinism: the Soviet bureaucracy, Communist parties, revolutionary movements of the masses headed by the Communist parties.

These elements form a unity, but are far from being identical. Stalinism is above all the conservative political expression, which in the global balance of its international action is counter-revolutionary in the last analysis, of the Soviet bureaucracy and its special interests. To confuse at every time and in every place the Soviet bureaucracy with the Communist parties and the mass movements they direct, to place all that under one common denominator: Stalinism, can have as a result quite simply the misunderstanding of the face of a Revolution, as was the case in Yugoslavia and in China; to pass over to the sidelines and to become imprisoned in a literally fatal sectarianism, and in any event to become incapable of understanding the movement of the masses in a series of countries and circumstances. That is the way it happened during the war with the Resistance movements in a number of European and Asiatic countries and that is now the case with the colonial Revolution in certain Asiatic countries.

In the event of the new war, whose character and perspectives we have already analyzed, a similar confusion runs the risk of multiplying the errors of the past and this time without any excuse.

Some people find the distinction between the Soviet bureaucracy, the Communist parties and the mass movements directed by the latter in the domain of neglible subleties. They prefer rounded-out and summary notions which are more easily manageable and guarantee against any possible "pro-Stalinist" sin. But in reality the distinction is of capital interest from the viewpoint of tactics, orientation and perspectives, and all the experience we have lived through during and after the war and all that of the current concrete work in a series of countries amply demonstrates its importance.

These constituent elements of what we summarily denominate as Stalinism, now tend, following the new phase in which the USSR and the Soviet bureaucracy itself has entered, to become further differentiated in their unity. All the more reason to still more firmly uphold the importance of their distinction.

We will return to this question when we speak of the preparatory documents for the Fourth World Congress.

Why was it necessary to redefine our principled position toward the USSR, the anti-capitalist states and Stalinism in general? Both because of the evolution of the international situation toward a decisive struggle between the two social camps, and the danger of deviations on this subject in our movement under the pressure of hostile social forces. It was necessary to understand to the bottom the extreme polarization which has been produced since the last war between the social forces in struggle and to adhere

with an equally extreme firmness to the camp of the Revolution, comprising all its forms; anti-capitalist states, colonial Revolution, revolutionary workers' movements in advanced countries. For a movement still so relatively weak as ours, not having as yet deeply penetrated into its class and found a solid footing there, caught between the pressures of opposing classes which in the last analysis are profoundly hostile to one another, there has been and always is an entirely real and important danger of deviating, if only slightly at the beginning, from a correct class position. During this period, the most critical in the whole history of the workers' movement (but at the same time the most promising), to resist all deviationist temptations which carry us away from the camp of the Revolution; to cope internationally and in each national sector with reactionary pressures; to reject categorically and firmly the so-called politics of the "third force" and the "third camp"—camouflage or preparation for gliding toward the side of imperialism—was and remains for us the supreme test of the profound revolutionary essence of our program and our action.

It was also necessary to demonstrate that our movement, far from acquiring a character of dogmatism and sectarian ossification, was capable of constantly renewing its theoretical thought; of assimilating the new elements produced by objective evolution, facts, events; to estimate the fundamental revolutionary process of our period at its full value, despite its sinuous and original paths, not foreseen in the past; in a word demonstrating that it is the genuine and only Marxist-revolutionary movement in theoretical elaboration and practical revolutionary activity.

Certain of our forces operate in the sectors where the power of counter-revolutionary imperialism is still concentrated: the United States, England, Germany.

They have the duty of adhering more firmly than elsewhere to our principled positions on the Soviet Union, the other anti-capitalist states and Stalinism in general, despite the formidable hostile pressure which imperialism subjects them to in diverse degrees in these countries through and including a public opinion considerably shaped by it. In all these countries, the duty of our organizations is to resolutely concentrate their attacks first of all and by far against their own imperialism and to unmask with the utmost energy its reactionary threats and war preparations—not in a vague and general way, but by specifying that they are directed against the Soviet Union, the other anti-capitalist states, the colonial Revolution and the revolutionary workers' movement; to clearly make the distinction between the anti-capitalist social structure of the Soviet Union, the European "Peoples Democracies," China and their temporary Stalinist or Stalinized leaderships; to resolutely speak our for the defense of these states as well as for every revolutionary movement, every revolutionary struggle, independently of its provisional Stalinist or Stalinized leadership as in the cases of the Korean or Viet-namese wars; to unmask the actions of imperialism in cases like that of Iran, or of Eastern Germany with the operation—among others—of Eisenhower's food packages; to occasionally ally themselves in a united front with Stalinist organizations against imperialist repression.

All that is naturally especially applicable to the activity of the Trotskyist organization in the United States, the citadel of international reaction, the principal base of the imperialist war against the Soviet Union, the other anti-capitalist states, the colonial Revolution, the revolutionary workers' movement where what is involved for a period is to effect a united front with the revolutionary forces, in all their forms, abroad against the principal enemy at home.

In all these cases what counts is not anti-imperialist declarations in general but the concrete manner, the precise nuance, the precise accent of our analyses, our campaigns and our articles.

For example, if in the United States the Trotskyists appear to cry out immoderately above all and in every circumstance against the Stalinists, making them responsible above all for everything: for the fall of Mossedegh in Iran, for the victory of Adenauer in Western Germany; if, taking as a pretext the bureaucratic and oppressive policy of the political regime in Eastern Germany, they justify the operation of Eisenhower's food packages—forgetting that the struggle in East Germany between the masses and the bureaucracy is unfolding in any event in the more general framework of the "cold war" and the political character of the food-package operation; if they do not resolutely undertake from the beginning the defense of the Stalinists persecuted above all as Communists and defenders of the USSR in the United States; if they hesitate to propose a united front to them against this repression; if in a word, by a skillful dosing of nuances and accents, they appear anxious to indemnify themselves in any way from any suspicion of more energetically defending than any other sector the Soviet Union the other anti-capitalist states, China, as well as from all compromising contact with the American Stalinists, it could only be concluded that the American Trotskyists are yielding to hostile class pressure in the United States.

But the line of the Third World Congress was precisely defined with the aim of avoiding such deviations *under any pretext whatsoever.*

On the Repercussions of the Relation of Forces and the Situation within the Organized Workers' Movement, and Stalinism in Particular

The Third World Congress affirmed that within the framework of an international situation evolving toward a decisive struggle, the polarization of opposing social forces would be accentuated in each country, provoking an organizational tightening of the masses around their traditional mass organizations, reformist or Stalinist. That it was consequently not necessary to expect—as the most probable variant—organizational mass breaks and new political regroupments outside these organizations, but rather—for an entire first period—ideological fermentation, a political ripening, differentiations and regroupings within these organizations and mass currents. That their leaderships, forced by the march of events and the consequent pressure of the masses upon them, could not go squarely against the stream but would be obliged to relatively "radicalize" their policy, in any event taking account of the aspirations and reactions of their ranks (and not strictly of the interests of the bourgeoisie or of the Soviet bureaucracy).

This supplementary consideration, the Third World Congress affirmed, would operate along the line of an organizational tightening and not the breaking up of the traditional organizations and currents.

This entire perspective has been fully verified both in respect to the reformists as well as the Stalinist mass organizations.

Examples:

The British Labor Party and its Bevanist tendency; the German Social Democracy polarizing the essential mass of the German proletariat at the last elections; the Belgian, Austrian and Dutch Social Democracies; the French CP and the Marty-Tillon case which occurred without any important organizational break; the Italian Communist Party and its new gains at the recent elections.

Only sectarian parrots, perched on the dry branch of solitude — and baptized for compensation *the Independent Revolutionary Party and its mass activity* — have supposedly seen or predicted (how many times the poor souls!) the end of these organizations, their breakup, splits, centrifugal mass currents, etc. in the process of going toward them — them, the Party, the Leadership, increasing their ranks, etc.

Meanwhile, they have avoided the only possible work for the formation of the genuine mass Revolutionary Party of tomorrow, that within these organizations and currents.

Agreement on the appraisal and predictions of the International concerning the consequences of the evolution of the objective situation and its perspectives on the mass Social-Democratic organizations and currents have shown themselves to be in one sense, in our ranks, easier than that on the Stalinist mass organizations and currents.

Some have been much more ready to recognize the organizational tightening and the relative "radicalization" of the Social Democracy than the same phenomena within the Stalinist mass organizations and currents.

This is in effect a strange reaction which at bottom denotes a "Stalinophobia" which is not entirely dissipated, that is to say, repulsion of a sectarian character from the Stalinist current which our movement has, however, always considered, Trotsky first of all, as an integral part of the workers' movement, differing "only to its own advantage" from the Social Democracy in particular!

For the most elementary reflection ought to make it easily understood that Stalinism cannot but be placed — in the big capitalist countries — for an entire period, that of the "cold war" and the preparation for war as such against the Soviet Union and the other anti-capitalist states, only *farther to the left of the Social Democracy.*

On the other hand, did we ever have the idea of comparing the "radicalization" of the policy of the Social Democracy at any given moment with the consistent Marxist-revolutionary line we represent? Naturally not. This "radicalization" exists only compared with the previous course of a given Social Democratic organization. Even in the best of cases it would not surpass the limits of a left centrism. Nevertheless, it remains of no less concern and highly exploitable by the revolutionary-Marxist tendency employing an adequate tactic.

It is the same with the mass Stalinist organizations and currents. Their "radicalization" under the pressure of the "cold war" and their mass base, does not mean that they are aligning themselves with the Marxist-revolutionary tendency, that they are adopting a genuine left policy. The comparison has meaning only when referred to the previous course of these organizations and currents. But its interest is no less great above all in relation to the possibilities and perspectives it offers to the Marxist-revolutionary tendency employing the tactic of entrism of a special type.

The "radicalization" is a consequence and an index of the objective conditions favorable for the formation of left centrist currents within the traditional mass organizations, despite the obstacle of the bureaucratic and opportunist elements of their leaderships, the inevitable first stage of the formation of revolutionary-Marxist consciousness in the best elements of the masses and of the more revolutionary orientation of their whole.

On the Creation of the Revolutionary-Marxist Party in these Conditions and Perspectives

The tactical conclusions from the general appraisal of the situation and of its perspectives drawn by the Third World Congress itself and then by the Tenth Plenum which closely followed it were very rich. The way toward a complete integration of our forces in the real movement of the masses was everywhere considerably opened and sectarianism attacked in its most hidden entrenchments.

Possibly the whole of our movement did not realize at one stroke all the consequences and the really new way of envisaging our work amongst the masses and the creation of a genuine Marxist-revolutionary Party. We shall see more clearly into this domain during the preparatory discussion for the Fourth World Congress on the text submitted on "Our Integration into the Real Movement of the Masses" which reviews, deepens and amplifies the tactic proclaimed by the Third World Congress and the Tenth Plenum.

It is not at all adequate to proclaim at every moment the need for the mass Marxist-revolutionary Party and of the Fourth International to resolve the crisis of leadership from which humanity suffers and thus to assure the triumph of the world Revolution and Socialism. It is necessary to know how to have this idea penetrate among the hundreds and thousands of elements necessary to build such a party in each country, organized meanwhile for the most part into reformism and Stalinism.

In the present concrete historical conditions, the variant which is more and more the least probable is the one where the masses, disillusioned by the reformists and Stalinists, break with their traditional mass organizations to come to polarize themselves around our present nuclei, the latter acting exclusively and essentially *in an independent manner, from without.* There are only very limited cases in our movement, especially those of Ceylon and Bolivia, which justify such a hope thanks to the advance already made by our organizations in these countries and the relative weakness of any other organized workers' movement. Naturally on condition, even in these special cases, that our organizations pass successfully the test to which history is now submitting them which demands from them to effectively fulfill their role as revolutionary mass Parties capable of organizing and leading the masses to the conquest of power. Elsewhere however the road which

will lead to the creation of revolutionary mass Parties will not be direct but in all probability will pass through detours and turnings which will demand tactical capacities (political in the last analysis) of flexibility and boldness, having the general form of a more or less prolonged and more or less total entrism.

Even for the category of countries where we have considered that the essential work ought to be *independent* in the present period, like those in Latin America or the United States, that does not mean that one can think of being able to conduct themselves from now on exactly "in the Bolivian manner" and excluding any eventuality of entrist work. The document presented for the Third World Congress on "Our Integration into the Real Movement of the Masses" should dissipate all possible confusion on this subject.

It specifies that it is "very unlikely, even where reformism and Stalinism do not now constitute major political obstacles that the movement of the political maturing of the masses will develop in a straight line toward its polarization around our present nuclei. A work of more or less lengthy duration, essentially oriented in this or that milieu which polarizes the movement of the masses at the present stage, at no matter what level, is necessary."

This conception of the tactic for the creation of the revolutionary mass Party results from the understanding of the real process of the formation of the Party by the class itself, through its struggles and real experiences, from the comprehension of the real dialectical relations between the class and the Party. It is fundamentally differentiated from any sectarian or literary conception of what the Party is and how it is created.

In the atmosphere of the imperialist epoch in particular one can form groups of cadres under no matter what special conditions, even in countries which are still socially stable, even in the absence of a genuine revolutionary movement of the masses, by selecting them one by one here and there, by educating them in courses and through books. But that is far from representing the Party of the class. Here we as yet have only a nucleus of this Party which has still to link itself with much larger forces by striving to attract them to its program and which will pass its true tests only during the resumption of the real class struggle in the country.

It is through this process and this real struggle that the restricted number of cadres initially formed must prove to really be the cadres of the class, capable among other things of understanding the concrete political experiences of the latter from which its revolutionary mass Party will come in the final reckoning.

But has there not been the experience of the Bolshevik Party, a small nucleus of cadres, still isolated in 1917, which from February to October won over the masses thanks to a correct and audacious program and led them to the conquest of power? Could not our present independent nuclei, assisted by the objectively revolutionary conditions, repeat the same experience and ought they not to be above all inspired by this example?

First of all, the Bolshevik nucleus of 1917 was on a quite different scale and had a quite different experience than most of our present nuclei, counting thousands in its cadres and members formed in the crucible of the revolutionary struggle of the Russian masses through a long period of years, marked by strikes, insurrections, wars. Its members were selected and tempered in these struggles where they were recognized cadres of the class itself. Finally, the general historical conditions characterizing the international workers' movement, and the Russian workers' movement in particular in 1917, are no longer the same, were it only because of the subsequent existence of the Soviet Union and Stalinism. We will return later on to this question.

The nuclei of Marxist-revolutionists, already having had experience of the masses and armed with a correct understanding of their real movement, can in the circumstances of revolutionary upswing and where neither Stalinism nor reformism represent major obstacles, advance rapidly and become genuine mass currents.

But the case is entirely different now in the big capitalist countries, especially where a traditional mass movement exists, organized under reformist or Stalinist leadership.

The Contribution of the Documents for the Preparation of the Fourth World Congress

The line of the International is developing since the Third World Congress in the framework of the same fundamental considerations and perspectives. That of the global relation of forces evolving favorably to the Revolution and the general characteristics of the international situation being such as the Third World Congress defined them.

The two documents presented for the preparatory discussion of the Fourth World Congress, "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism" and "Our Integration in the Real Movement of the Masses," form a unity and endeavor to develop still more our revolutionary perspectives and our possibilities of creating in the new favorable objective conditions genuine mass Marxist-revolutionary parties.

The new events, or rather new developments have been those occurring above all in the USSR following Stalin's death, in the buffer countries and Stalinism in general.

If these were not foreseen in the precise form and details in which they were manifested (and in any event they could not have been foreseen in such a fashion), they were counted on as inevitable since the revolutionary dynamic of the international objective situation and the new conditions in which Stalinism has been placed since the last war were pushing in this direction. Our movement, ahead of any other political tendency, repeated many times in recent years that the equilibrium on which the Stalinist phenomenon had developed was irreparably broken, that the expansion of Stalinism, that is to say, the grip of the Soviet bureaucracy on the new anti-capitalist states and the Communist parties, must be understood dialectically as reinforcing the elements of ferment, crisis and breakup of Stalinism in the last analysis; that new revolutionary forces were rising up in the Soviet Union itself on the basis of the economic and cultural progress achieved.

For us, Stalinism began to decline before Stalin was dead.

We expected that the international revolutionary wave would manifest itself in one way or another in the USSR itself through the inevitable juncture of the external and internal revolutionary forces of the country. We foresaw

the disintegration and even the end of Stalinism during this period of the decisive struggle waged between imperialism and the Revolution in all its forms, rejecting with the utmost energy all the pessimistic lucubrations of the sectarian or right-wing currents on a so-called world domnation and consolidation of Stalinism for an entire historical period, that is to say, of the grip of the Soviet bureaucracy on the international workers' movement and the world Revolution.

Naturally we did not foresee the date of Stalin's death, an event that in its own way, because of the special role that personage played in the system of equilibrium of the Soviet bureaucracy and Stalinism in general, precipitated the entire development.

However, armed with a profound understanding of the totality of the general situation, of Stalinism and the new conditions in which the latter henceforth found itself situated, we were again the first to draw from Stalin's death a whole series of conclusions and perspectives. They are precisely set forth in the document "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism." They have already anticipated a series of events which have been produced since then and which sketch out the tendency.

Several comrades wanted this document to be shorter, summing up in theses form the essential points, clearly indicating the guiding line, insisting on the new sides and ideas to emphasize, and less on the well-known things which presumably had already been assimilated by our movement. But we preferred to present a longer document, a sort of global balance sheet of Stalinism since the birth of the phenomenon, in order to recall everything that had been said by our movement up to now on the question, justifying our general line on this subject and thus facilitating an understanding of why the new objective conditions and the new events determine the new phase of the disintegration of Stalinism and the new perspectives opened in the USSR, the other anti-capitalist states, the Communist parties and Stalinism in general.

We thus thought to forestall objections and possible misunderstandings from elements and currents which follow with some delay the general thought of the International. Really all that we say on the chapter of Stalinism ought normally to be an easily assimilable matter for the whole of the International, the entire programmatic preparation of our movement and all its revolutionary perspectives having proceeded along this line: that the objective conditions upon which the equilibrium of Stalinism was based in the past (before the last war) have changed both on the international plane and on the internal plane of the USSR; that the USSR is no longer either an isolated country, totally encircled by a powerful, relatively stable imperialism, or a backward country; that the imperialist encirclement is seriously broken through provoking a profound disequilibrium of the whole of the capitalist system; that the social structure of the USSR has been transformed with the creation of a powerful working class of 42 million technologically very developed individuals and that it has become the second industrial power in the world; that because of the overall effect of all these profound international and national changes the objective bases of the dictatorship (bonapartist bureaucratic) are in the process of rapidly disappearing; that the death of Stalin whose role consisted precisely in prolonging the maintenance of the equilibrium of the bureaucracy in general beyond what corresponded to the already changed objective conditions, has precipitated this entire evolution; that as a consequence the USSR as well as Stalinism in general has entered into a new phase; that henceforth it is necessary to expect a still more marked modification of the relations of strict obedience to the Kremlin of the other anti-capitalist states, the mass Communist parties and the revolutionary mass movements influenced by these parties; that in a word, the decline of Stalinism is being precipitated, the conditions of its rise and its relative equilibrium having been profoundly modified.

Consequently new perspectives are opened for our movement. The importance of the base of the Communist parties, bit or little, far from diminishing for us, is only increased under the new conditions of evolution of the objective situation and Stalinism. The base of the Communist parties — and this in all countries without exception — still constitutes the only revolutionary vanguard beside our own nuclei (as a general rule far inferior numerically to them up to now), from whose ideological differentiation will come the decisive forces — or in any event extremely valuable ones according to the given case — of the revolutionary Party of tomorrow.

This base of the Communist parties, that is to say the revolutionary proletarian vanguard formed by the still-living attraction of the October Revolution and the new anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist victories achieved after the last war, is now being furrowed by forces, pressures, influences and ideas breaking up strict Stalinism. It can and ought to be won to the ideas and program of Trotskyism.

However restricted the influence of the Communist parties may be in any country, this case is for us not a negligible quantity over which one can very simply place a cross, especially at the present stage. Such an attitude would be a manifestation of unpardonable sectarianism.

As a general rule, the base of the Communist parties have an interest for us everywhere and ought to receive our attention especially in the new conditions of the acceleration of the crisis and ideological breaking up of Stalinism.

How should this concern with the base of the CP's manifest itself in practice? This depends on each concrete case.

In countries where the principal movement of the class is still passing through the CP's, we should, as we are now already doing, more than ever persevere in the tactic of entrism of a special type.

In countries where the CP's constitute only a minority, often even a very restricted one, we ought to find a way to concern ourselves with their base, with its present reactions, with its preoccupations and doubts by demonstrating to it, among other things, the falseness and sterility of the orientation of its leadership which is neglecting the indispensable work to be done in the real movement of the masses of these countries.

Thus, for example, in a country like England one way of attracting toward us the healthiest and so valuable elements in the base of the English CP is undeniably the effectiveness of our entrist work within the Labor Party.

In Ceylon and Bolivia it is the dynamism and effectiveness of our activity as the genuine revolutionary mass party which will attract the best Stalinist elements to us.

To accord an absolutely necessary attention to the base of the CP's which is now more necessary than ever, does not at all signify everywhere orienting our essential work toward this milieu. On the contrary in all cases where the CP's represent only a minority within the workers' movement of a country, that signifies adequately demonstrating to their ranks the real mass work that has to be done and the non-sectarian way of conducting it well.

The Trotskyists ought to be more than ever persuaded of the possibility of influencing the best elements in the ranks of the CP's in the present period, and far from avoiding them, make on the contrary a persevering effort to contact them. "Stalinophobia," repulsion of a sectarian character from the Stalinist movement, which at bottom denotes on the part of these who practice it an inferiority complex toward the latter and lack of assurance in the profound correctness of the Trotskyist program, must more than ever be rejected. It ought to be replaced in reality by the contrary slogan: *More concern than ever now and everywhere with the base of the Communist parties!*

This attitude has a profound logic which is bound up with the real, and not literary and arbitrary development of the world revolution and of the creation of genuine mass revolutionary parties. In reality the overcoming of Stalinism will not emerge from nothingness, from a creation *ex nihilo,* but above all from the differentiation within the already created revolutionary vanguard.

On the other hand both the USSR, China and the other anti-capitalist states far from representing handicaps for the Marxist-revolutionary rebirth of the workers movement, far from losing importance in such a process, far from being able to be neglected in any respect whatsoever, on the contrary acquire an increasing importance under the new conditions, again becoming essential and active hearts of the rebirth of the movement as well as the affirmation of the Revolution in the world.

The real and dialectical renewal of the workers movement will not be accomplished independently or apart from what is now happening, with what is being prepared and ripening in these countries. The Russian proletariat is in the process of reentering upon the scene on an infinitely higher basis than in the past. It is more than ever an essential force of the world revolution. Analogous considerations apply to the subject of the masses of the other anti-capitalist countries and of China.

It is necessary to grasp the process of the world Socialist Revolution in its concrete and real march, advancing from these countries through the colonial and semi-colonial world and the European countries toward the last fortress of imperialism: the United States.

It is necessary to grasp in this march the interaction of the epicenters of the revolution, it is now necessary to grasp the role of the new contribution of the USSR and its masses on the general march of the revolution and the breaking up of Stalinism.

It is certainly now now that the base of the Communist parties, the essential material of the revolutionary vanguard up to now created by history, will become of less concern to us than in the past.

Precisely the contrary is true. And it is precisely on this question of the attitude toward the transformations in sight in the USSR and in Stalinism in general, of the appraisal of the USSR, China and the other anti-capitalist states in the march of the world revolution and of the precise attitude toward the base of the Communist parties that no compromise with the sectarian tendencies which have already been manifested on this subject and others which will later appear within our own movement, is possible.

The line of demarcation between those who fuse with the real development of the world revolution in our time and those who wish to treat it in some other manner, in accord with this or that desire (resulting from this or that pressure) clearly passes through this point.

We want to be and we will be with the real revolution. Any other attitude will lead us to sectarian isolation and even in the end to treachery. We will deal with the questions of the evolution of the USSR, China, the other anti-capitalist states, the base of the CP with the greatest confidence and the greatest optimism. We see in all that some of the most serious and promising opportunities for the Marxist-revolutionary rebirth of the workers' movement, for the definitive triumph of the ideas and program of the Fourth International.

Yes, the objective conditions are in the process of changing favorably to Trotskyism in all these domains, as has never in the past been the case.

Yes, our active intervention in this process, carried out in a non-sectarian and tactically adequate manner, can accelerate the whole process and thus lead it to a complete victory for our ideas and our program, a victory which will then be that of the Revolution and Socialism on the world scale.

All these considerations, far from diminishing the role and importance of Trotskyism, of the International, and its national sections, only bring out their value the more by making them real.

It is from this viewpoint that "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism" speaks of the possibility for the Fourth International to capitalize on the crisis and the present ideological breaking-up of Stalinism. It is from this same viewpoint that the document on "Our Integration in the Real Mass Movement" emphasizes more then in the past the development of our direct means of expression in all the countries where we practice an entrist tactic, on the diffusion of our full Trotskyist ideas as broadly as possible as well as emphasizing the significance and role of our movement regarded as an organized world party, as an International.

The entrist tactic acquires its full meaning, especially under present conditions, only when accompanied by a broader than ever diffusion of our Trotskyist ideas, that is to say, our thorough-going, Marxist-revolutionary ideas through 100% Trotskyist organs and publications parallel to those organs directly serving entrism.

On the other hand the whole of our work in the national sectors acquires its full meaning only when viewed from the angle of our international movement organized into a world party, into the International.

The part of the documents referring to the conception and role of the International is one of the most developed that has ever been devoted to this subject up to now.

That has been made necessary in order to leave no confusion as to the true role our International ought to play in the new conditions, to emphasize its decisive importance and the inevitable victory of its ideas and its program;

then we have it clearly understood that we do not conceive of the International as a mechanical assembly, with more or less loose connections like the Social Democracy and like those centrists that Trotsky has similarly combatted in the past, the Vereeckens, the Sneevliets, the partisans of the London Bureau and bureaus of mere connections and consultations in general, but as a single world Party with a single line and discipline and a centralized international leadership. The role, the idea and the functioning of the International as a single world party is the very essence of our movement. It is in the existence and the manifestations of the International that our programmatic and organizational independence of all the other workers movements is expressed, independently of this or that national entrist experience, as well as the ideological superiority of our movement, profoundly bound up with the organic unity of the international situation, with the international structure of the revolutionary program in our epoch, and with the struggle of the proletarian and colonial masses.

On the other hand, our present conception of the International corresponds to the real progress and practice since its foundation and especially since the last war, along the line of the intimate fusion of our different national groups into a single world party and the creation of an international leadership.

The present structure and functioning of the International expresses the progress realized in the political maturing of our movement and its strengthening as an integral part of the real movement of the class. All the tendencies in the past who have challenged this conception of the International, who have wanted to regain their "freedom" and not recognize the organization of the International, have really found themselves subjected to the pressure of forces hostile to the fundamental policy of the International and have ideologically degenerated.

The inevitable revisionism that these tendencies undertook, proceeding from the so-called "organizational" domain of the International to its policy and its program, has never been denied in the long run.

The Only Tradition We Make Use Of

There is a profound creative continuity in the line of the International from the Third to the Fourth World Congress which is bound up with the best theoretical traditions of our international movement and of revolutionary Marxism in general.

In these recent years how many people have uttered cries, literally hysterical cries, against a so-called "revision of traditional Trotskyism" undertaken by the International! Their conception of "tradition" is that of all the sectarians and routinists of thought (the ideological expression of a conservative and routinist practical work in a setting of stagnation or set-back). Similar elements have always existed in the workers movement and have never missed resisting the living application of the Marxist-revolutionary method to the extreme richness and complexity of reality in motion, hiding behind citations, schemas and slogans arbitrarily extracted from their historical context. Instead of analyzing each phenomena, each situation, proceeding above all from the new relation of forces and the new dynamic which determines them, instead of looking for those features of change inevitably provoked in this or that domain in respect to the past of deducing from them the necessary readjustments in this or that analysis, idea, formula or slogan of the past, they hold on to the formal resemblances or contradictions between the past and the present, prisoners of the weight of dead tradition upon reality in its evolution.

"Marxism"—wrote Trotsky, flogging as vigorously as Lenin the so-called defenders of tradition—"is a method of historical analysis, of political orientation, and not a mass of decisions prepared in advance. Leninism is the application of this method in the conditions of an exceptional historical epoch. It is precisely this union of the peculiarities of the epoch and the method that determines that courageous, self-assured policy of *brusque turns* of which Lenin gave us the finest models and which he illumined theoretically and generalized on more than one occasion.

"Neither October, nor Brest-Litovsk, nor the creation of a regular peasant army, nor the system of requisitioning food products, nor the NEP, nor the State Planning Commission, were or could have been foreseen or predetermined by pre-October Marxism or Bolshevism. All these facts and turns were the result of the independent, critical application, marked by the spirit of initiative, of the methods of Bolshevism in situations that differed in each case.

"Every one of these decisions, before being adopted, provoked struggles. The simple appeal to tradition never decided anything. As a matter of fact, with each new task and at each new turn, it is not a question of searching in tradition and discovering there a non-existing reply, but of profiting from all the experience of the party to find by oneself a new solution suitable to the situation and, by doing so, enriching tradition. It may even be put more sharply: Leninism consists in being courageously free from conservative retrospection, from being bound by precedent, purely formal references and quotations.

"Lenin himself not so long ago expressed this thought in Napoleon's words: *'On s'engage et puis on voit.'* (Start fighting and then see.) To put it differently, once engaged in the struggle, not to be excessively preoccupied with canon and precedent, but to plunge into reality as it is and to see there the forces necessary for the victory and the roads leading to it. It is by following this line that Lenin, not once but dozens of times, was accused in his own party of violating tradition and repudiating 'old Bolshevism.'" (*The New Course,* by Leon Trotsky, Chapter V, "Tradition and Revolutionary Policy," pp. 51-53)

Trotskyism as the continuation of Leninism, that is to say as the application of living revolutionary Marxism to our epoch which is developing in more tumultuous, explosive and complicated manner than in Lenin's time, demands the same, if not an even more profound, conception of political elaboration, critical, creative, freed of all "dogmatism, formalism," of any "conservative and bureaucratic traditionalism."

The Leninist and Trotskyist, that is to say revolutionary-Marxist tradition, consists above all in the highest qualitative and quantitative appraisal of reality, undertaken with a critical, liberated and bold spirit. The political answer to the most important problems which have arisen since the last war, do not exist ready-made in any book or document of the past. We must find it through our own intellectual effort, thanks to our formation as Trotskyists, as revolutionary-Marxists.

Neither the unfolding of the Second Imperialist War, culminating not in the destruction but in the victory of the USSR; nor the appearance of new workers states; nor the peculiarities of the Yugoslav Revolution and the Chinese Revolution; nor the new concrete situation in which imperialism finds itself; nor the new developments in the USSR have been events which were foreseen, or could have been in Trotsky's time. The world of 1936-1939 and the world of today, fifteen years after, are profoundly different. The quotations, formulas and slogans of the past must be critically reexamined and then readjusted in accord with the new relation of forces, the new dynamic, the new factors, in accord with the balance of global changes which have intervened since that time. Whoever does not understand that and does not make the necessary effort to contribute to thus maintain, and only thus, the theoretical tradition of Trotskyism, is ready for the museum of "Trotskyist antiquities."

Let us take the concrete example of the Soviet bureaucracy and Stalinism. The objective conditions have changed both internationally and in the USSR itself in relation to them. What does that mean exactly? That the Soviet bureaucracy has changed its character, its nature, that it has become less conservative and in the overall balance of its international action less counter-revolutionary?

Absolutely not. For its character, its nature are conditioned by its social position as a privileged caste which has usurped direct political power from the Russian proletariat. But its relations of force with imperialism on the one side and the Soviet and international masses on the other have manifestly changed. There follows from this a series of conclusions, exemplified by events, which are otherwise inexplicable.

Why has this bureaucracy, still as conservative as before the war, been able to transform on so grat a scale in a military-bureaucratic manner, the relations of production in a series of European countries and thereby accomplish an objectively revolutionary work? Only the post-war conditions of capitalism and of the new relation of forces between it and the bureaucracy explains the possibility, even the inevitability of such an accomplishment. On the other hand the new relation of forces between the bureaucracy and the Soviet and international masses explains why its counter-revolutionary action is necessarily becoming more limited than in the past, and that the bureaucracy itself is being broken up (not being a homogeneous class, but an extremely stratified caste) and presents a less great resistance than it would put up before the war at the height of its power and its relative stability.

Shall we deduce from this that it will abandon power without a major struggle, without the violent action of the masses against it, or that its regime will be liquidated in an evolutionary manner, by more and more ample reforms and concessions? Not at all. Only that its resistance let us repeat it again, could be less great and that the program and the forms of what we call the political revolution are not yet foreseeable in all details.[1]

In fact these are not to be found in any book or text of the past and we should ourselves follow its evolution, understand it, and readjust formulas to the objective changes. The only positive and valid landmarks are the inevitability of the fall of the bureaucracy, thanks fundamentally to the pressure and action of the masses.

We Will Never Go Backward

We have the profound conviction that the overwhelming majority of our movement has been definitively won to the present appraisals and perspectives of the International as well as to the living application of the method of revolutionary Marxism, exempt from all formalism and sectarianism, to the analysis of the reality. However shall we avoid every internal shock in this march forward? "Generally speaking," Trotsky wrote, "crises are produced in the party at each important turn in its line, either as a prelude or as a consequence of this turn. A tactical or strategic turn involves a more or less important break with the habits and methods of work of the past." And he adds, citing Lenin's words: "It very often happens that when history makes a sharp turn even the most advanced parties show themselves incapable for a more or less extended period to adapt themselves to the new conditions. They repeat yesterday's slogans, slogans which were correct yesterday, but which have lost all their meaning today as sharply as history has realized its own sharp turn." (Leon Trotsky, *The Lessons of October*).

In reference to the extraordinary situation which has been developing in the world since the last war, full of unforeseen events, new phenomena and sharp turns, we must certainly make a no less extraordinary effort to readjust our analyses and formulas of the past to the new reality and to constantly renew our theoretical thought. In doing this, only a miracle on the other hand could spare us from internal shocks.

To think over again the objective situation and its perspectives; to resituate the USSR, the Soviet bureaucracy and Stalinism in general, in the new conditions; to readjust our tactics for the construction of revolutionary mass parties as a consequence; such was and still remains our task. It has not been accomplished and will very probably not be accomplished without frictions and internal crises. But to the degree that we readjust our policy to the rhythm and to the demands of history, we are progressing in that respect, we are consolidating our positions, and we are preparing the future, avoiding, as there is the strong risk and always the risk, of becoming under hostile pressures "indirect instruments of other classes."

September 15, 1953

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1. In his *Revolution Betrayed,* although written in 1936, Leon Trotsky even in emphasizing the necessity and inevitability of a "political revolution against bureaucratic absolutism" considered that "with energetic pressure from the popular mass, and the disintegration, inevitable in such circumstances of the government apparatus, the resistance of those in power may prove much weaker than now appears." (p. 287) He specified on the other hand that "the program of the new revolution depends to a great extent upon the moment when it breaks out, upon the level which the country has then attained and to a great degree upon the international situation." (p. 289)