

EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

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TOWARDS A HISTORY OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL Part II:

**How the Fourth International Was
Conceived by Jean van Heijenoort**

**Trotsky's Struggle for the Fourth
International by John G. Wright**

**The Fourth International (A History
of Its Ideas and Its Struggles) by Michel Pablo**

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The articles in this collection deal with aspects of the history of the Fourth International from its founding to the Second World Congress held in 1948. Jean van Heijenoort's "How the Fourth International Was Conceived" appeared in the August 1944 issue of Fourth International, predecessor to the International Socialist Review. Van Heijenoort left France in 1932 to become Trotsky's secretary in Prinkipo, Turkey. He continued to assist Trotsky in this capacity until shortly before Trotsky's assassination. Van Heijenoort withdrew from politics in the 1940s and is now a professor of mathematics and philosophy. His article was written in French and translated for publication in Fourth International.

"Trotsky's Struggle for the Fourth International" by John G. Wright first appeared in the August 1946 issue of Fourth International. John G. Wright was the pen name of Joseph Vanzler (1902-1956) who, for almost a quarter of a century, was one of the leaders of American Trotskyism. He was the translator of many of Trotsky's works, notably The First Five Years of the Communist International, The Stalin School of Falsification, and The Third International After Lenin.

The essays by van Heijenoort and Wright are also available in Leon Trotsky: The Man and His Work (Merit Publishers, 1969, New York -- now distributed by Pathfinder Press, New York).

Michel Pablo's "The Fourth International (A History of Its Ideas and Its Struggles)" first appeared in four issues of 4th International (Spring 1958, Summer 1958, Autumn 1958, and Autumn 1959), the publication of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International, one of the two public factions the Trotskyist movement was divided into at that time. Pablo joined the Greek Trotskyist movement in the late 1920s. Shortly after the second world war, he emerged as the central leader of European Trotskyism. He soon began to develop positions on the question of Stalinism that were sharply at variance with traditional Trotskyist views. His attempts to impose these views, by organizational means, on Trotskyist parties led to a de facto split in 1953 that lasted for ten years. Shortly after the reunification of the Fourth International in 1963, Pablo left to form the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency. This grouping has since given up all pretense of adhering to Trotskyism or attempting to build the Fourth International.

How the Fourth International Was Conceived

By JEAN van HEIJENOORT

Our movement has the right to consider itself the representative and the historical standard-bearer of revolutionary socialism. It is at the end of a chain whose links were the Communist League of Marx and Engels, the International Workingmen's Association (First International), the Second International, the Bolshevik party of Lenin, and the Communist International. But in order to establish the specific beginnings of our movement it is necessary to begin with the year 1923 in the U.S.S.R.

The Left Opposition

The October Revolution established the first Workers' State, but remained isolated. "Without revolution in Europe," said Lenin repeatedly, "we shall perish." History verified the truth of his words, but in its own manner. Degeneration appeared in the apparatus itself of the new regime—the party that led the revolution to victory.

The resistance to corruption of the party came from Trotsky. The struggle began in the fall of 1923. On October 8th, he sent a letter to the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission denouncing the stifling of the right of criticism on the part of party members. This is the first document of our movement. It can be compared to what had been for Bolshevism the famous vote on the statutes of the party in 1902.

Beginning with the question of the internal regime of the party, the struggle grew progressively to include all problems of revolutionary tactics and strategy. Outside of the USSR, opposition groups appeared in most of the sections of the Communist International. The connections of these groups among themselves, and with the Russian Opposition, remained precarious. Many of the groups arose in opposition to one of the aspects of Stalinist policy. Their political solidarity was far from complete. One group that proved of great importance for the future of our movement, the Left Opposition in the American communist party, appeared belatedly on the scene, in 1928.

The organizational cohesion of the International Left Opposition was not seriously undertaken until the time of Trotsky's expulsion from the USSR and his arrival in Turkey, in February 1929. The first international conference of the Left Opposition took place in Paris in 1930.

The policy of the Opposition in relation to the Communist International, both in its entirety as well as its various sections, had remained the same since 1923. In one word it was—reform. Although expelled by the faction in power, the Trotskyist groups considered themselves part of the International, its left faction, exactly as in each country each group considered itself a faction of the national Communist Party. Their objective was to convince the party membership of the correctness of their views, to win over the majority, and to set the organization on the correct course. Toward the Bolshevik Party in the USSR the policy was essentially the same as toward any other section of the International. The name of the movement, *Opposition*, expressed and symbolized this policy.

A political document of a programmatic character, entitled *The International Left Opposition—Its Tasks and Methods*, was written by Trotsky in December 1932, immediately after his return to Prinkipo from Copenhagen, where he had had the opportunity of meeting about thirty of the most important leaders of the International Opposition. One chapter of this document was entitled "Faction—Not a Party." The perspective outlined there was the same as in the preceding years, namely, the reform of the Communist International and of each of its sections. Nevertheless, a warning was sounded:

"Such an historical catastrophe as the fall of the Soviet State would surely drag along the Third International. Similarly, a victory of fascism in Germany and the crushing of the German proletariat would hardly allow the Comintern to survive the consequences of its ruinous policy."

One of these two warnings was soon to become a terrible reality. On January 30, 1933, Hindenburg, the constitutional head of the Weimar Republic, elected with the votes of the Social Democracy, called on Hitler to form a new cabinet.

For three years the Left Opposition had sounded the alarm at the rise of German fascism. In a series of articles and pamphlets, which in their clarity and revolutionary passion rank among the best products of his pen, Trotsky revealed the nature of fascism and showed the consequences of a fascist victory to the German workers, to the international labor movement, to the USSR, to Europe, and to the whole world. He also pointed to the means of combating this danger: the united front of the workers' parties, Communist and Social Democratic, for the active defense of workers' organizations against the Nazi vermin, a defensive struggle which, when successful, would become an offensive.

The Collapse of the German Communist Party

The leaders of the two official workers' parties vied with each other in their impotence in the face of the fascist menace. The Social Democratic leadership desperately grasped at a democracy which, in the midst of economic chaos and the sharpened social and political conflicts, was disowning itself. The Stalinists acted in line with the "genial" theory of their leader, that it was first necessary to crush the Social Democrats before fighting fascism. They had made common cause with the Nazis in the famous plebiscite in Prussia in August 1931. When the fascist menace became imminent, they clamored with braggadocio "After them will be our turn!"

When Hitler formed his government on January 30, 1933, not all was lost. The workers' organizations were still intact. In the following weeks the Nazis acted very cautiously. In February, Trotsky stated in a conversation: "The situation in Germany is similar to that of a man at the bottom of an abyss facing a stone wall. To get out it is necessary to clutch at the rocks with bare and bloody hands. It is necessary to have courage and will, but it is possible. Not all is lost."

The official leadership of the workers' parties allowed the last chance to slip by. In the face of their passivity, Hitler

became more brazen. He had never hoped to win such an easy victory. At the beginning of March, the crude provocation of the Reichstag fire allowed him to definitely entrench his regime. The workers' organizations were swept away.

Trotsky's reaction was not long in coming. He wrote an article entitled *The Tragedy of the German Proletariat*. It was dated March 14, 1933 and had as a sub-title, "The German Workers Will Rise, Stalinism—Never!" The gist of the article was that, in Germany, the Communist Party failed in its historic mission, that it was doomed as a revolutionary organization. Thus, there was no choice but to give up the policy of its reform and to proceed to build a new German Communist Party. When Trotsky wrote that Stalinism would not rise again, he meant Stalinism in Germany. As to the Communist parties in other lands, especially the Russian Bolshevik Party, and the Communist International viewed in its entirety, the line remained as before, that of reform.

In the weeks that followed other articles elaborated this position and answered the objections raised against it. In the ranks of the Left Opposition, these objections were minimal. They came mostly from certain comrades in the German section, the one most directly concerned. These objections remained secondary or sentimental in character: maybe it would be better to wait before speaking about a new party while the official one is under the blows of bloody repressions, etc. But the lesson of the events was so clear that the need of a change in the old policy was not questioned seriously.

Yet when one's memory turns to that month of March 1933, it cannot be denied that the new policy was a surprise to the members of the Left Opposition. The daily activity of each of the sections was centered exclusively around the Communist Party; and to develop a new line, even if it were for only one of our sections, was to break with a tradition of ten years standing. The great authority of Trotsky made it possible to bring about the change in line rapidly and with cohesion. Without him, the lessons of the events in Germany would have surely been learned in our ranks, but after how many months of discussion?

The problem of the Third International in its totality could not fail to be posed. After the collapse of the German Communist Party, the executive committee of the International passed in April a resolution which declared that the policy followed by the German Communist Party "up to and at the time of Hitler's coup d'état was fully correct."

This is not astonishing: the executive committee under the orders of Stalin merely covered Stalin, who imposed his fatal political line on the German Communist Party. But the decisive fact was that all the sections of the International accepted the Moscow resolution and thus became equally responsible for the historical catastrophe in Germany. The members who denounced the line that had been followed, or merely questioned it, were expelled. The policy of reform was losing all reality.

On July 15, 1933, Trotsky, under the pen-name of G. Gurov, addressed to the sections of the Opposition an article entitled, *It is necessary to build anew Communist parties and an International*. Here the perspective of reform was definitely abandoned. After the lessons of the events, the turn was decisive: "Talk of 'reform' and the demand of readmission of the oppositionists into the official parties must be definitely given up, as utopian and reactionary," he wrote. And he took this opportunity to give general and valuable advice: "The most dangerous thing in politics is to become a prisoner of your own formula, which was appropriate yesterday, but is deprived of any content today."

On July 20th a second article entitled, "*It is no longer possible to stay in the same 'International' with Stalin, Manuilsky, Lozovsky and Co.*", answered possible arguments against the new position.

The change in policy coincided with the change in Trotsky's residence. On July 17th, he left Istanbul, and on the 24th he landed in Marseilles. Next day he settled himself near Saint-Palais, on the Atlantic seaboard. It was a big change in his personal life. While on the island of Prinkipo, the arrival of a visitor was a little event every four or six months; in France Trotsky was able in the following few weeks to meet with practically all leading members of the European opposition groups, and with quite a few from overseas.

When Trotsky landed in Marseilles, the translation of his first article on the need of a new International had hardly reached the leadership of the various sections. The leading Trotskyists of France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, etc., soon took the road to Saint-Palais, and there in Trotsky's study, or under the trees of the garden, participated in lengthy discussions. Opposition to the new orientation was practically non-existent. The turn to a new party in Germany three months before, had broken with a long tradition and opened new perspectives. The discussions did not deal so much with the need of a new International, but rather with the ways and means of bringing it about: how to build it, how to build new parties?

The New International

A few voices raised the question: haven't we waited too long? Shouldn't we have recognized the need of a new International much sooner? To this Trotsky answered: "This is a question we may well leave to the historians." He was undoubtedly profoundly convinced that the change in the policy would have been incorrect several years sooner, but he refused to discuss this question because it was no longer of practical and immediate interest.

One question that took up a large share of the discussion was that of the USSR. It is worth while examining how it was posed then. The document of December 1932 that we have already mentioned, and which still followed the line of reform, had stated:

"Sharper and brighter is this question [of reform] in the USSR. The policy of the second party there would imply the policy of armed insurrection and a new revolution. The policy of the faction implies the line of inner reform of the party and the workers' state."

In the article of April 1933 which pointed out the need of a new party in Germany, but at the same time retained the policy of reform of the Communist International, Trotsky wrote:

"If the Stalinist bureaucracy will bring the USSR to collapse, then... it will be necessary to build a Fourth International."

The problem was: how to discard the policy of reform of the Bolshevik Party and at the same time retain the perspective of reforming the workers' state? How to proclaim the Fourth International before the Stalinist bureaucracy has led the USSR to its collapse?

The problem of the USSR was the greatest obstacle in Trotsky's mind before reaching the conclusion that there remained no other alternative than to form a Fourth International. Shortly before his article of July 15, he said in a conversation at Prinkipo: "Since April, we have been for reform in all countries except Germany, where we are for a new party. Now we can take a symmetrical position, i.e., in favor of a new party in every country except the USSR, where we will be for reform of the Bolshevik Party." (This position, as far as I know,

was never put into writing.) But it was clear to his listeners that his ideas on this matter were only in the process of formation and that they had not yet reached their conclusion.

The solution of this problem is, as is well known now, the distinction between a social revolution and a political revolution. This solution was already outlined in the first documents, in July, which speak about the need of a new International.

On the other hand, in the summer of 1933, the discussions around the nature of the USSR were numerous: not only was Stalinism bankrupt in Germany, but the first economic experiences of Hitler, Roosevelt, as well as the Italian corporate state, gave rise on all sides to theories of "State capitalism."

Trotsky then clarified his position toward the USSR in a long article entitled, *The Class Nature of the Soviet State*, dated October 1, 1933. This article definitely eliminates the perspective of a peaceful removal of the bureaucracy, and clarifies the formulas used in the July documents on the new International. In the main this is the position we have maintained to the present. (On the question of an historical analogy with Thermidor, a correction was made in February 1935.)

Another question required a good deal of attention in the discussions at Saint-Palais: that of our relation toward other organizations. The Left Opposition had its attention focused exclusively on the various Communist parties. Our organization was made up, with a few rare exceptions, only of expelled members of Communist parties or Young Communist leagues. All our activity was subordinated to the perspective of reform. As early as June 15, 1933, that is, before the turn toward a New International, Trotsky addressed to the sections of the Left Opposition an article, *Left Socialist Organizations and Our Tasks*, in which he pointed out a new field of activity: The victory of German Fascism had brought a crisis to the Social Democracy. The Comintern was losing its powers of attraction. We could expect that the centrist organizations of the left would turn toward us. It was therefore necessary to turn our attention and our efforts in this direction.

In fact, the whole political atmosphere, our orientation toward a new International, the arrival of Trotsky in France, actually attracted toward us the eyes of organizations which, in different periods and under different circumstances, had broken with the Second and Third Internationals. Numerous were the visits in Saint-Palais of leaders of these organizations (German S.A.P., English I.L.P., Dutch O.S.P. and R.S.P., etc.). The Dutch party of Sneevliet (R.S.P.) declared itself ready to join our ranks immediately.

The excitement provoked by the shameful bankruptcy of the two Internationals in Germany was so great that not less

than fourteen organizations, belonging to neither of the two Internationals, decided to unite. Nevertheless, they were far from having a common program. To complain about the old official organizations in articles and speeches is one thing. To undertake to build a new International is another. Our organization decided to participate in the conference of the fourteen groups held in Paris at the end of August 1933. Our policy was clear: to draw our conclusions from events to the end, to propose our program of creating a new International, to denounce those who wanted to remain equivocal and ambiguous. Together with a few organizations which recognized the immediate necessity of a new International (S.A.P., R.S.P., O.S.P.), our organization signed a programmatic document known under the name of *Declaration of the Four*. Some months later the S.A.P. was to deny its signature.

The conference in Paris proved to be the maximum effort of which the centrist groups were capable. It remained without results. All the perspectives gradually revealed themselves to be empty, unrealistic, with the exception of one: to create a new International. The formal founding of the Fourth International took place five years later, in 1938.

Eleven years have passed since that summer of 1933 when the Fourth International was conceived. Its progress has been slow, always too slow for our hopes. It was born amidst the defeats provoked by the old official organizations of the working class. While a defeat will stir the best elements of the vanguard to examine its causes and to build a better organization, its effect on the class as a whole is one of disorientation, discouragement and passivity. It takes years and years to eradicate its marks; a new generation which has not known cynicism must raise its head.

We have found in our path the putrid corpse of the Comintern, an organization which has utilized the immense prestige of the victorious Russian Revolution precisely to disorientate, disorganize and crush, where necessary, the revolutionary emancipation of the working class.

Following defeats in a series of countries, a catastrophe has descended upon the peoples—a new world war. For five years now, hundreds of millions of men have been confronted with the terrors of war, but today the sound of the cannon can no longer drown out the melody of revolt. Throughout all Europe fists are clenching. Tomorrow tens and hundreds of millions will rise to demand an accounting from the old order, which generated oppression, misery and wars. Gaining consciousness of their strength, they will cast aside their false leaders, the perfidious agents of the enemy. They will need a stainless banner. There is only one: ours, the banner of the Fourth International, of the World Party of the Socialist Revolution.

Reproduced from *Fourth International*, August, 1944

Trotsky's Struggle for the Fourth International

By JOHN G. WRIGHT

All of Leon Trotsky's basic teachings are concentrated in the major task of his lifetime's activity—the building of the Fourth International.

For an entire decade—1923-1933—he struggled to reform the Third International, which he had founded together with Lenin. When Stalinism paved the way for Hitler's assumption of power in Germany; when this betrayal passed over the heads of the completely degenerated Stalinized parties, history itself proved irrefutably that the Third International was beyond reform. It died ignominiously as had the Second International before it. What died with these old Internationals was not revolutionary Marxism, but two virtually duplicate sets of false ideas and practices—nationalism, opportunism, reformism. In brief, petty-bourgeois adaptation to capitalism and capitulation to it. A new International became necessary. As Trotsky tirelessly repeated, this was—and is—the *basic* task of our epoch. It was to this task that he devoted his best energies and the last years of his life.

For Trotsky, the building of the Fourth International was least of all a question of abstract theory or of an "organizational form." He heaped scorn upon all those who posed the issue in this manner, because such an approach stands everything on its head. Trotsky saw that the world party of the working class is first of all a *closely knit system of ideas*, that is to say, a *program*. On no other basis is it possible to train, temper and fuse the proletarian vanguard internationally and nationally. From the given system of ideas—or program—flows a corresponding system of strategic, tactical and organizational methods. The latter have no independent meaning or existence of their own and are subordinate to the former.

One of Trotsky's favorite sayings was: "It is not the party that makes the program; it is the program that makes the party."

Precisely because of this primary stress on program, Trotsky's decade of struggle to reform the Third International became in the most direct sense the preparation for the Fourth International.

This approach—and it is the only correct one—obviously invests ideas with extraordinary importance. Indeed we can say without any fear of exaggeration than none attach greater significance or power to ideas than do the revolutionary Marxists. Like Marx, Engels and Lenin, Trotsky regarded ideas as the greatest power in the world.

Lenin's Bolshevik Party valued its ideas as its most potent weapon. Bolshevism demonstrated in action, in 1917, that such ideas, once embraced by the masses, become converted into an insuperable material force.

Here is how Trotsky formulated this approach in a personal letter to James P. Cannon:

We work with the most correct and powerful ideas in the world, with inadequate numerical forces and material means. But correct ideas, in the long run, always conquer and make available for themselves the necessary material means and forces.

Trotsky's ideas derive their power from the same source as Lenin's: both are the correct expression of the struggle of living forces, first and foremost of the liberationist struggle of the proletariat. They represent not only the product of profound theoretical analysis (without which it is impossible to understand reality) but also the unassailable deductions from the march of history for the last hundred years (that is to say, from 1848 when Marx and Engels first expounded the laws governing the movement of capitalist society).

There are ideas and ideas. As against the correct ideas of Marxism, there is also the power of the false ideas. The former serve the interests of progress, of the world working class; the latter only play into the hands of reaction and deal untold injury to workers all the oppressed and to society as a whole. False ideas, like correct ones, do not fall from the sky. They, too, express one of the living forces engaged in struggle, namely: the camp of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

Like Lenin, Trotsky rejected the notion that the policies of opportunist tendencies represented merely mistakes in "theory." Theory is scarcely involved in the policy of the treacherous "Socialists," who each time base themselves on the current needs of propping up the rule of decaying capitalism. Theory has even less to do with the Kremlin's policy, which is each time determined by practical needs of safeguarding the privileges and power of the ruling clique. Fear of the proletarian revolution has long ago converted both the moribund Second and Third Internationals into agencies of world imperialism. Hence flows the necessity of an irreconcilable attitude towards them. For the first condition for unifying the workers is a complete break with all the agencies, direct or indirect, of the bourgeoisie.

The basic plank of a revolutionary program is—*internationalism*. Mere acceptance of "internationalism" is hollow mockery unless accompanied in practice by complete rejection of *nationalist* policies, in whatever guise they may manifest themselves. It was precisely against the nationalist deviations of the Soviet bureaucracy, most crassly expressed by Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country," that Trotsky launched his life-and-death struggle against Stalinism. He warned that the adoption of Stalin's theory would imperceptibly but inescapably shunt the Third International onto the tracks of opportunism.

This warning was swiftly verified by events. In England during the critical period of the labor movement in 1925-27, the Stalinists followed a false and opportunist policy (the policy of the Anglo-Russian Committee). In China the Stalinists betrayed the revolution of 1925-27 by pursuing a typical Menshevik policy of collaborating with the native bourgeoisie (Stalin's bloc

of "four classes"), in the name of establishing not workers' rule but the "democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants." In the Soviet Union, Stalin's false policies manifested themselves at the time in an opportunist economic policy (slow tempo of industrialization, fostering of neo-capitalist elements: "kulak grow rich," etc.) and subsequently in the adventurist economic policy in connection with the First Five-Year Plan.

The great lessons of these experiences in China, the USSR and England were the axis of the struggle inside the Russian party, and they later became the basis for the education and unification of the original world Trotskyist movement.

Internationalism became the very hall-mark of Trotskyism. Writing in 1938, on the Ninetieth Anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto*, Trotsky said:

The international development of capitalism has predetermined the international character of the proletarian revolution. "United action, of the leading civilized countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat," [wrote Marx and Engels in 1848]. The subsequent development of capitalism has so closely knit all sections of our planet, both "civilized" and "uncivilized," that the problem of the socialist revolution has completely and decisively assumed a world character. The Soviet bureaucracy attempted to liquidate the *Manifesto* with respect to this fundamental question. The Bonapartist degeneration of the Soviet state is an overwhelming illustration of the falseness of the theory of socialism in one country.

The Elaboration of an International Program

Trotsky's primary objective from the outset was to elaborate an internationalist program, and to select groups and individuals on this programmatic foundation. No sooner were his hands untied for work on a world scale (by his exile to Turkey in February 1929), than he began hammering home the cardinal consideration that whoever assigns a secondary importance to the international factor is travelling on the road to national opportunism. "National programs can be built only on international ground." "Our international orientation and our national policy are indissolubly bound together."

"It is undeniable," he explained, "that each country possesses the greatest peculiarities of its own. But in our epoch their true value can be estimated, and revolutionary use can be made of them only from an internationalist point of view. Only an international organization can be the bearer of an international ideology."

Trotsky's touchstone for evaluating "tendencies in world communism"—and therefore his touchstone for political collaboration—was: the position taken by any given group on the above-listed three questions which he designated as "classic" (Anglo-Russian Committee, Chinese revolution of 1925-27, Soviet economic policy in conjunction with the theory of socialism in one country). In his opinion only an organization which demarcated itself ideologically from all others on these issues, could prove viable, capable of action, capable of withstanding the test of events, and finally able to unite the proletariat under its banner.

Why? Because in each case fundamental principles of revolutionary policy were involved. Agreement meant the possibility for joint work within a common organization; disagreement either excluded such a possibility or rendered it extremely remote.

While attaching paramount importance to questions of principle, Trotsky invariably subordinated questions of tactic, organ-

ization and the like. In March 31, 1929, in the same letter in which he lists the "three classic questions" as the decisive criteria, he adds the following highly illuminating comment:

Some comrades may be astonished that I omit reference here to the question of the party regime. I do so not out of oversight, but deliberately. A party regime has no independent, self-sufficient meaning. In relation to party policy it is a derivative magnitude. The most heterogeneous elements sympathize with the struggle against Stalinist bureaucratism. . . . For a Marxist, democracy within a party or within a country is not an abstraction. Democracy is always conditioned by the struggle of living forces. By bureaucratism, the opportunist elements in part and as a whole understand revolutionary centralism. Obviously, they cannot be our co-thinkers.

Of no less significance is Trotsky's refusal not only to unite but even to effect blocs with the Right wing, even though at the time it was a tendency within the Communist movement. This is an important lesson in principled politics. Only unprincipled politicians enter into political collaboration with those with whom they disagree fundamentally, but with whom they happen to have temporary agreement on secondary issues. Trotsky was unyielding on this score.

In March 1929 he wrote:

Two irreconcilably opposed tendencies are usually listed under the label of opposition: the revolutionary tendency [the Trotskyists] and the opportunist tendency [Bukharin-Brandler-Lovestone wing]. A hostile attitude toward centrism [the reference here is to Stalinism] and toward the "regime" is the only thing they have in common. But this is a purely negative bond. Our struggle against centrism derives from the fact that centrism is semi-opportunist and covers up full-blown opportunism, despite temporary and sharp disagreements with the latter. For this reason there cannot even be talk of a bloc between the Left Opposition and the Right Opposition. This requires no commentary.

Trotsky safeguarded the movement from being converted into a melting pot of divergent ideological tendencies not only by a principled and serious attitude toward unifications but also by a similar attitude toward splits.

During the same period he wrote:

It is not always, nor under all circumstances, that unity within an organization must remain inviolate. In cases where the differences assume a fundamental character, a split at times appears to be the only solution possible. But care must be taken that this be a genuine split, that is, that the split should not depart from the line of principled differences, and that this line be brought clear-cut before the eyes of all the members of the organization.

In the first seven years of its existence the Left Opposition experienced approximately a score of splits. The political opponents seized upon this with glee as proof of an intolerable "internal regime."

Trotsky dismissed this contention with contempt, pointing out that "it is necessary to take not the bald *statistics of splits*, but the *dialectics of development*." A movement irreconcilably defending its program against opportunism, against centrism, against ultra-leftism could not have possibly avoided splits under the most favorable conditions, and all the less so in the period of catastrophic defeats and universal disorientation of the labor movement.

Beginning with 1930 a whole series of splits occurred over the constantly recurring differences relating to the class nature of the Soviet Union. If in 1939-40 this issue precipitated the struggle inside the Socialist Workers Party, then in 1930, at the very inception of the European movement, it led to a break

with Urbahns in Germany, Louzon in France, Overstraeten in Belgium, etc.

When the turn from propaganda groups to mass work was launched in 1934-36, another series of splits occurred in France, England, the U.S. and elsewhere over the tactic of entry into the Socialist parties where left wing tendencies were crystallizing (the famous "French Turn").

But precisely because the movement had a banner and a program from which it refused to swerve, it was able to overcome each internal crisis and to forge steadily, even if slowly, forward.

Trotsky's Struggle for the International

Parallel with Trotsky's irreconcilability in defending the internationalist principles of the movement was his adamant insistence upon the necessity and primacy of the international organization. "Only an international organization can be the bearer of an international ideology." The organization form flows from and must correspond to the party's platform.

From the outset, he insisted on the speediest possible consolidation of all his genuine co-thinkers into an international body. "From its first steps," he wrote in February 1930, "the Opposition must therefore clearly declare itself as an international faction—as did the Communists in the period of the *Communist Manifesto*, or of the First International, or of the Left Zimmerwald at the beginning of the war (1914-18). . . . In the epoch of imperialism, a similar attitude imposes itself a hundred times more categorically than in the times of Marx."

This conception of party building was hotly disputed and opposed by all the varieties of centrism who favored a "broader," more "all-inclusive" organization. In practically every country in Europe, especially France, voices were raised in favor of the more accommodating perspective. Their fundamental criterion for political collaboration was as simple as it was false: opposition to Stalinism. These people sought to operate in politics much after the manner of those who strike up close personal friendships solely on the basis of mutual and pet dislikes. Trotsky fought the centrist trends implacably. For example, in answer to Paz and Treint, the French champions of an "all-inclusive" organization, he wrote:

They dream of creating an international association which will be open to everybody: those who support Chiang Kai-shek and those who support the Soviet Republic [in the 1930 conflict over the Manchurian railway]; those who endeavor to save the "autonomy" of the industrial unions from Communism as well as those who struggle for the influence of Communism in the trade unions; those who are for a united front with the Right wing groups [the Bukharin wing in Russia; the Brandlerites in Germany; the Lovestoneites in the U.S., etc.] against the official party as well as those who are for a united front with the official party against the Right wing groups. This program for a melting-pot is being advanced under the slogan of "party democracy." Could any one invent a more malicious mockery of party democracy?

Trotsky's criteria for the building of the International, it will be observed, were not at all based on purely negative bonds. What he invariably sought was not unity for unity's sake, but unity based on community of ideas. No selection was worthwhile in his opinion unless it was a selection of co-thinkers animated by common basic views, by the same fundamental principles.

This was Trotsky's position during the years when the movement functioned as a faction of the Third International; this remained his position after 1933 when the movement turned to

the task of building the Fourth International. The English ILP, the German SAP and others then came to the fore with proposals for a new melting pot. Trotsky rejected an "all-inclusive" International just as he had previously rejected an "all-inclusive" international faction. In the five years that elapsed between the issuance of the call for the Fourth International and its Founding Congress in 1938, the centrists played out to the fullest measure their experiment of creating a "broad," "non-sectarian," "non-dogmatic" International organization. Their catch-all International, the London Bureau, otherwise known as the "International Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Unity"—a pretentious body, without a banner, without a program, was a conglomeration of parties and groups moving simultaneously in all directions. As Trotsky predicted, it fell apart without leaving a trace.

The Norwegian Labor Party of Tranmael broke with the London Bureau and entered the capitalist government of Norway. The Swedish Socialist Party, one of the original mainstays, had found its way back into the embraces of the Social Democracy; the German SAP travelled in the same direction. The Brandler-Lovestone "international" that adhered to the Bureau in its heyday simply dissolved. The splinter exile groups (the Italian Maximalists and the Austrian Red Front "lefts") gave up the ghost. The ILP, the lone survivor of this galaxy, continued to vegetate.

* * *

The early splits in the Trotskyist movement which we have already recounted were in reality only anticipations of the two subsequent struggles upon the outcome of which the very fate of the International depended.

The first of these came in connection with the Spanish Civil War which erupted in 1936; the second coincided with the outbreak of the Second World War.

The internal crisis in connection with the Spanish Civil War was precipitated by the following developments:

Under the leadership of Andres Nin the majority of Spanish Trotskyist section merged with the semi-nationalist Catalan Federation of Maurin. The product of this fusion was the POUM (Party of Marxist Unity) with a typically centrist program. This sacrifice of principles for the sake of "unity" led unavoidably to disastrous results. The POUM was not a revolutionary party at all, but like its prototypes merely gave the appearance of being one. It began its career by engaging in electoral maneuvers with the Spanish People's Front and ended by the entry of Nin into the bourgeois government, that is to say, by the commission of the greatest crime of all in a period of the socialist revolution.

The policies of the POUM were supported not only by the London Bureau, to which it was affiliated, but met with widespread sympathy among revolutionary workers throughout the world. As a matter of fact, there were illusions about the POUM within the ranks of the Trotskyists.

A break with the POUM implied swimming against the stream, including broad sections of class-conscious workers. Trotsky did not hesitate. He did not change his course.

In January 1936, after the POUM entered into an electoral bloc with the Spanish People's Front, Trotsky branded its course as *treachery*, and added in conclusion:

As far as we are concerned we prefer clarity. In Spain, genuine revolutionists will no doubt be found who will mercilessly expose the betrayal of Maurin, Nin, Andrade and Co., and lay the foundation for the Spanish section of the Fourth International.

Franco's assault came in July 1936. The POUM did not

effect a change in its policy, but slid further and further on its false and perfidious course. Trotsky continued to criticise and oppose. The subsequent fate of the POUM bore out his position to the hilt. It is hardly necessary to point out that had a different policy been followed, the Fourth International would have assumed responsibility for the terrible defeat in Spain and would have been, in consequence, badly compromised.

Trotsky's Break With Sneevliet

Among the organizations that sided with the POUM was the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party of Holland (RSAP) which under the leadership of Sneevliet and Schmidt was one of the signatories to the August 1935 call for the Fourth International. Trotsky remained firm, even though this meant a break with one of the largest mass parties affiliated to the Trotskyist movement at the time.

Despite this grave internal crisis, and without the RSAP, it became nevertheless possible by September 1938 to convene the Founding Conference of the Fourth International.

Less than a year later, in July 1939, Trotsky was able to declare:

The international organization of Brandler, Lovestone, etc., which appeared to be many times more powerful than our organizations has crumbled to dust. The alliance between Walcher and the Norwegian Labor Party and Pivert himself (leader of PSOP, a French counterpart of the Spanish POUM) burst into fragments. The London Bureau has given up the ghost. But the Fourth International, despite all the difficulties and crises, has grown uninterruptedly, has its own organizations in more than a score of countries, and was able to convene its World Congress under the most difficult circumstances. . . .

The movement could derive this inner drive and power from one source, and one source only—its unassailable ideas, its correct and tested program. This is how Trotsky explained it in July 1939:

The Fourth International is developing as a grouping of new and fresh elements on the basis of a common program growing out of the entire past experience, incessantly checked and rendered more precise. In the selection of its cadres the Fourth International has great advantages over the Third. These advantages flow precisely from the difficult conditions of struggle in the epoch of reaction. The Third International took shape swiftly because many "Lefts" easily and readily adhered to the victorious revolution. The Fourth International takes form under the blows of defeats and persecutions. The ideological bond created under such conditions is extraordinarily firm.

Within a few months after writing these lines, Trotsky was to engage in and lead, for the last time in his lifetime, another decisive struggle for the program and tradition of the Fourth International. This was the 1939-40 struggle against the petty-bourgeois opposition within the SWP. Involved here was still another attempt to revise and overthrow the colossal conquest of the revolutionary vanguard—its theory, its political principles, its organizational ideas and practices. Precisely because of its scope, the 1939-40 struggle recapitulated the essential features of all the preceding struggles.

The extraordinary firmness of the ideological bond that binds the movement created by Trotsky has been decisively confirmed by the emergence of a stronger and more homogeneous Fourth International out of the fiery test of World War II. What safeguards its future is the very same thing that has safeguarded its past, namely: it is being built in the same way and with the same ideas and methods that Trotsky taught all his co-thinkers.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

(A History of Its Ideas and Its Struggles)

By MICHEL PABLO

I

From the Founding Conference (September 1938) to the Outbreak of the Second World War (September 1939)

The Fourth International was founded in 1938, about five years after the coming to power of fascism in Germany and the historic bankruptcy of the Third International and the Communist Parties in this decisive test.

The year 1938 was indeed not propitious to rapid revolutionary developments that might swell the ranks of the new International. It was on the contrary one of the most sombre pre-war years, a culminating point in the period of defeats for the international proletariat, of fascist reaction, of Stalinist crimes and terror. The experiment of the Popular Front in France was ending up with the coming to power in April 1938 of the reactionary government of Daladier, which was beginning to liquidate one by one the gains of 1936, signing the Munich Pact, and hurling the confused and demoralized country on to the path to imperialist war.

In Spain, after Franco's capture of Teruel, there was rapidly looming up the defeat of the Spanish Revolution, betrayed by its "Popular Front" leadership.

In the USSR, Stalin's Thermidorian reaction was at high tide with the third big Moscow Trial, the "Trial of the 21," which condemned to death and executed Bukharin and 18 of his companions, all Old Bolsheviks, leaders of the October Revolution and of the Third International.

The shadow of the imperialist war was spreading darkly, dominating the international scene.

In Europe Hitler's coups d'état followed one on another, bringing closer the fateful date of the new world massacre: the occupation of Austria; a similar fate in preparation for Czechoslovakia.

In the Far East, Japan was settling into the difficult war against China and sounding out by cannon-shots the USSR's ability to resist on its eastern frontier.

The arms race in all capitalist countries was at its height. That was, furthermore, a means of combatting the persistent and still not yet overcome economic crisis that had fallen upon the capitalist world from 1929 on.

War itself was more and more silhouetted on the horizon as the only outcome to this situation.

Stalin, conscious of this danger and fearing to be lost in case of a conflict with an imperialist coalition, had staked everything on the "Democratic Front for Peace" in collaboration with the "democratic" imperialists of the United States, France, and England. This class-collaboration policy, combined with the sanguinary terror of the GPU toward revolutionary tendencies in the USSR and in the international workers' movement as a whole, had ended by bringing that movement's decomposition and demoralization to its peak.

From then on, therefore, the road was wide open to the outbreak of the imperialist massacre.

Only the handful of Trotskyists who had survived Stalinist terror in the USSR and in the capitalist and dependent countries were fighting unflinchingly on a programme of revolutionary Marxism, denouncing the war preparations of imperialism — both "fascist" and "democratic" — and calling for a *class front* to fight effectively against fascism and the danger of war.

In order to guarantee the masses peace, Leon Trotsky wrote just after Munich in September 1938, we must overthrow imperialism under all its masks. Only the proletarian revolution can accomplish this task. To prepare this goal, the proletariat and the oppressed peoples must be set in irreconcilable opposition to the imperialist bourgeoisie and rallied in a single international revolutionary army. This great liberating task is now being carried out exclusively by the Fourth International.

For this reason, the international tendency of the Trotskyists, known at that time (and more especially after 1936) under the name of "Movement for the Fourth International," became the target for the repression and the hatred of "fascist" and "democratic" imperialism, of the social-patriots, and of the Kremlin lackeys.

In Germany, many Trotskyists lay in Nazi jails and concentration camps; in Greece, the prisons and the places of exile of Metaxas, ally of the "democratic" imperialists, held the same fate for Trotskyists.

But the blows of imperialism counted for little compared to those rained on the revolutionary Marxists by the enraged Thermidorians of the first workers' state.

Proletarians will learn one day, which we think will be soon now, the incredible epic of the Bolshevik-Leninists in the USSR, fighting fearlessly against their Stalinist exterminators, in the prisons, the concentration camps, and the Arctic isolators.

The year 1938 witnessed the death in Paris, after an abrupt and brief illness, in most suspicious circumstances, of Leon Trotsky's son, Leon Sedov. A few months later, in July 1938, there disappeared, kidnapped by the GPU, the international secretary Rudolf Klement (Camille), a student of German origin.

In Mexico itself, the Stalinists' preparations for the assassination of Trotsky were multiplied: their agents, with Lombardo Toledano at their head, were trying to create in advance an ambience favorable to this crime.

In Spain, Trotskyists and POUMists were also being persecuted and imprisoned by the Stalinist police of the "Popular Front" government.

THE FOUNDING CONFERENCE

It was in this ambience of imperialist and Stalinist terror, and of the approach of the war, that the Founding Conference of the Fourth International was held on September 3rd 1938. It lasted in fact only one day, somewhere in the inner Paris suburbs (1), with 30 delegates present, representing the ten following countries, plus a Latin-American representative: USA, USSR, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Belgium, Holland, Greece. Several other sections were prevented by circumstances from sending their representatives.

Despite the difficult conditions of this meeting and the still fresh memory of the kidnapping of Rudolf Klement, the conference was inspired by the great afflatus of its historic significance and the importance of its labors. Confronting the rumblings of the war approaching with giant strides, recording the incredible bankruptcy of the traditional Social-Democratic and Stalinist leaderships in Germany, in Austria, in France, and in Spain, the international tendency of revolutionary Marxists affirmed its unshakable confidence in the future of the proletarian revolution and of world socialism.

The threatened storm was the inevitable penalty for the failure of the traditional leaderships of the workers' movement to replace war by its revolutionary solution. But the war in its passage would not fail to sweep away all the old equilibrium and to bring about the upsurge of a new revolutionary period with unimaginable possibilities, in which the opportunities for authentic revolutionary Marxism and, consequently, for the Fourth International, would become clear.

To give the revolutionary Marxist tendency the structure of a single international organization, to endow it with a precise programme, would be already a guarantee of its survival as such and of its inevitable future successes. That is exactly what the Founding Conference of the Fourth International accomplished.

WHY THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Between 1933 and 1938, and at the very Founding Congress of the Fourth International, the question of a new International was often debated (2).

Patiently but firmly, our tendency, with Leon Trotsky at its head, fought during this period against the centrists outside and the skeptics inside our own ranks as to whether *it was opportune to create a new International*. These arguments were in reality summarized in this one: *The revolutionary Marxist tendency is too isolated from the masses, who have not yet become conscious of the betrayal of the traditional leaderships and especially of Stalinism*. Consequently it is necessary to wait for more favorable conditions and avoid creating an International "artificially."

How did we answer these arguments, out of the mouth of the very Founding Conference of the Fourth International? By noting simultaneously three things: the bankruptcy of the traditional leaderships, proved by the historic defeats of the proletariat in Germany in 1933, in France and Spain in the years 1936 to 1938, defeats that produced no reaction of possible correction of the organizations led by the Social-Democrats and the Stalinists; the incompatibility of our programme and doctrine with those of these leaderships; our factual existence as an international tendency fighting on the same programme. That is to say, our existence as an international organization was both an objective result, and a fact, an objective cause, which from then on was influencing developments. That the masses were not yet with us was a secondary aspect compared to our objective existence as an effectively international organization, created, consolidated, and inspired by a common programme, fundamentally distinct from any other tendency.

The Fourth International emerged as an international tendency opposed to the traditional leaderships, through the very development of the class struggle in the pre-war world, and of the inevitable differentiations which this caused within the international communist vanguard.

From the point of view both of ideas, programme, and doctrine, and of cadres, the Fourth International was the result of the objective development, of the very evolution of the workers' movement, and nowise an "artificial" creation. The fact of its conjunctural isolation from the broad masses could not be evoked as an argument against its founding. Revolutionary

(1) The official communiqué of the conference, for security reasons obvious for that period, gave Switzerland as the place of the meeting.

(2) More particularly by the Polish delegates.

Marxists have long since understood the concrete dialectic that exists among the class, the parties, and the leaderships. There is a fusion among these elements only at rare moments in history, only at culminating points of the revolutionary upsurge. The changing dynamics of the class struggle constantly disassociate these elements and bring them together again, without identifying them.

The party, furthermore, while being a fraction of the class, is distinguished from it by its ideological quality, by the fact that it constitutes a more homogeneous fraction, more enlightened than the class as a whole about the conditions and the goals of the class struggle. The programme and the doctrine, while being constantly worked up out of the elements of the class struggle, its actions and its experiences, are the party's own work, and not that of the class as a whole.

Similar relationships exist between the party as a mass organization and its leadership group. A party, a revolutionary leadership, can be very far in advance of the mentality and consciousness of the masses, just as they can sometimes fall no less colossally behind them. The history of the international workers' movement is full of examples.

What definitively counts for the quality of a revolutionary leadership is not the degree of its liaison with the class at any given moment, but its programme and its doctrine, as well as the continuity and consistency with which they are advocated by the revolutionary cadres. If the programme and doctrine effectively correspond, not to the conjunctural consciousness and mentality of the class, but to the objective situation; and if the organization advocates these ideas with consistency and perseverance, sooner or later it will bring about its junction with the masses set in movement toward it by the objective conditions that finally determine the struggle of the masses.

That is the basic reasoning that we find both in the act of founding the Fourth International and in its programme.

It was already known in 1938 that the new International was and would remain for a whole period isolated from the broad masses; even an aggravated isolation was foreseen at the time of the beginning of the war; nor was much confidence felt in the adults of that period, tired out and demoralized by the defeats and betrayals of the traditional leaderships. We staked especially on the new revolutionary period to which the upsets of the war would not fail to give rise.

Enemies of or renegades from our movement rarely miss the opportunity to remind us of the "prophecy" that has not been "fulfilled" contained in Trotsky's 19 October 1938 speech to the meeting held in New York to celebrate the founding of the Fourth International:

During the next ten years the programme of the

Fourth International will become the guide for millions, and these millions of revolutionaries will be able to move heaven and earth.

It is true that the evolution of the Second World War, by dividing the imperialist camp, presented a variant which aided the survival of the traditional leaderships. This in its turn complicated revolutionary developments and lengthened the respite. The fact remains, however, that millions, in spite of everything, have taken the revolutionary road in China and elsewhere, overthrowing capitalism and imperialism on a great part of the globe, and above all that a new revolutionary period has arisen from the war, the most extraordinary in upsets and dynamism. It is in fact the period of the triumph of the revolutionary programme of the Fourth International, as concerns both capitalism and Stalinism.

What is this programme?

THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME

From the viewpoint of *political documents*, the main contribution of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International was unquestionably its adoption of *The Transitional Programme*. (3)

Worked up principally by Leon Trotsky, this programme was subjected to full discussion before and during the Conference, in which the then principal cadres of our movement took part. This programme is naturally not *the* programme of the Fourth International, ie its *total* programme, but only a part thereof, which covers "action from today until the beginning of the Revolution" (Leon Trotsky). In order for it to be complete, as Trotsky himself specified (4), it would have to have at the beginning a part that was more analytical from a theoretical viewpoint concerning "modern capitalist society in its imperialist stage."

We find this analysis in other writings by Leon Trotsky, such for example as the criticism of the programme of the Third International worked up by Bukharin on the occasion of its Sixth World Congress, and *The Permanent Revolution*. It is in these writings that there must be sought the fundamental characteristics of the imperialist period which determine the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary proletariat.

There would also have to be a final part concerning itself with "the social revolution, the seizure of power through insurrection, the transformation of capitalist society into the dictatorship of the proletariat, and of the latter into socialist society."

The programmatic ideas of our International in this more and more important and timely field must be sought in the writings of Leon Trotsky on the USSR and Stalinism, particularly in *The Revolution Be-*

(3) Its real title is *The Death-Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*.

(4) Discussion on *The Transitional Programme*.

trayed, as well as in the later documents of the Fourth International.

The goal of the Transitional Programme was and remains specific :

...to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist programme of the revolution ; to aid in thus surmounting "the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary situation" which characterizes our period, "and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard," due essentially to the policy of betrayal of the traditional leaderships.

This bridge, the Transitional Programme specifies, should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion : the conquest of power by the proletariat.

This is what distinguishes this programme, dialectical in structure, from the programmes of the Social-Democrats and Stalinists, which set up an organic separation between their minimum programmes, limited to reforms within the framework of capitalist society, and their maximum programmes, promising for an indeterminate future the replacement of capitalism by socialism.

The Transitional Programme, modeling itself on the way the first Congresses of the Communist International (5) posed revolutionary tactics, wipes out this distinction and tries on the contrary to connect up organically the struggle for the immediate demands of the masses with the struggle for power.

The programme's *transitional*, that is, *dynamic and revolutionary*, and *not static and reformist*, structure is not, however, a mental trick, an intellectual abstraction. It is based, on the contrary, on the conviction that the orientation of the masses is in the last analysis determined by the objective conditions that characterize society.

If consequently the programme is worked out in adaptation, not to the conjunctural mentality of the masses, but to objective conditions, we can be certain that sooner or later the masses will adopt the leading lines and the slogans of such a programme. That is the meaning and the strength of revolutionary Marxism.

Naturally, objective conditions determine only the *content* of the programme. In order to decide on its *form*, the form of its slogans for action, the form of agitation or propaganda, a genuine revolutionary leadership in touch with the realities of the workers' movement will always take into consideration the exact mentality and consciousness of the masses. Sectarianism in such a case would consist in concerning oneself

only with the content while neglecting the form capable of conveying it best, fastest, and in time, to the masses. On the contrary, opportunism would consist in sacrificing the content to the form so as supposedly to shorten the paths over which the ripening and revolutionary organization of the class pass.

The Transitional Programme, developed on the basis of such considerations, has successfully undergone the test of events and of time. Several of its fundamental slogans have been taken up throughout the world by immense masses, taught by their own experience. Such for example are the slogans : *sliding scale of wages and sliding scale of working hours, workers' control of industry, expropriation of certain groups of capitalists, strike pickets and workers' militias, factory committees and soviets.*

Indeed, certain among them are now part of the official programme of various trade-union organisms, from the unified AFL-CIO in the USA to the Bolivian COB and the Chilean CUT. Naturally, these organizations always have an *eclectic and minimalist* tendency which consists of taking certain slogans out of the programme and filling them with a *reformist meaning*. But the fact that at a given moment such-and-such a slogan of the Transitional Programme has been taken up—necessarily, as it were—by the masses, shows the scientific soundness of this programme, based on a correct evaluation of objective conditions and of the movement of the masses determined by these conditions.

What can we say at the present moment about the validity of the Transitional Programme twenty years after it was worked out ? That it remains in general timely, save for a few adaptations rendered necessary by new elements in the situation. For example the section on the "trade unions in the transitional epoch" could with advantage be improved by including some paragraphs on the possible role of the trade unions, in semi-colonial and dependent countries, going outside specifically economic limits. The broad-scale introduction of automation and atomic energy will unquestionably give rise to the formulation of new economic slogans, as well as new forms of organization.

The section on "transitional demands in fascist countries" is now—at least temporarily—rather out-of-date, even though it contains highly instructive appraisals about the revolutionary way of using democratic slogans and of conceiving their organic liaison with transitional slogans.

On the contrary, the section on the "problems of the transitional period" in the workers' states takes on an importance quite other than in 1938, because of both the evolution of the USSR since then, and the appearance of new workers' states.

The indispensable changes and additions to this chapter we shall find in the later documents of the

(5) Particularly the Third Congress (1921) in its "Theses on Tactics."

Fourth International, and more especially in those of its Fourth and Fifth World Congresses.

Leon Trotsky described the adoption of the Transitional Programme as "our capital conquest." And it was in fact the fundamental contribution of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International. But the work of this conference was not limited to that document. Besides that, the Founding Conference also accomplished the following tasks: it adopted a manifesto on the danger of the war that was silhouetted on the horizon; a resolution on the war in the Far East, and another on the world role of American imperialism. It also adopted the first statutes of the Fourth International containing the declaration of principles of its policy and its organizational structure as the world party of socialist revolution, based on a regime of democratic centralism on the international scale.

Various other resolutions concerned particular questions of an internal nature: the unification of the Trotskyist movement in England and Greece, and its situation in France, in Poland, and in Mexico. Another resolution concerned the question of the policy to be followed in the youth conference which was held soon after the Founding Congress of the Fourth International. Greetings were addressed to the fighters in Spain, to the dead, imprisoned and exiled militants of the Fourth International, and to Leon Trotsky.

In short, a very considerable labor was accomplished by the First World Congress of the new International, a striking proof of the intense political life of the movement it represented, and of its vitality.

THE PERIOD UNTIL THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR

The months that followed the foundation of the International were marked by the worsening of the international situation, evolving rapidly toward war, the debacle of the Kremlin's policy of the "Democratic Front for Peace" by means of Popular Fronts and class collaboration with the "democratic" bourgeoisie, and new defeats of the international proletariat.

Analyzing the international situation after Munich, Leon Trotsky easily brought out the real meaning of the compromise there reached, which, far from preventing the war, was in reality precipitating it. He furthermore demonstrated the bankruptcy of the Kremlin's "Popular Front" policy, and called for a class policy.

After the Czechoslovak events, the key to the European situation lay once more in France, where the Socialists and Communists had by their April 1938 vote brought into power the government of Daladier, the gravedigger of the Popular Front. France was now evolving rapidly toward a reactionary regime whose outlook was the perspective of war.

Nevertheless, the French masses still wanted to resist this trend. Despite the betrayal of Jouhaux and Thorez, and the discouragement and confusion of the most advanced sectors of the proletariat of that country, about two million workers went on strike between mid-November and the beginning of December against Daladier's extra-constitutional measures. This was, however, a rear-guard action, for the reformist and Stalinist leaderships had no intention of seriously combatting Daladier and replacing him this time by a genuinely worker's government.

On December 14th 1938 Leon Trotsky, commenting on these struggles, wrote his article, "The Decisive Hour is Approaching in France," in which, having drawn the balance sheet of the bankruptcy of the Popular Front, supposedly "betrayed" by its partner, the Radicals, "the most corrupt party" of business and careerist circles of the French bourgeoisie, he urged the vanguard elements to resolute revolutionary *action*, the only thing able to try to stop the trend to totalitarian reaction and war.

Side-by-side with this, the Spanish Revolution was living out its last tragic hours. The new year 1939 began with the onrush of the Franco hordes toward Barcelona, which the "Popular Front" government of Negrín was soon to abandon. The Stalinists tried to cover up the debacle by holding out bright prospects of "resistance," and above all by unloading the blame on their "democratic" bourgeois allies and on the Socialists, while carrying on, right up to the last minute of the fall of Barcelona, the persecutions, the trials, and the imprisonments of the POUMists and the Trotskyists.

In February 1939 Leon Trotsky drew the balance sheet of the "Spanish tragedy," and brought out how there also the Popular Front had proved itself to be "a system organized so as to fool and betray the exploited masses."

As a policy of class collaboration, subordinated, as everywhere else, to the political leadership of the "democratic" bourgeois ally, the Spanish Popular Front systematically sabotaged the social deepening of the revolution so as supposedly to devote itself the better to the "military" pursuit of the struggle. It did not dare to proceed either to agrarian reform or to the liberation of Morocco, and it did everything to crush the soviet organisms of the masses. Thus it both disappointed the masses and consolidated Franco's positions.

Negrín and Azaña begging Franco for peace after the fall of Barcelona, and soon the lamentable exodus toward the Pyrenees—with these pictures of humiliation was sealed the extraordinary epic written during three years by the Spanish masses.

On the plane of the Fourth International movement itself during these first months after its founding, we must mention: activity and some successes by the

French, Belgian, and American sections ; news from the sections in Argentina, Peru, and Greece ; the arrests of a large number of the leaders of the unified section of the last-named country, among them Comrade P Pouliopoulos (October 1938) ; the news, arriving in January 1939, of the trial and sentencing to long prison terms of our German comrades of Magdeburg and Berlin by the Nazis ; the persecution of the leading comrades in Spain, Grandizo Munis and Carlini, by the Stalinists ; the joint campaign against Leon Trotsky, accused by the Stalinists of Mexico of being an "agent of imperialism," and by the imperialist press of the USA of having "inspired" President Cárdenas of Mexico in his policy of "nationalization" of petroleum ; the campaigns of the SWP for the right of asylum in the United States for political refugees from Europe, for the freeing of the leaders of the POUM arrested by the Stalinists in Spain, and against the war plans of Yankee imperialism which were becoming ever clearer.

In a general way the essential policy of the sections of the Fourth International at that period was concentrated around the struggle against the danger of war. Taking their inspiration from the Manifesto issued by the Founding Congress, the different sections of the Fourth International were insisting on the following ideas : The "democratic" imperialists and the "fascist" imperialists were actively preparing for a new war. The reason for it would not be the defense of "democracy" against "fascism," or of some new "poor Belgium" (in this case, Czechoslovakia) against "aggression," but the internal contradictions of imperialism as a whole. Only the class action of the proletariat and of the oppressed peoples would be able to stop the fascism and war engendered by capitalism.

Just as during the First World War, it was necessary to stand resolutely up against "social-patriotism," against class collaboration, while distinguishing the eventuality of the USSR, a workers' state, being involved in an inter-imperialist war, as well as the case of colonial countries standing up against imperialism.

The correctness of such a line did not have to wait long to be strikingly verified, on the one hand by the compromise concluded by the "democratic" bourgeoisies with the "fascist" bourgeoisies at the time of the Munich Agreement, and on the other hand by the spectacular reversal operated by Stalin with the German-Soviet rapprochement. It was Leon Trotsky who first expressed the hypothesis of such a possible rapprochement between Stalin and Hitler, in October 1938.

Soon after, the international press began also to glimpse this possibility. On March 6th 1939, Trotsky again discussed the possibility of a Stalin-Hitler agreement, and endeavored to clarify its significance. Just a few days later (March 10th) there was held

the XVIIIth Congress of the CP of the USSR, in which Stalin presented a report. Manuilsky, suddenly baptized "secretary" of the Communist International in place of Dimitrov, who suffered an unexplained eclipse, also spoke in the name of the International. The two speeches were most extraordinary, characteristic of the cynical opportunism of the Stalinist leadership.

The two orators, who were speaking almost at the very moment when the Spanish revolution was undergoing a last humiliation at Madrid, turned over to the Franquists by the military junta presided over by "Comrade Miaja" (6), the military hero of the Popular Front and a member of the Spanish Communist Party, did not even mention the Spanish defeat. It was as if the Spanish revolution and its tragic end had never existed ! Stalin in particular did not even deign to breathe a word about the policy of the "Popular Front," reserving all his eloquence for an unexpected indictment of the democratic states and bourgeoisies, his allies of the day before, and for undissimulated advances, this time toward the fascist states !

Discovering "inter-imperialist antagonisms," he explained that the roots of inter-imperialist rivalries between the Axis powers on the one hand and the "democracies" on the other must be sought in the "unjust" Treaty of Versailles imposed by the imperialist victors of the First World War ! Getting into step with him, Manuilsky criticized the policy of Popular Fronts for having aided "certain tendencies of rightist opportunism" which "idealized the role of the so-called democratic states and blurred their imperialist character" !

In his usual way, Stalin, observing the obvious failure of his Popular Front policy, and being engaged in bringing about a rapprochement with Hitler, unloaded all errors and defeats on his subordinates, and, without any self-criticism, moved on to the directly opposite policy !

Meanwhile the trend toward war was speeding up extremely. In March 1939 Hitler entered Prague and practically annexed Czechoslovakia ; in April, Mussolini annexed Albania, and London mobilized.

In the United States, Roosevelt was putting the last touches to war mobilization plans and openly took a position for the use of "force against force." He thus encouraged England and France in their feverish preparations for war against the Axis powers. The news coming from the International during these

(6) Who was General José Miaja, President of the "Madrid Defense Council," who turned over the capital to Franco, and whom the Stalinists continued to cover up ? "The President of the famous Madrid Defense Commission, Comrade Miaja, is a member of the Communist Party. His work, with that of his colleagues, will enter into history !" wrote the official organ of the Communist International, *Imprekor*, dated 6 February 1937.

months concerned the activity of the Trotskyist organizations in the United States, in France, in Canada, in China, and in Indochina. In this last-mentioned country the Trotskyist leader Ta-Tu-Thau was freed from his jail sentence and soon after (April 1938) triumphantly elected, with his whole slate, in the Cochinchina elections

The flirtation between Hitler and Stalin was continuing. After Dimitrov, theoretician of the Popular Front (replaced by Manuisky who was discovering the virtues of Nazi Germany), Litvinov, who for years had directed the diplomacy of the "Democratic Front for Peace," was eliminated and replaced by Molotov (May 1939). The summer began under the auspices of the Dantzig crisis and Hitler's threats to Poland.

On August 21st 1939, Hitler announced the non-aggression" pact concluded with Stalin !

Far from preventing the war, this pact, deeply disorienting the world proletariat (which had not expected in spite of everything such a spectacular reversal by the Kremlin), and encouraging the Nazis, in reality only rendered the unleashing of the conflict an immediate question from then on.

In order to attack Poland and carry on the war against France and England, Hitler needed the benevolent "neutrality" of the USSR, and its raw materials, Trotsky declared to the press on September 4th 1939. The political and commercial pact now concluded assures Hitler of both.

The next day, Friday, September 5th, the Second World War had begun.

What was, then, the policy urged by the Fourth International in the face of this war ?

The question has its importance both with reference to the attitude of the International during the development of the second world-wide conflict, in which after 1941 the USSR itself was involved, and with reference to the divergences that arose within the International itself.

II

From the Outbreak of the War (September 1939) to the Assassination of Leon Trotsky (August 1940)

The war question had been a very early concern of the Fourth International. Indeed, from the time that Hitler sprang to power in Germany, Trotsky had concluded that the Second World War had become thenceforth almost inevitable. He did not, for all that, stop calling the proletariat to the revolutionary struggle in both the fascist capitalist states and in the "democratic" countries, since only such a struggle had any chance of turning back the trend toward war by the victory of the revolution.

In June 1934, a fundamental document of our

movement, entitled "The War and the Fourth International," defined its essential positions on the war in preparation (7). The document correctly foresaw that the new war would begin as an *inter-imperialist war* between two blocs of imperialist countries, the "rich ones", the Treaty of Versailles victors on the one side, and the "poor ones," those vanquished by this treaty or those in an inferior position in the dividing up of the world, on the other. The goal of such a war would be, as during the first world-wide conflict, the "redivision of the world" among the great imperialist powers.

Nevertheless, the document specified, any great war, independently of its initial motives, must inevitably raise the question of a military intervention against the USSR for the purpose of transfusing fresh blood into the sclerotic veins of capitalism.

The document then took up again the classic arguments that Lenin had developed at the time of the First World War (8) against the social-patriotic slogans of "national defense," "defense of democracy," and defense of small or neutral nations," and polemicized against their being served up again, warmed over in the sauce of the new circumstances, by Social-Democratic advocates, centrists of every kidney, and those of the Stalinist Third International.

That International, already the completely docile servant of the diplomacy of the Soviet bureaucracy, was attempting to solve questions as important as those of war and peace by opportunist key-formulae like "general disarmament" and "rejection of aggression" !

The document concretely foresaw the eventuality of the USSR getting involved in an inter-imperialist war as the ally of one of the two blocs of states in the fight. It admitted that the USSR, as a state that was isolated and weakened as a result of the repeated defeats of the proletariat caused by the Stalinist leadership, had the right to conclude an alliance with this or that imperialist state, and even with this or that camp of imperialist states. But the proletariat and its parties must preserve their independence in relation to these imperialist allies of the USSR. Far from idealizing them in any manner whatsoever, the proletariat must fight them in case of war by a Leninist attitude, one of *revolutionary defeatism, advocated equally in both camps.*

By *revolutionary defeatism*, the document, taking as its models Lenin and the Third International in his time, understood : *the carrying out by the proletariat, in case of war, of a revolutionary policy against its own bourgeoisie, independently of possible consequences of this policy on the military front, its*

(7) Theses issued by the International Secretariat, dated 10 June 1934, at Geneva.

(8) In this connection, vide Zinoviev's collection, *Against the Stream.*

weakening and even collapse. Military defeats of its bourgeoisie, resulting from the development of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, would be preferable and more favorable to the final goal of the Revolution than the knuckling-under of the proletariat in a sacred union."

The alliance of any given imperialist country with the USSR must nowise alter this conduct of the proletariat ; it would, however, call for a certain difference in *practical tasks* in the case of a proletariat of a country at war with the USSR. In the case of an allied country, the proletariat must not, for example, sabotage the transport of arms destined for the USSR, whereas in the case of a country fighting against the USSR, all forms of action, including sabotages, are permitted and even necessary.

The document concluded with an analysis of the idea that the struggle against the war in preparation was in reality synonymous with the struggle for the formation and strengthening of a new revolutionary International : the Fourth International.

On August 9th 1937 in his article "Before the New World War," Trotsky became more affirmative as to the eventuality of a new inter-imperialist conflict. He even set the date with considerable exactness : in one or two years. The war, Trotsky said in this article, would begin between the states who were defenders and those who were adversaries of the status quo, but, once begun, it would rapidly degenerate into a fight for a new division of the world, including of the USSR.

As for the USSR's chances of survival, despite its international isolation and the terrible errors and crimes committed by the Stalinist regime in the USSR itself, Trotsky wrote :

Everything leads us to believe that if all of humanity is not thrown back into barbarism, the social bases of the soviet régime (the new forms of property and planned economy) will resist the ordeal of the war and even come out of it strengthened.

He reaffirmed this same position in the article he wrote just on the eve of the war's outbreak, 2 September 1939, on "The War and the Soviet-Nazi Pact."

The last official stand of the International on the Second World War before the USSR entered the conflict, and just before Trotsky's assassination, was that contained in the Manifesto of the "Emergency" Conference held the 19th and 20th May 1940 in the United States.

This international conference was called on the initiative of the Trotskyist organizations of the United States, Mexico, and Canada, with the participation also of representatives of the Trotskyist organizations of Germany, Belgium, Spain, Cuba, Argentina, Chile, and Puerto Rico. Its principal document was its manifesto, titled "The Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution," in which the Fourth International

restated its previous positions on the war and its will "not to change course," as Trotsky wrote soon after in an article under that title.

Indeed, the pressure caused by Hitler's spectacular victories was at that moment enormous and weighed heavily, including even on our own ranks. Let us briefly recall the evolution of events following on the declaration of war.

After the invasion of Poland in September 1939, there followed in December of the same year the invasion of Finland by Stalin. The League of Nations, dominated by Stalin's "democratic" ex-allies, took a position against the USSR. In March 1940 Finland, after an unexpected resistance, was led to ask peace from the Kremlin. In April 1940 Norway was jointly invaded by the "allies" and by Germany.

In May 1940 there began the French defeat and the occupation of France. The battle of continental Europe was practically won by Hitler, and his shadow was already spreading over England.

Hitler promised Europe's subject peoples centuries of "German peace," and the effect of his lightning-like victories was so great that people wondered how far and how long the Nazi steam-roller would roll.

The atmosphere of demoralization in the ranks of the workers' movement was lowering, aggravated by the terrible ambiguity maintained by the attitude of the USSR as ally of the Nazis.

For, in fact, the good entente between Hitler and Stalin continued. In November 1939 the Third International, by an article of Dimitrov, resurrected for this purpose, and by a manifesto, ratified the policy of rapprochement with Hitler. Dimitrov in his article picked up some arguments put forward a few days previously by Molotov (declarations of 31 October 1939). Molotov had said that Germany was fighting for the earliest possible end of the war and for peace, whereas England and France were for the continuation of the war and opposed to making peace. Dimitrov "theorized" these arguments, by establishing "two stages" : in the first, Hitler was "the aggressor" ; in the second, it was England and France who had gone over to the offensive against Germany, whereas the latter was now calling for "peace" !

The Manifesto of the Third International was, for its part, entirely aimed against the "democracies," ex-allies of the USSR, and did not breathe a word against Hitler !

In December 1939 Stalin, replying to Hitler's greetings on his birthday, declared that "the friendship of the peoples of Germany and of the USSR, *cemented by blood* [sic !], had all the preconditions for being prolonged and stabilized" !

It is true that, despite this scandalous policy toward Hitler, the Kremlin was not at all reassured about Hitler's final secret intentions, and tried to find guarantees against a possible sudden reversal by its new ally. The invasion of Finland, like the later inva-

sion of the Baltic countries in July 1940, was to a large extent determined by this fear.

After the defeat of France in June 1940, there could be discerned even a sort of slow withdrawal of the Stalinist policy toward Hitler, more perceptible at the beginning in the attitude of the Communist Parties of the United States and of England, which announced a new turn in the Kremlin's policy toward Hitler, who had become too powerful and, from this point of view, more to be feared than ever.

It remains none the less true that a terrible uneasiness was weighing on the international workers' movement, cast down by the defeats and betrayals of its traditional leaderships. This uneasiness had its repercussions, including within the ranks of the Fourth International, as we shall soon see.

For the moment let us concentrate on the stand of the Emergency Conference on the war question, at the moment when Hitler's victory became overwhelming. Was that a reason for the Fourth International to "change its course," to abandon its policy of "revolutionary defeatism" applicable in both camps, and to line up for example on the side of the "democracies" against fascism?

The Conference resolutely answered No. Despite the fact that the Manifesto was written "at a moment when, after overwhelming Holland and Belgium, the German armies are rolling like a tide of fire toward Paris and the Channel," the task posed by History remained always "not to support one part of the imperialist system against the other, but to put an end to the system as a whole."

The Manifesto foresaw the involvement of the USSR in the war as inevitable. In this case the war on the part of the USSR would be a *just war* (as in the case also of a colony fighting against its imperialism), and *it was necessary to defend the USSR unconditionally against imperialism*. But that would not give the right to extend this characterization of "just war" to include the USSR's possible imperialist allies.

Among the most important parts of the Manifesto are those which defined the meaning of the defense of the USSR, despite the crimes of Stalin committed in his operations in Poland and in Finland, by his alliance in general with the Nazis and against the international proletariat, and his tyrannical reign in the USSR itself.

The class-conscious worker, the Manifesto declared, knows that a successful struggle for complete emancipation is unthinkable without the defense of conquests already gained, however modest these may be.

In the case of the USSR, these conquests were called *the statified and planned economy that it was necessary to defend independently of this or that policy of Stalin* ("unconditionally") against imperialism.

The defense of the USSR, in this sense, was tied up with the defense also of all colonies against imperialism.

In the colonial and semi-colonial countries the struggle for an independent national state, the Manifesto proclaimed, and consequently the "defense of the fatherland," is different in principle from that of the imperialist countries. The revolutionary proletariat of the whole world gives unconditional support to the struggle of China and India for national independence, for this struggle, "by tearing the backward people out of the Asiatic system, particularism and foreign bondage, strikes powerful blows at imperialism." (Quoted from *War and the Fourth International*.)

The struggle for the national independence of the colonies, the Manifesto of the Emergency Conference further added, is, from the point of view of the revolutionary proletariat, only a transitional stage on the road to drawing the backward countries into the international socialist revolution.

The Manifesto accorded much importance to the revolutionary developments which the imperialist war, already begun, would not fail to produce in the colonies, especially in China, India, and Latin America. It concluded with the need of profiting by the war to bring about the victory of the world socialist revolution.

In contradistinction to the policy of the Second or the Third International, the Fourth International, the Manifesto declared, built its policy, not on the military ups-and-down of the capitalist states, but on the transformation of the imperialist war into a war of the workers against the capitalists, on the overthrow of the owning classes of all countries, on the world socialist revolution.

Independently of the course of the war, we fulfill our basic task: we explain to the workers the irreconcilability between their interests and the interests of bloodthirsty capitalism; we mobilize the toilers against imperialism; we propagate the unity of the workers in all warring and neutral countries; we call for the fraternization of workers and soldiers within each country, and of soldiers with soldiers on the opposite side of the battle front; we mobilize the women and youth against the war; we carry on constant, persistent, tireless preparation of the revolution—in the factories, in the mills, in the villages, in the barracks, at the front, and in the fleet.

This is our programme. Proletarians of the world, there is no other way out except to unite under the banner of the Fourth International! And it is fundamentally this line of the Manifesto of the Emergency Conference that has in general lighted the path that the Fourth International has followed since the Second World War.

[to be continued]

II

From the Outbreak of the War (September 1939) to the Assassination of Leon Trotsky (August 1940) [continued]

DIVERGENCES IN THE INTERNATIONAL

The declaration of war and the new crimes and betrayals of Stalinism subjected the International to enormous pressure and to a decisive test. Would it capitulate in its turn to social-patriotism or to anti-Soviet hysteria? Would it change course by reversing its fundamental positions about the war, the USSR, and Stalinism?

The quality of a revolutionary movement is tested by the most decisive events of history, wars and revolutions, which raise class tensions to the pitch of paroxysm. With the declaration of war, the Fourth International began to live in a growing isolation — as it had foreseen — from mass trends.

News arriving about the activities of the sections indicated an almost desperate struggle against the stream, and reflected the first measures of repression taken precisely against the revolutionary Marxists who were fighting against the imperialist war. In September 1939, the Belgian police arrested Walter Dauge, secretary of the Parti Socialiste Revolutionnaire, the organization of the Fourth International, for his activity against the war.

In Canada the Trotskyist militant Frank Watson experienced the same fate, as well as several militants in France.

The declarations of the organizations of the Fourth International against the deepening imperialist war, appealing to the proletariat to take action, were multiplied: in Belgium, France, Greece, Denmark, England, Canada, Australia, the United States, China, and in several countries of Latin America. At the same time, while criticizing Stalin's action, the organizations of the Fourth International energetically made a distinction between the Kremlin, political representative of the bureaucracy, and the USSR as a social state; they stood up against the anti-Soviet hysteria encouraged by Stalin's crimes and called for the unconditional defense of the USSR against imperialist plots.

With courage, lucidity, and cool heads, the Fourth

International fought on every front to defend its line, that of revolutionary Marxism applied to a given situation. It was a splendid struggle, carried on by forces which, though limited, saved the honor of the revolutionary proletarian movement and prepared with absolute confidence for the future.

The Fourth International, however, forms an integral part of the social context, and the pressures that were being exercised on the working class also ran through its own ranks, though in an inevitably deformed way. A serious ideological struggle soon took place in its ranks, centred around its policy toward the war, and more particularly toward the USSR. The centre of this struggle was the Socialist Workers Party, the Trotskyist organization in the United States, the country which, by the evolution of circumstances, was at the heart of the resistance against the fascist countries and which encouraged and was soon to lead the camp of the "democracies."

It is not by accident, furthermore, that the divergences crystalized around the question of the USSR and Stalinism. This question had occupied a key place, a central place, in the ideological formation of our movement, whose origins go back to the struggle following Lenin's death inside the C P of the USSR and the Third International against the rising Stalinist bureaucracy. Furthermore, the years 1936-1939 marked the Peak of Stalinist Thermidorian reaction: the Moscow Trials; the defeat of the Spanish revolution; the reactionary reversal of the situation in France; the Hitler-Stalin Pact; the unleashing of the war; the Soviet invasion of Poland and Finland.

In face of such a development in the situation, it was almost inevitable that voices, even within our own ranks, should rise up to cast doubt on our positions about the USSR and Stalinism. The revisionist trend, of which there had already been some manifestations before the outbreak of the war, was taking root in the specific context of the evolution of Stalinism and the international situation. It took on its most highly developed expression within the American organization, which played, beginning with the formation of the Fourth International and up to the end of the war, a central role in the life of the International.

This is explained both by the fact that it happened to be located outside the zone of military operations and Stalinist repression, and by the importance of its human and material means.

Between August 1939 and April 1940 there occurred within the S W P an important ideological struggle which had consequences in the entire International and which in every way raised basic questions on the theoretical and political as well as on the organizational plane for the whole of our movement. The results of this struggle were later incorporated in a durable and organic way in the formation and development of the Fourth International — whence the need to insist upon it in a more detailed way.

The divergences which had been for some time ripening within the S W P leadership burst out on the occasion of the signature of the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 22 August 1939. The very day the pact was signed, Max Shachtman, at that period one of the leaders of the S W P, declared: "The next meeting of the Political Bureau [of the S W P] must begin with a discussion of our evaluation of the Hitler-Stalin Pact with regard to our **characterization of the Soviet state** and future perspectives." On 5 September 1939, James Burnham, another leader of the S W P at that period, submitted to the Central Committee a document on "the character of the war," in which he brought into question the evaluation of the USSR as a workers' state "in any sense whatever."

Burnham considered that the involvement of the USSR in the imperialist war would not create any distinction concerning the particular case of the USSR, and declared himself to be opposed to its unconditional defense, i e, independently of this or that policy of the Kremlin, of Stalin.

From then on, the struggle in the S W P was opened up. Leon Trotsky soon (25 September 1939) replied to Burnham's document by his article, "The USSR in the War," whose importance in the ideological history of our movement could not be minimized even today. From the theoretical and political point of view, the struggle against the Shachtman-Burnham revisionist tendency was carried on almost exclusively by Leon Trotsky, who found the occasion to reaffirm and deepen his former conceptions about the USSR and Stalinism ¹. His behavior in the course of this struggle, furthermore, is highly interesting from the viewpoint of the conceptions he developed concerning the way of treating divergences in an organization of our movement and on the organizational level, properly speaking — hence the need to draw all the lessons from this experience, which is among the most important and richest in the history of the Fourth International.

On the theoretical and political plane, the ideological struggle inside the S W P quickly raised all the most fundamental questions: the dialectical materialist essence of Marxism's method of analysis; the character of the social regime of the USSR; the character of the period; perspectives.

¹) The collection of all Leon Trotsky's writings during this struggle have been published in English with the title *In Defense of Marxism* by Pioneer Publishers, New York.

THE METHOD OF MARXISM

In a given political context, characterized by the outbreak of an imperialist war in which the USSR would soon be involved, in alliance with Hitler or, once more, with the "democracies," it was a question of grasping once again the social character of the USSR and of determining the line and the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat toward both the war and the USSR. How to proceed in this difficult and complicated matter? with what criteria? with what method? The discussion quickly turned on the bases, the structure, and the functioning of the analysis itself. Was it possible, in defining the special character of the USSR, to start out from the "concrete political questions" of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, of the invasion of Poland or of Finland by the Kremlin, political acts carried out in a style related to that of fascism and imperialism? Or was it necessary rather to start out from **class criteria**, from the class definition of political phenomena, so as to arrive at valid conclusions? Let us take for example the war question. War is a political phenomenon, a **function** and **not a characteristic constitutive organ of society**. To understand war, its "just" or "unjust," progressive or reactionary, character, and to define a correct line toward this political phenomenon, one must start out from, not the **function**, but the **state** and the **society** of which it is a function. In other terms, a far-reaching class analysis is needed in order to determine the character of this or that war.

At the given conjuncture of the period, only such a dialectical materialist method could permit of getting away from the dangers of pragmatism and eclecticism and taking a correct position toward the war carried on by the "democratic" allies and their fascist adversaries, toward the "defense" of Finland, toward the USSR's "aggression" against it, toward the resistance of the colonies against the homelands. In what case was it a question of an imperialist war, of an "unjust war," and in what case was it a question of a "just war"? By starting out only from the "concrete facts," from the "circumstances," from the forms of the war, it was easy to end up for example by endorsing the cause of the "democracies" against fascism, or of the "defense" of "poor little Finland" against the "aggression" of the USSR. But the conclusions might be quite different if one looked upon the war as a **political phenomenon**, as a function of states and societies of a different class character.

The first way of proceeding was that of Burnham, an open adversary of the dialectic, and of Shachtman. The second was that of Leon Trotsky. In a famous passage of his article, "From a Scratch to the Danger of Gangrene" (24 January 1940), Trotsky defined in an epigrammatic way the divergences about the conception of method. Here is the passage:

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school, etc. In most cases, however, the mere class definition is inadequate, for a class consists of different strata, passes through different stages of development, comes under different conditions, is subjected to the influence of other classes. It becomes necessary to bring up these second and third rate factors in order to round out the analysis, and they are taken either partially or completely, depending upon the specific aim. But for a Marxist, analysis is impossible without a class characterization of the phenomenon under consideration.

The skeletal and muscular systems do not exhaust the anatomy of an animal; nevertheless an anatomical treatise which attempted to "abstract" itself from bones and muscles would dangle in midair. War is not an organ but a function of society, i. e., of its ruling class. It is impossible to define and study a function without understanding the organ, i. e., the state; it is impossible to gain scientific understanding of the organ without understanding the general structure of the organism, i. e., society. The bones and muscles of society consist of the productive forces and the class (property) relations. Shachtman holds it possible that a function, namely, war, can be studied "concretely" independently of the organ to which it pertains, i. e., the state. Isn't this monstrous?

This fundamental error is supplemented by another equally glaring. After splitting function away from organ, Shachtman in studying the function itself, contrary to all his promises, proceeds not from the abstract to the concrete but on the contrary dissolves the concrete in the abstract. **Imperialist** war is one of the functions of finance capital, i. e., the bourgeoisie at a certain stage of development resting upon capitalism of a specific structure, namely, monopoly capital. This definition is sufficiently concrete for our basic political conclusions. But by extending the term **imperialist** war to cover the Soviet state too, Shachtman cuts the ground away from under his own feet. In order to reach even a superficial justification for applying one and the same designation to the expansion of finance capital and the expansion of the workers' state, Shachtman is compelled to detach himself from the social structure of both states altogether by proclaiming it to be — an abstraction. Thus playing hide and seek with Marxism, Shachtman labels the concrete as abstract and palms off the abstract as concrete!

THE SOCIAL CHARACTER OF THE USSR

The question of method, once settled, naturally does not give a master-key for solving the problems raised by the war and the behavior of the Kremlin. For even while admitting that the character of the war

must in the final analysis be determined by the social character of the state and the society that wage it, that does not solve the problem of grasping whether the USSR might be considered a workers' state, even a degenerated one. And even though Shachtman in particular did not dare to bring directly into question, during the August 1939 - April 1940 discussion, the Fourth International's position on the social character of the USSR², this question in reality lay behind the whole discussion and determined the positions of the revisionist tendency.

During this discussion Trotsky was led to specify, for a last time, almost on the eve of his death, the organic whole of the reasons which justify the Fourth International's position on the social character of the USSR as a **degenerated workers' state**. Here is an example of applying the dialectical materialist methodology of Marxism to a given social phenomenon, grasped in its history, its birth, its evolution, its contradictions, its perspectives, i. e., grasped in its **concrete dialectical totality**.

Those who — like the Burnham-Shachtman revisionist tendency during the struggle within the S W P — have struggled or are still struggling against the definition given by the Fourth International to the social character of the USSR generally err by **pragmatism** or **eclecticism** or by a combination of both, by attacking this or that separate aspect of the conception of our definition of the USSR and showing themselves unable to grasp it, we repeat, in its **concrete dialectical entirety**.

To understand the USSR and its definition, there must be taken into account: its **birth**, through a proletarian revolution that overturned old property relations and installed new relations based on a statified and planned economy; its **evolution**, always on the basis of **these** relations, despite the expropriation from government and political power that the proletariat had undergone in the meantime, and consequently despite the contradiction set up between **production relations**, fruits of the Revolution, and **political power** in the hands of a privileged bureaucracy; and its **historic perspectives**, as a transitional formation set in the dynamic of our period, which is that of the irresistible and irreversible development of the world revolution, destined to put an end to the isolation of the USSR within what is historically a relatively brief time.

The revolutionary birth of the USSR is important as an argument against those who pretend to forget or want to forget that the **new property relations** established in the USSR (**statified and planned economy**) are not the attribute of a sort of peaceful and organic evolution of capitalism toward a "state capitalism" or a "bureaucratic collectivism," but the result of the struggle of concrete social forces, a struggle

² As contrasted with James Burnham, who at this period affirmed that the USSR was neither a "capitalist" nor "workers' state."

culminating in the proletarian revolution. That is to say that these relations prove to be the fruit of a proletarian revolution, without which it is practically impossible to arrive at such relations.

In practice, furthermore, in the concrete historic case in which the proletarian revolution is developed by means of nationally limited victories, beginning by backward countries on the periphery of the capitalist system, the beginning also of the socialist reconstruction of society must inevitably pass through the establishment of such relations. History has given no proof that it is possible to proceed otherwise, through other relations.

This last argument is of value against those who, for example, while assigning primacy to the character of the **political power**, minimize the importance of production relations as the decisive criterion for characterizing the **social nature** of a regime.

Since the proletariat in the USSR has been expropriated from political power, which is held by a privileged bureaucracy, reason the adepts of "state capitalism" or "bureaucratic collectivism," production relations are not sufficient to characterize the USSR as a **workers' state**, even a **degenerated** one.

Let us recognize first of all that these relations are those by which the reconstruction of the society that follows the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, of imperialism, in a given country, inevitably begins. That is a historical fact. Another historical fact, already proved by an experience of some 40 years, is that these relations constitute an immense progress over capitalism from the viewpoint of the development of **productive forces**. This aspect of the question has long remained covered up by the enormous difficulties that the USSR, which was among the most backward countries in the world, had to overcome before laying the foundations for a modern economy, and by the monstrous errors and deformations arising from Stalinist administration.

Despite that, the new property relations have successfully passed all the tests of isolation and war, have grown stronger, and are at present expanding with a rapidity, a strength, and a brilliance, which in the coming years will toll the knell of capitalism, including on the economic plane.

But can one not conceive, on the basis of these relations, of the consolidation of an intermediate social regime, for example, between capitalism and socialism, not foreseen by the classics of Marxism? To this question also the only satisfying answer is that which Leon Trotsky gave at the time of the struggle inside the S W P. Writing to James Cannon on September 12th 1939, he specified :

The USSR question cannot be isolated as unique from the whole historic process of our times. Either the Stalin state is a transitory formation, it is a deformation of a worker state in a backward and isolated country, or "bureaucratic col-

lectivism" (Bruno R., *La Bureaucratization du Monde*; Paris, 1939) is a new social formation which is replacing capitalism throughout the world (Stalinism, Fascism, New Deal, etc.). The terminological experiments (workers' state; not workers' state; class, not class; etc.) receive a sense only under this historic aspect. Who chooses the second alternative admits, openly or silently, that all the revolutionary potentialities of the world proletariat are exhausted, that the socialist movement is bankrupt, and that the old capitalism is transforming itself into "bureaucratic collectivism" with a new exploiting class.

The tremendous importance of such a conclusion is self-explanatory. It concerns the whole fate of the world proletariat and mankind. Have we the slightest right to induce ourselves by purely terminological experiments in a new historic conception which occurs to be in an absolute contradiction with our program, strategy and tactics? Such an adventuristic jump would be doubly criminal now in view of the world war when the perspective of the socialist revolution becomes an imminent reality and when the case of the USSR will appear to everybody as a transitory episode in the process of world socialist revolution.

In his writings against the revisionist tendency, Trotsky found the occasion for a broad development of this argumentation, obviously of extreme importance. The events of the war and later developments only justified the general significance of this argumentation. The war ended, not with a decline of the proletariat and of the revolution, but with the opening of a long revolutionary period, in which the relationship of forces between capitalism and the revolution changed, and in which also the relationship of forces between the bureaucracy and the proletariat is more and more changing in the latter's favor.

That is the general meaning of events both in the capitalist world and in the USSR and the "people's democracies."

It is true that this whole process has taken and is still taking the most sinuous and complicated forms, as well as a longer time than that foreseen by Leon Trotsky. It could hardly be otherwise, given the depth and breadth of the overturns that have occurred in the world situation since the outbreak of the war, the multitude and complexity of the factors involved therein, factors themselves modified in the course of events. But the general line of developments is following the perspective sketched by Leon Trotsky, and fully justifies his revolutionary optimism.

On the scale of history, the time elapsed since then is still only a moment, which has yet been filled with tremendous revolutionary gains, and which stores up a revolutionary dynamism destined to shake "heaven and earth" from top to bottom.

*THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY AND THE
"UNCONDITIONAL" DEFENSE OF THE USSR*

The problem of the class nature of the USSR is obviously connected with that of the class nature of the Soviet bureaucracy which assumes political power in the USSR. **A new social class or a parasitical and temporary social caste?** — that is the whole question, and not only from a purely terminological point of view.

Leon Trotsky tried to clarify it, at the time of the struggle within the S W P, from a **scientific and political** point of view. Once more he analyzed the formation of the Soviet bureaucracy **historically**, noting that it was a question of a social stratum **in evolution**, not yet having reached **stable forms**. He posed the question in these terms: "does the bureaucracy represent a temporary growth on a social organism or has this growth already become transformed into an historically indispensable organ?"³

The convulsions, the permanent crisis, in which the Soviet bureaucracy keeps Soviet society, demonstrate that this organ, before stabilizing itself and becoming historically necessary, has in reality entered into a deep contradiction with the interests, the aspirations, and the needs of that society. From this viewpoint it appears to be rather a temporary parasitical ex-crescence than **a stable class having a historic function to fulfil**.

As was the case with the class nature of the USSR as a state, so with the class nature of the Soviet bureaucracy, the definitive answer can be found only by adopting a **historical perspective**. If the proletariat should in the long run show itself unable to take political power in the USSR back into its own hands, and if in the advanced countries the revolution should also end up with the abdication of proletarian power to the profit of that of the bureaucracy, it would be necessary to conclude that capitalism would be followed internationally by a new social regime of exploitation assumed by the bureaucratic **class** (and not **caste**), as it is currently being formed in the USSR. A few decades, however, do not constitute a historically conclusive experience — all the more so in that there is still no valid reason to suppose that the international proletariat has exhausted its revolutionary capacities, or that the regime of the Soviet bureaucracy has been able to achieve a lasting stabilization. All post-war experience is there to demonstrate the contrary, the world as a whole having entered into a stage of deep revolutionary transformations, the most dynamic and radical in the whole history of humanity. How, under these conditions, can conclusions be drawn about processes in full development? The most controverted point of this class analysis of the USSR and the Soviet bureaucracy in reality was — and in one sense still remains — the "uncondition-

al" defense of the USSR, i.e. the defense of the basic social and economic structures of the USSR against imperialism and internal reaction, independently of this or that policy of the Kremlin, of the political leadership of the Soviet bureaucracy.

That is a key position of our movement, which has distinguished us from all the other currents of the communist movement and which we have maintained inflexibly throughout the worst difficulties.

The "unconditional" defense of the USSR is not a slogan, **but a political line subordinated to the defense of the interests of the world revolution**. The confusion that exists around this question arises from the confusion about the **methods and means** of this "defense." This nowise means any embellishing of the Kremlin bureaucracy, or any rapprochement with it, acceptance of its policy, or conciliation with the policy of its bourgeois or other allies.

The defense of the USSR coincides for us with the preparation of world revolution. Only those methods are permissible which do not conflict with the interests of the revolution. The defense of the USSR is related to the world socialist revolution as a tactical task is related to a strategic one⁴.

The defense of the USSR — as, now, of the other workers' states — takes on meaning in case of an attack by imperialism or native reactionary forces, or of a war involving workers' states and capitalist states. In such cases our movement, independently of this or that policy of the Kremlin, would stand for and put into practice revolutionary defeatism in the capitalist camp, but would be for a sort of united front with the leadership of the workers' state against imperialism. In no case would we write an equal-sign between a capitalist state and a workers' state, or adopt an equally "neutral" line toward both, or leave to imperialism the task of overthrowing the bureaucracy.

Naturally, even in such an extreme case, our movement would not abandon its **revolutionary propaganda** against the political regime of the bureaucracy, preparing for its overthrow, **but, for the "next immediate period," subordinated to the interests of the immediate military fight in common against imperialism**.

The complexity of such a line, which remains to be concretely defined in each case, is caused by the complex and contradictory dialectical nature of the USSR and the bureaucracy. Questions which history has made complex cannot be solved by simplistic formulæ, without thereby falling into a pragmatism that imperceptibly carries us far from a correct class line. The experience of both the "neutralists" toward both camps and the adepts of the "third camp," has clearly demonstrated their practical and objective slide into one single "camp," that of imperialism.

³ "The USSR in War."

⁴ Ibid.

HOW TO HANDLE DIVERGENCES WITHIN THE PROLETARIAN PARTY?

The struggle carried on by Leon Trotsky against the revisionist tendency within the S W P and the International possesses even today another important aspect for us: that concerning the way of handling divergences arising within a section of the International. There is, first of all, the need to allow to tendencies that may arise the possibility of expressing clearly and freely, in writing, in documents, their exact political positions, without hasty characterizations of their possible class nature, and without organizational restrictions or threats.

The ideological struggle, however implacably it must be waged on the strictly theoretical and political plane, must at the same time be paralleled by "very cautious and wise organizational tactics."⁵

Majority and minority must accept free political discussion and the verdict of a democratic-centralist organization.

After several months of discussion, Trotsky had reached the conclusion that the revisionist tendency within the S W P had strong petty-bourgeois characteristics. But he hastened to add that these characteristics were neither the only traits of this tendency nor definitively crystalized. In another conjuncture this tendency might possibly put forward other characteristics.

There is no fatal predestination in political struggles, which develop in a moving social and political context, in which the subjective factor, the maturity, the efforts, and the tact of the truly revolutionary Marxist tendency can have much influence on the final result. Trotsky raised the question whether the then dominant petty-bourgeois character of the revisionist tendency excluded their living together in the same organization with the "proletarian" tendency. He answered his own question in the negative, and he even considered the possibility of the "proletarian" tendency's being a minority and remaining disciplined within an organization led by the revisionist tendency. He naturally foresaw that such an eventuality would in any case have only a provisional character, but one that would permit a better political clarification.

In order to avoid a split, Trotsky went to the length even of accepting the publication of the internal discussion documents before the general public. Trotsky's organizational flexibility, however, was not sufficient to outweigh the centrifugal forces that were precipitating the revisionist tendency outside the Fourth International.

The national conference of the S W P, held from 5 to 9 April 1940, after an ample and democratic discussion of several months' duration and the publication of some 13 internal bulletins, ended in a factual split, the revisionist tendency categorically re-

⁵ Letter of 19 December 1939 from Leon Trotsky to John G Wright.

jecting the democratic-centralist functioning of the organization.

Trotsky drew the final political conclusions from the split that occurred in the S W P in his 23 April 1940 article titled "Petty-Bourgeois Moralists and the Proletarian Party." He noted therein that the revisionist minority, despite the serious organizational concessions granted it by the majority, wanted to break the democratic-centralist framework that characterizes every revolutionary proletarian organization. The minority, an intellectual "aristocracy," felt that it was rendered inferior in a proletarian organization that it did not lead. But the basis for this capricious, undisciplined, and irresponsible attitude was obviously to be found elsewhere. Trotsky wrote:

The petty-bourgeois minority of the S W P split from the proletarian majority on the basis of a struggle against revolutionary Marxism. Burnham proclaimed dialectical materialism to be incompatible with his moth-eaten "science." Shachtman proclaimed revolutionary Marxism to be of no moment from the standpoint of "practical tasks."

The minority grouped itself under the banner of the "third camp." "What is this animal?" Trotsky ironically asked. "There is the camp of capitalism; there is the camp of the proletariat. But is there perhaps a 'third camp' — a petty-bourgeois sanctuary?" "Advanced workers!" Trotsky concluded. "Not one cent's worth of confidence in the 'third front' of the petty bourgeoisie!"

Scarcely a month after the split, James Burnham, co-leader with Max Shachtman of the revisionist tendency, abandoned that tendency as well, his ideas having already developed toward those contained in his well-known book, *The Managerial Revolution* which appeared a few months later.

Shachtman in his turn soon adopted Burnham's thesis on the USSR as a "bureaucratic collectivist" state, neither capitalist nor proletarian, and naturally gave up the "unconditional" defense of that state, already involved in the war.

The split in the S W P was followed by a split, although a very small one, in the International, where a series of elements like Lebrun, Johnson, Trent, and Anton, who had seats on the International Executive Committee, had in reality adopted the political and organizational positions of Shachtman.

THE ASSASSINATION OF LEON TROTSKY

Scarcely had the struggle within the S W P and the International been closed than a fateful date approached: that of the assassination of Leon Trotsky by the agents of Stalin. As Victor Serge wrote quite correctly:

Beginning with the Moscow Trials, the assassination of Leon Trotsky became both a political and a logical necessity. It is of no use to shoot tens of thousands of men if the loftiest head of the revolutionary generation, the one that it will

be impossible to strike out of history, freely survives.

And it is obvious that against Trotsky, denounced as the most diabolical character in history, anything is permitted in the eyes of the Russian world poisoned by the frame-up trials.

It was the declaration of World War II and the prospect that the USSR would be involved in the conflict that speeded up Trotsky's assassination. The frantic campaign of the Mexican Communist Party against Trotsky's presence in Mexico was preparing the ground. In March 1940 the Hernan Laborde leadership of the Mexican C P, accused of being "pro-Trotskyist," (!) was purged by the G P U, and the campaign against the right of asylum and against Lázaro Cárdenas, President of Mexico, Trotsky's "protector," redoubled in violence.

In May 1940 Trotsky's fortified house at Coyoacán, in the suburbs of the capital, was attacked by 20 Stalinists armed with machine-guns, who had succeeded in tying up the police who were guarding the house, and in carrying off Trotsky's bodyguard, Robert Sheldon Harte, a young American militant of the S W P. ⁶

Comrade Natalia Trotsky relates:

They had fired on us, in our bedroom, sixty bullets in cross-fire aimed from four different directions. It was precisely this excess in machine-gunning that saved us. The killers had no doubts about getting us by these combined salvos, and they were afraid of killing one another. ⁷

The Mexican police soon got their hands on several of the organizers and executants of the attack, all members and sympathizers of the Mexican Communist Party. But those who were principally responsible, foreign agents of the G P U, remained in the shadows. Trotsky engaged in great activity to denounce Stalin's role in the outrage and to unmask in the eyes of international public opinion the way the G P U functioned inside each Communist Party, prepared and introduced its crimes. He was convinced, furthermore, that there would soon be a new attempt to assassinate him, Stalin having decided on his death. In his 8 June 1940 article, "Stalin Seeks My Death," he wrote with cool lucidity:

The accidental failure of the assault so carefully and so ably prepared is a serious blow to Stalin. The G P U must rehabilitate itself with Stalin. Stalin must demonstrate his power. **A repetition of the attempt is inevitable.**

Indeed, his physical extermination had for a very long time already become an imperious necessity for

⁶ Suspected of having betrayed Trotsky, Sheldon Harte was found dead on June 25th 1940, killed during his sleep and buried in an isolated cottage in the mountains, at Talminalco, in the Desierto de los Leones, rented by the brothers-in-law of David Alfaro Siqueiros, Leopoldo and Luis Arenal.

⁷ *Life and Death of L. Trotsky*, by Victor Serge.

Stalin. Trotsky knew that he was condemned and destined to die from one day to another, for the immense means at Stalin's disposal must in the long run prove more powerful than whatever measure of protection taken by himself and his friends. Reasoning with his usual serenity, he concluded in this same article: "I can therefore say that I live on this earth not in accordance with the rule, but as an exception to the rule."

The new attack, this time fatal, occurred during the day of 20 August 1940. Leon Trotsky got up that day in excellent humor, Natalia Trotsky relates. "A double dose of barbiturates had assured him of a sleep that had done him good. Not for many days had he felt so alert. 'Ah, I'm going to work well,' he said."

Toward five o'clock that afternoon he received in his study one Jacson Mornard, a self-styled Belgian, son of a diplomat, who had been introduced into the circles of several close friends of Leon Trotsky by Sylvia Ageloff, a member of the American Trotskyist organization. Jacson Mornard, who had succeeded in winning the affection of Ageloff and the unanimous sympathy of other people close to Trotsky, came, so he said, to present an article. Natalia Trotsky reports what then followed:

Not more than three or four minutes had elapsed when I heard a terrible, soul-shaking cry and without as much as realizing **who it was that uttered this cry**, I rushed in the direction from which it came. Between the dining room and the balcony, on the threshold, beside the door post and leaning against it stood... Lev Davidovich. His face was covered with blood, his eyes, without glasses, were sharp blue, his hands were hanging.

"What happened? What happened?"

I flung my arms about him, but he did not immediately answer [...]

And he said to me calmly, without any indignation, bitterness or irritation, "Jacson." L. D. said it as if he wished to say, "It has happened."

Jacson Mornard had struck him on the head with a short mountain-climbing pick hidden under his raincoat. The murderer had tried to hit a second blow, but Trotsky had hurled himself on him. Meanwhile Trotsky's bodyguards, Comrades Charlie Cornell, Joe Hansen, and Harold Robbins, who had run in, had roughly overcome the assassin, who was shouting: "They forced me to strike him!... They're holding my mother!... They've imprisoned my mother!..." Despite rapid treatment by doctors and the extraordinary resistance of his organism, Leon Trotsky died calmly on August 12th 1940 at 7:25 p.m. He was 60. Before he underwent trepanning, he called Joe Hansen to him and dictated a few words by way of a political testament. They were these: "Say to my friends, please, that I have no doubt about the victory of the Fourth International. Go forward!"

The Mexican government took charge of the funeral. For five days, the body, with an honor guard of militants, was shown to the public in a hall in the Calle Tacuba ; about 100,000 persons, mostly simple Mexican workers and peasants, paid silent homage to the heroic and exalting life of the revolutionary. "Jacson Mornard" was quickly identified as a false name hiding an authentic G P U agent. All the details of the organization of the outrage, the international figures who contributed to it, and even the exact identity of the assassin, are still not entirely known. According to the revelations of General Sánchez Salazar, former chief of the Mexican Secret Service, who carried out the investigation of the murder, the real name of "Jacson Mornard" is **Mercader**, he is of Catalan origin, and his mother, who lived in France and Belgium, had gone over to the service of the G P U during the Spanish Civil War.

The death of Leon Trotsky occurred at a moment when the international situation was dominated by the resounding victories of Hitler in Europe. The campaign of France had just been victoriously ended

by Hitler, and England's turn was awaited. Italy, speculating on the eventuality of a rapid ending of the war, had decided to enter the conflict. Hitler seemed to be at the apogee of his power.

Under these conditions, Stalin's crime was not forcefully brought into question either in the fascist countries, which were still treating Stalin carefully, or in the "democratic" countries, which were speculating on a possible break between Stalin and Hitler.

Only vanguard revolutionary militants had painfully felt this terrible blow. The most powerful head of the world revolution had just been fractured by the Thermidorian reaction. The richest and most living contemporary Marxist thought, the most indomitable revolutionary character, a stimulus and example for all, had just disappeared. Thenceforward it was necessary to find the path alone, it was necessary to carry on the struggle by forging in action the intelligence and characters of those who would keep high the banner of the Fourth International.

In spite of everything, it was indeed necessary to go forward !

[In the next issue: *The Fourth International during the Second World War*]

III

The Fourth International During the Second World War (1940-1944)

The occupation of Europe by Hitler's armies had at first the effect of shaking the young organizations of the Fourth International in various countries. The contacts among them in Europe and with those operating on the other continents were loosened, and soon, for the most part, completely interrupted. Experience later demonstrated, however, that despite this forced isolation of various organizations, they all maintained a substantial community of ideas and of line throughout the whole war, and were convinced of the victorious survival of the International.

Under these conditions, the withdrawal of the international leadership to the American continents, which remained practically outside the storm, was confirmed and stabilized. Beginning with the outbreak of the war, and until just after the end of the conflict, the central international leadership functioned in the United States, in close collaboration with the American organization. But on account of the reduced contacts with the sections, it had only a limited activity. Nevertheless, it noted, commented, and explained all the important events and main turns of the war, in its constant effort to regroup an international vanguard on the basis of effective revolutionary action.

France's passing under Hitler's control in 1940 and the Pétain regime were subject-matter for a manifesto of the Fourth International, issued in November 1940, centred around a demonstration of the historic impossibility for the Nazis to "unify" Europe, and anticipating the inevitable emancipating resistance of the European masses against fascist tyranny:

Hitler has reduced Europe to a vast concentration camp of nations. The struggle for the unity of all Germans has been followed by that of unity of all non-Germans under the Nazi boot. But history is a sure guarantee that there has never been national oppression without national struggle.

Soon Hitler's hope of ending the war by the occupation of Europe vanished. The Battle of Britain, which marked the beginning of 1941, led to neither its occupation nor its surrender, while American imperialism was mobilizing and stepping up its intervention in the conflict.

Faithful to its line of revolutionary opposition to

all imperialisms, the Fourth International took a stand on the American intervention in China on the side of Chiang Kai-Shek against Japan. Naturally the question was complicated by the fact that China was a semi-colonial country attacked by Japan and that inside China there was a masked civil war between the regime of the Chinese bourgeoisie and the peasant armies led by the Communist Party.

In the 31 March 1941 resolution of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, the imperialist aims of American intervention in favor of Chiang Kai-Shek were clearly denounced, while the victory of the Chinese armies over the Japanese invaders was called for, opening up the perspective of the socialist revolution in China:

The growing collaboration between Chiang Kai-Shek and the American imperialists has already had repercussions in the attacks by Chiang Kai-Shek on the Stalinist-controlled peasant armies. While we condemn the class-collaborationist policy of the Chinese Stalinist leaders which facilitates these attacks, the revolutionists proclaim their solidarity with the brave peasant fighters under Stalinist leadership, and their readiness to join with them in resisting the counter-revolutionary moves of Chiang Kai-Shek. [...] The defense of China by American imperialism is in reality preparation for new slavery for that country. [...] Just as the war against Japan has led Chiang Kai-Shek to become a tool of American imperialism, so the masses of China, in alliance with their class brothers in the Japanese empire, will be led to the Social Revolution.

The alliance of American imperialism with Chiang Kai-Shek was consolidated during the war both to serve against Japan and to open up the post-war Chinese market to the Americans.

It can be measured only a posteriori, in the light of present events, how right it was during the war to put the masses constantly on their guard about the real nature of American imperialism and its operations, as opposed to the Stalinist policy which embellished the American "ally" and always went easy on Chiang Kai-Shek.

In June 1941 the war underwent a historic and decisive development: Hitler, despite all the assurances given to Stalin and swallowed by the latter, unexpectedly attacked the Soviet Union. The press of the Fourth International immediately called for *the*

unconditional defense of the first workers' state. The manifesto issued on this occasion by the American organization, the Socialist Workers Party, declared without ambiguity :

Defend the Soviet Union at all costs and under all circumstances against imperialist attack ! Stalin must be overthrown — but only by the working class. The workers' struggle must be subordinated to the struggle against the *main enemy* : the armies of Hitler. Everything that we say or do must have as its primary object the victory of the Red Army. The Soviet Union can be best understood as a great trade union fallen into the hands of corrupt and degenerate leaders. Our struggle against Stalinism is a struggle within the labor movement. Despite imprisonment and repression our comrades in the Soviet Union will prove to the Soviet masses that the Trotskyists are the best fighters against the capitalist enemy.

At the same time the manifesto warned about the capitalist allies of the Soviet Union, calling for irreconcilable opposition toward all imperialists and a revolutionary conduct of the war against Hitler. That is to say, in the capitalist countries allied to the U S S R, not to paint Churchill, Roosevelt, de Gaulle, Chiang Kai-Shek in rosy colors, as the Stalinists were doing, but to maintain revolutionary opposition against them, to call for fraternization with the workers and peasants in uniform of the Nazi armies, to avoid secret diplomacy and the sharing out of zones of influence with the imperialist allies, and constantly to prepare the future of the socialist revolution in Germany itself, in Italy, Japan, and all countries.

The manifesto for the defense of the Soviet Union issued in the name of the Executive Committee of the Fourth International in August 1941 takes essentially the same line :

The Soviet Union is at war ! The Soviet Union is in mortal danger ! In Germany and in European countries occupied by German troops, defense of the Soviet Union means directly the sabotage of the German military machine. German workers and peasants in soldiers' uniforms, the Fourth International calls upon you to pass over with your arms and equipment into the ranks of the Red Army ! German workers and peasants, now in the factories, on railroads, and on the farms, and enslaved peoples of Europe, paralyze in every possible way the march of German militarism !

At the same time the manifesto called for opening up for the German workers the perspective of the German and European socialist revolution. In the Soviet Union, it called on the workers "to be the best soldiers," and concluded by declaring to the workers everywhere : "[...] defend the Soviet Union, and you thereby defend yourselves, you will hasten the hour of your liberation."

The Soviet Union's entry into the war had, however, as foreseen, the result of causing a new turn by

the Kremlin : to come back as it were to the alliance with the "democracies" against fascism, and once more to call for the subordination of the policy of the Communist Parties operating in "allied" countries to that of the bourgeoisie of these countries. We thus had the spectacle of the American Stalinists returning to the adulation they used to give Roosevelt in 1936, the English Stalinists preaching "national union" around Churchill, the French Stalinists building up de Gaulle's prestige, the Chinese Stalinists under the Kremlin's instigation putting the mute once more on their struggle against Chiang Kai-Shek. Everywhere it was the policy of "national union" under bourgeois leadership "against fascism."

The U S S R's entry into the war stimulated resistance against Hitler in occupied Europe. The regroupment of the revolutionary forces was intensified, and contacts were restored on the intra-European scale. But it was necessary to wait till the beginning of 1943 before it was possible to speak of a considerable extension of the mass resistance movement in Europe, and of a more serious reorganization of the revolutionary vanguard.

News about the activity of Trotskyist organizations throughout the world was already growing more frequent beginning with late 1941. In the United States, 18 militants of the S W P and members of the C I O Teamster's Local 544 in Minneapolis were indicted under the Smith Act for the propaganda of revolutionary ideas against the imperialist war being carried on by the United States, and were sentenced to prison terms running from 12 to 16 months.

In France, the reorganized Parti Communiste Internationaliste was bringing out its newspaper, *La Vérité*, regularly each fortnight. In September 1941 it held a conference in which it proclaimed the need of combining a resolute fight against Hitler with a policy of fraternization with the German workers and peasants in uniform, and its opposition to the policy of the "national front" for "the independence of France."

It was also at this period (1941) that the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of Ceylon joined the Fourth International and that there was news of the activity of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India, a Trotskyist organization.

The year 1942 opened with agitation spreading in India in quest of its independence, a process speeded up by the Cripps Plan of April 1942.

In March 1942 the Governor of Ceylon, Sir Andrew Caldecott, outlawed the Lanka Sama Samaja Party. On April 9th 1942, the *Times* of London related in the following terms the spectacular escape of Comrades Colvin da Silva, N M Perera, D R R Gunawardene, and Edmund Samarkkody from the prison where they were held, and their passage to India with their own jailer who had followed them : "It is presumed that they left with their gaol guard who is missing. [...] They have been in detention since June 1940." Com-

rade Leslie Gunawardene, for whom a similar warrant had been out since 1940, had also succeeded in reaching India in time.

In May 1942 there was formed in India the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India Burma and Ceylon which published the *Permanent Revolution*.

In August 1942 a very important wave of strikes of the proletariat was sweeping India. The Fourth International, which defended the Soviet Union against Hitler, and China against Japan, also defended India against Great Britain. Far from assimilating the struggle of these countries against their imperialist adversaries with a struggle "of one imperialist camp against the other," as Max Shachtman affirmed at that time, the International practised unconditional defense of these countries against imperialism. In its September 1942 manifesto to the workers and peasants of India, the Fourth International took a position for the immediate independence of India, and, as opposed to the methods of "passive resistance" put forward by the Congress leaders, called for revolutionary methods of struggle and slogans : agrarian reform ; democratic committees of struggle ; constituent assembly ; a programme of industrialization of the country ; a workers' and peasants' government.

The British and Hindu Stalinists, on the contrary, anxious not to displease the British "ally" of the U S S R, were towed along by the Churchill policy toward India and took a position against mass agitation in the country.

The year 1943 was marked by resounding victories of the Soviet army, the dissolution of the Comintern, and the invasion of Italy by the Anglo-Americans. At the same time the consequences — reactionary for the future of the European and world revolution — of the alliance of the Kremlin with the "democratic" imperialists grew more clear — first of all concerning Germany and the German revolution, key to the European revolution.

The American Welles and the Briton Vansittart had already in 1942 put forward the theory of the collective responsibility of the German people, and called for an equally collective punishment. The secret treaties which, beginning with this period, were concluded between the Kremlin and its British and American allies aimed at preventing any possibility of revolution in Europe, in order to guarantee each of the allies an exclusive zone of influence. Thus, for example, the agreements concluded in 1942 by the Kremlin, on the one side with the British, and on the other the Americans, stipulated that the allies pledged themselves to : refusing to make a separate peace with any government in Germany, that is, including a possible revolutionary government ; disarmament of all of the future Germany ; working together for the "peace, security, and prosperity of Europe."

In June 1943 Stalin decided to dissolve the Comintern, to reassure his allies about his counter-revolutionary intentions and to guarantee the respect

of the conventions that had been concluded. With the pretext that the importance and maturity acquired by the different Communist Parties henceforth rendered superfluous the existence of the International, in reality he merely formalized a practical reality : the Comintern had for many years already ceased to function as an International that was autonomous and alive to any degree.

The Fourth International, in a manifesto of June 1943, noted and explained the event and concluded that

there is only one International now, the World Party of Socialist Revolution, the Fourth International. Enter its ranks and prepare with it to lead the successful struggle for the World Revolution !

The dissolution soon after of the American C P, decreed by Browder at the Kremlin's instigation, was another step in the same direction, of appeasement of its allies by the Kremlin, so that its future conquests might be made through secret agreements about the dividing up of zones of influence among states without any irruption of the autonomous revolution.

A quite other policy was followed by the Fourth International, which aimed at the preparation of the proletarian revolution in Europe and the world and was trying to give the necessary struggle against Hitler a revolutionary orientation and perspectives, i.e., starting out with the mass resistance to Hitlerian occupation and war, to endow it gradually with a proletarian content and guide it toward objectives that were not exclusively "national," but finally anti-capitalist. The difficulty of such a task, resulting from the complex character of the war and from the class collaboration of the Socialist and Stalinist leaderships, was reflected even within the ranks of the Fourth International by the discussions that arose, especially beginning with 1942, about the "national question in Europe," and then about the meaning and perspectives of the Italian events of 1943 and the perspectives of the European revolution in general.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The first positions taken on the national question go back as far as 1941. They were so to speak the result of two facts : a certain national oppression to which the subjection of Europe by the Nazis had led, and the beginning of a mass resistance to this oppression.

But by its very nature the question was "indiscutably very tangled up," to use Lenin's expression concerning the same subject during World War I. For it was necessary to take into account both the imperialist character of the war on the side of the big capitalist countries of the Axis as well as on the side of the big capitalists countries of the "democratic" camp, and the reactions of the masses in the occupied countries.

The temporary occupation of one capitalist country

by another in the imperialist epoch does not automatically wipe out the imperialist character of the conquered country, and gives no right to a "national" mobilization of all its classes against the occupant on a "national" programme. According to Lenin's teachings, the national question in the imperialist epoch is characteristic of colonial and dependent countries, as of countries permanently annexed by capitalist and imperialist countries. Naturally Lenin did not deny the possibility of certain recessions in the imperialist epoch, pulling a capitalist country back to the level of an oppressed country in which the "national question" is again raised, and the question of a "national war."

But in general he reasoned in the following way :

In 1793 and 1848 in France, as in Germany, and as in all Europe, the bourgeois-democratic revolution was on the order of the day. To this historical situation there corresponded a "genuinely national" programme, i.e., the bourgeois national programme of democracy as it then was, which in 1793 was carried out by the most revolutionary elements of the bourgeoisie and by the plebs ; a programme which in 1848 Marx proclaimed in the name of all advanced democracy. To the feudal and dynastic wars there were then opposed, objectively, the democratic revolutionary wars, the wars of national emancipation. At present, for the great states of Europe, the objective situation is different. Progress — apart from certain temporary regressions — can be carried out only by going toward the socialist society. As against the bourgeois imperialist war, the war of a highly developed capitalism, there can be set up in opposition, objectively, from the viewpoint of progress, from the viewpoint of the advanced class, only a war against the bourgeoisie, the war for power, without which there can be no serious movement forward, and later — but only under certain particular conditions — a possible war for the defense of the socialist state against the bourgeois states.

Lenin was opposed even to "those Bolsheviks" or "those revolutionaries" who called for "national defense," who in 1914-1918 wanted to put forward in their respective countries (Russia, Germany, and elsewhere) a "national programme," and to defend "the fatherland" conditionally against "invasion" and "occupation" by "means of the class struggle."

But Lenin, on the other hand, and quite properly too, paid great attention to any mass movement whatever that rose up against "the calamities of imperialism" during the war, and was ready to use it in the "struggle of the proletariat for socialism."

Consequently a distinction had to be made also during the Second World War among the social natures of the temporarily occupied countries, and the mass movements objectively standing up to Hitlerian occupation, despite their subjective "impurities."

The discussions and divergences on the national question that occurred in our movement during the last war concerned in reality the following points: a struggle that was preponderantly if not exclusively "national-democratic," or one that was subordinated to the proletarian struggle for socialism ; the exact coupling of the "national-democratic" slogans with the socialist slogans properly so called, in the sense of a transitional programme ; the practical attitude to be taken toward the resistance movements.

On all these questions clarity was far from being complete and the line adopted from being correct, throughout our movement. Opportunist or leftist deviations developed here and there because of the complexity of the question, under the weight of Nazi oppression, the class collaboration of the Socialist and Stalinist leaderships, and the contradictory character of the resistance movements. As rightist and opportunist deviations there must be listed all tendencies that made each people's right to self-determination an end in itself, separating it from the rest of the socialist, revolutionary, and internationalist programme, that confined themselves to the struggle "by stages," beginning with the "national-democratic" stage allegedly imposed by the war conditions ; that were in favor, in one form or another, of our participating, as a distinct political movement, in the political organizations of the "Resistance," or of thus collaborating with them ; who put "national resistance" on the same level in a defeated big country like France and in oppressed small states like Yugoslavia, Poland, and Greece.

The most extreme illustration of these tendencies was given in the 1941 "Three Theses" worked up on the national question by the emigré comrades of the German section, the I K D. These theses emphasized the "backward evolution" of the situation under the weight of fascism, which had raised to the level of "the most urgent question in Europe the national liberation of the countries enslaved by Germany," which had dissolved all political movements, including the workers' movement, into a sort of "popular movement" without distinction of classes, struggling exclusively for "national liberation," and which rendered "the transition from fascism to socialism a utopia without an intermediate stage basically equivalent to a democratic revolution." "National liberation," according to the authors of these theses, should be the immediate agitational slogan, and "The United States of Europe" a purely propaganda slogan, without a transitional coupling of these two demands.

As leftist sectarian deviations must be considered all tendencies that denied the existence of national oppression, or that did not take a clear stand about each people's right to self-determination ; that failed to organize under our own banner (the banner of the revolutionary party) the struggle against German imperialism (carried out, of course, in an internationalist class sense) ; that minimized the importance of work

in the popular resistance organizations (Jugoslav or Greek partisans, French F T P, etc).

The example of the resistance movements in the "small states," such as Jugoslavia, Poland, and Greece, and the popular resistance movements that soon arose against Nazi oppression in the big capitalist countries, is characteristic of the overall aspects of this question. Unquestionably it was here a matter of authentically popular movements which, despite their subjective "impurities," rose up objectively against the "calamities of the imperialist war," especially against national oppression. But because of their plebeian composition — a majority of poor peasants and nuclei of workers — and in the concrete international and national conditions, these movements had a tendency quickly to overflow the "national" frame properly so called, and to become transformed into forces aspiring to and fighting for the socialist revolution. Such a transformation naturally depended very much on the leadership of these movements.

In the case of Jugoslavia, the conscious line of the leadership soon permitted transforming "the detachments of partisans into proletarian brigades of national liberation,"¹ i.e. to combine the struggle for national liberation with that for the socialist revolution. This combination was objectively possible because the aspirations of the masses were simultaneously "democratic and socialist,"² to the contrary of the affirmations of the "Three Theses" concerning the necessity of an exclusively "national-democratic" stage allegedly flowing from the existence of a liberation movement indiscriminately assembling elements of all the classes. Besides, the rapid differentiation in Jugoslavia (as in Greece, Poland, and even France) between partisans of the proletarian tendency and partisans of the reactionary bourgeois tendency is a further confirmation of the interpenetration of the *national* and the *social* in an organic combination whose dynamics more and more brought out the preponderance of the *social* over the *national*.

Better balanced conclusions about the line to be followed in the national question ripened among the cadres of the European leadership of the Fourth International that was formed in 1943. As a result of contacts established in full Nazi occupation of Europe among the different sections and groups of the Fourth International, a provisional European secretariat was formed early in 1943, which undertook the task of coördinating the struggle of the organizations of the Fourth International on the continental European plane, and published the magazine *Quatrième Internationale*.³

In 1944, "somewhere in occupied Europe," there was held a conference of the European sections of the

Fourth International, the first in Europe since the founding of the International and the declaration of the Second World War. This conference brought together representatives of the Trotskyist organizations of France, Belgium, Greece, Spain, and Germany, and its labors lasted six consecutive days. The communiqué of the conference, published in the clandestine February 1944 number of *Quatrième Internationale*, declared with legitimate pride :

That, in a Europe blood-stained by more than four years of total war, crushed under the most hideous yoke of the imperialisms, whose prisons and concentration camps are gorged with the victims of the most savage and most systematic repression, our organization has been able to hold its European assembly, to work out and define its political line of struggle, of itself constitutes the most eloquent manifestation of its vitality, its internationalist spirit, and the revolutionary ardor by which it is animated.

The principal text that emerged from the European Conference was the theses on "The Liquidation of the Second Imperialist War and the Revolutionary Upsurge." It is in this document that, among other matters, the line was established on the national question. The document stated clearly that the European proletariat must not "play craftily with" the bourgeois slogans, but must put forward its own policy and get prepared, not for a "national insurrection," but for the socialist revolution in Europe. It adds, however :

Though the proletariat must refuse the alliance with its own bourgeoisie, it cannot be indifferent to the mass struggle against the oppression of German imperialism. The proletariat supports this struggle in order to help and speed up its transformation into a general fight against capitalism. This attitude implies the most energetic struggle against attempts by the agents of the national bourgeoisie to get hold of the masses and make use of them for rebuilding the capitalist army and state. Everything must be put to work, on the contrary, to develop the embryos of workers' power (militias, committees, etc), while the most energetic fight must be carried on against all forms of nationalism.

The document was centred around the perspective of transforming the liquidation of the war, not in the French style (de Gaulle), or in the Greek style (Papandreou), but in the Jugoslav style, so to speak, i.e. not to permit the reconstruction of the bourgeois state, but to take an orientation toward proletarian power.

The question of the popular resistance movements was also broadly treated in this document. It observed that the question of the partisans had undergone an evolution since 1942, a date until which groups of a few franc-tireurs in Belgium, France, and elsewhere were completely taken in tow by the chauvinist policy of the bourgeoisie and of Anglo-American imperial-

¹ Programme of the Jugoslav Communists adopted at their VIIth National Congress.

² Ibid.

³ Which, after a few duplicated issues, appeared near the end of 1943 in printed form.

ism, engaging in individual terrorism against German soldiers. It was now a matter of partly "spontaneous" movements expressing

the open and inevitable revolt of the broad toiling masses against German imperialism and against the order and the state of the native bourgeoisie, which personified in their eyes those responsible for their present poverty and sufferings.

The duty of the Fourth International was, consequently,

to take into consideration this will to struggle on the part of the masses, and to try, despite the many dangers resulting from the national forms which this struggle takes on, to guide it toward class goals.

For this reason it was necessary, according to the document, to combine propaganda that was anti-chauvinist and in favor of a class orientation, with practical efforts

to make this propaganda penetrate into the ranks of the partisans, with a view to regrouping the latent revolutionary forces existing therein on a political and organizational class basis.

Thus it was decided to engage in a work of systematic penetration into the popular resistance movements and to give more importance to the revolutionary possibilities of their content than to the chauvinist aspects of their form.

THE PERSPECTIVE

OF THE EUROPEAN REVOLUTION

The national question was in the last analysis connected with that of the perspectives of the European revolution. In fact, it was a question of knowing whether, with the liquidation of the war, the path led to "national insurrection" and then a "bourgeois-democratic" period, or whether it was necessary to orient toward the socialist revolution, by profiting from the revolutionary crisis created precisely by the war, the defeat of Germany and Italy, the victories of the Soviet army, and the exasperation of the European masses against all persons responsible for the "calamities of imperialism."

The discussion around these perspectives began to grow particularly lively in 1943, with the invasion of Italy and the revolutionary agitation that spread through that country. It was hailed as the beginning of the Italian and European revolution. Little by little, however, it was realized what a weight the counter-revolutionary role of the Socialist and particularly the Stalinist leaderships (both the Kremlin itself and the Communist Parties) and the Anglo-American occupation, threatened to bring to bear on a favorable revolutionary development. The Kremlin contemplated only the continuance of a secret diplomacy with its imperialist "allies" in order to complete the division into zones of influence through the successive conferences at Cairo and Teheran, extended later by those at Yalta and Berlin.

The publication of the memoirs of the various statesmen, like those of Churchill, as well as the correspondence among Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill, and the testimony from the Jugoslavs and from other sources, have by now cast sufficient light on these transactions, which in the majority of cases sealed the fate of Europe by knowingly blocking the autonomous development of the revolution.

The Communist Parties faithful to the Kremlin, with the exception of the de facto position of independence taken by the Yugoslav CP, limited themselves to a strict policy of "national union" with the bourgeoisie, nowise oriented toward the revolution. On the contrary, what mattered for those parties in reality was to guarantee the secret agreements made by the Kremlin with its allies, which provided that countries like Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Greece, etc, belonged to the latter's zone of influence. Hence they must remain under bourgeois regimes. It was further necessary to take into account the fact that to a certain degree this "national" policy of the Communist Parties had created a situation, a certain state of mind, in the mass movements, and that the long Hitlerian oppression would also favor the birth of "democratic illusions."

These considerations naturally were not to alter the correct general orientation toward workers' power in Europe, and all the efforts necessary to transform the revolutionary crisis caused by the war into a victorious revolution. But they were to influence the perspectives about the *rhythm* of revolutionary developments and the *conception of the transitional programme* on which the masses would be mobilized. There were good grounds to fear lest the rhythm be slower, and to take partly into account the democratic illusions of the European masses.

These questions were simultaneously debated in the American organization and in Europe, between 1943 and 1946. Apart from small minorities that had a simplistic vision of the transition from war to "peace" with a possibility of skipping over stages, as it were, and quickly arriving at the power of the "committees," of the soviets, the overwhelming majority of the International took into account the difficulties resulting from the aforementioned factors (policy of the traditional leaderships, democratic illusions of the masses, Anglo-American occupation).

The principal difference within the majority concerned the conception, the structure, of the programme to mobilize the masses: an essentially democratic programme, as some advocated, adapted to the "political consciousness" of masses filled with democratic and parliamentary illusions? or an essentially *transitional* programme centred especially around the objective conditions in which capitalism would find itself after the liquidation of the war?

The majority of the International was resolutely oriented toward this latter conception of the programme, without minimizing the "enormous role"

that democratic slogans might play at certain moments in the struggle. But also without forgetting that for us the formulæ of democracy are only passing and episodic slogans in the independent movement of the proletariat, and not a democratic hangman's noose hung round the neck of the proletariat by the agents of the bourgeoisie (Spain). [The Transitional Programme of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International.]

A mistake in evaluation that was common to the whole International until the end of 1944 was that of the perspective of the German revolution. From the inevitable perspective of the defeat and collapse of the Hitler regime there was derived that of the German revolution, for it was not well realized at that period what would be the consequences of the reactionary policy of the Kremlin in close alliance with the Anglo-Saxon imperialists to occupy Germany jointly, to dismember it, to pillage it, and to deprive it of any possibility of revolutionary revival. This perspective was in reality bound up with the more general one of the European revolution, based on the conception of Europe as the no 1 "epicentre" of the revolutionary crisis that would accompany the liquidation of the war. It required the passage of some time before it was realized that the genuine revolutionary transformations would be situated in the colonial field and in the countries occupied by the Soviet army.

OUR VICTIMS DURING THE WAR

It is not yet possible even to rough out a picture, however incomplete, of the practical activity of the militants of the Fourth International during the Second World War, and of the exact cost of that activity. It is not yet well known, for example, what was the activity of the Trotskyists in the U S S R, in the concentration camps and prisons. From some testimony provided by persons freed from the Soviet camps who have been able to reach the West, we know, however, that the Trotskyist militants who survived the Stalinist terror of the years 1936 to 1938 continued their indomitable resistance, and were among the politically most solid and active elements in these places of desolation.

Nor do we know either all the details about the activity of our militants in the concentration camps and prisons of Nazi Germany, or of Chiang Kai-Shek's China.

What is sure in any case is that everywhere the Trotskyist militants were able to reorganize their forces during the war itself, and that new organizations and contacts arose during this very period, as in India, Ceylon, and in various countries of Latin America.

We know much better, on the contrary, what went on in the countries of Western Europe occupied by the Nazis, as well as in England, the United States, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere. There are even places which have not had much weight on the world's fate, such as Palestine under English mandate

during the war, but where nevertheless the activity of the Trotskyist militants is of great significance for the correctness of the line advocated and the sacrifices accepted for that task. For example, in the light of the present Arab revolution, it would be hard to exaggerate the struggle which the Trotskyists carried on before and during the war in Palestine, against British, French, and American imperialisms, against Zionism, against the creation of a Jewish state to the detriment of the Arabs, for the liberation and unification of the Arab countries, and for an inter-Arab revolutionary socialist workers' movement.

This line was defended by the Palestinian Trotskyists during the war in numerous publications, severely repressed by British imperialism and its Zionist allies, which appeared in Hebrew, Arabic, and English (for the use of British soldiers). It must not be forgotten, on the other hand, what the line of the Stalinists was, for example that followed by the Syrian Communist Party, led by Bakdash, which stood for absolute coöperation with de Gaulle, which was opposed to any class action against the native feudalists and capitalists, rejected any idea of agrarian reform, and was satisfied to implore the "pity" of the feudalists for the "miserable fellahin."

The only public trials attempted during the war, and the only condemnations to death or to prison of revolutionary leaders and militants accused of opposition to the imperialist war, *in both camps*, had Trotskyists as their victims. It was thus that in Holland the Gestapo assassinated, after a public trial on April 12th 1942, nine well known leaders of the R S A P, Trotskyists and pro-Trotskyists, among them Comrades Sneevliet and Dolleman. In Vienna, Trotskyist militants were executed after a public trial, as well as in Germany. We have already spoken of the trial and imprisonment of the Trotskyist leaders in the United States, and of the Trotskyist leaders imprisoned in Ceylon.

In England, in 1943 and 1944, the Trotskyists played an outstanding role in the wave of strikes that marked the reawakening of political consciousness in the British workers and their opposition to the imperialist war. The capitalist press accused the Trotskyists, bourgeois justice hounded several leaders held to be responsible for the agitation among the workers, unlike the Stalinist Party which was preaching sacred union around the "national" leadership of Churchill.

But it was in the countries of continental Europe occupied by the Nazis that the Fourth International had to pay the heaviest tribute for its consistent and courageous struggle against the imperialist war and against the regime that generated it.⁴ In France, very early, several comrades fell victims to the ferocious Nazi repression. Among the first were Marc Bourhis and Pierre Gueguen, shot on October 22nd 1941

⁴ For more details, see the pamphlet, *La lutte des Trotskyistes sous la terreur nazie*, published by the P C I in France in 1945.

at the camp of Châteaubriant, and dozens of other comrades arrested and deported, most of whom died in the concentration camps. In October 1943, the Gestapo arrested the secretary of the P C I, French Section of the Fourth International, Comrade Marcel Hic, and sent him to Buchenwald, then to Dora, where he died.

Despite this repression, which again and again decimated their ranks, the Trotskyist militants in France reorganized and carried on a tireless activity. For four years the Trotskyist press appeared regularly, most often in printed form. In fact, beside the Stalinist press, the Trotskyist publications were the only ones to appear regularly and in printed form. *La Vérité* appeared in duplicated form in the underground, beginning with August 1940, calling for resistance to the Nazi occupation. The P C I brought out in all 73 clandestine issues of *La Vérité*, of which 19 were duplicated and 54 printed, beside other clandestine Trotskyist publications in France.

Quatrième Internationale, theoretical review of the European Secretariat formed in 1943, after a few duplicated issues also appeared in printed form beginning in late 1943. Special mention must be made of a printed organ in German, *Arbeiter und Soldat*, aimed at propaganda among the German soldiers in France and other countries of Europe. Also a publication of the European Secretariat, it had as editor Comrade Paul Widelin, a German émigré Trotskyist.

Arbeiter und Soldat was the only organ of revolutionary Marxism in German; its daring distribution among German soldiers cost the lives of several German comrades, soldiers and civilians, and of French comrades associated with this work.

Deeds of high heroism and devotion to the revolutionary cause of the International marked the activity of Trotskyists throughout the war, both in France and elsewhere. It is enough to mention the names of comrades such as the Belgian comrades Léon Lesoil, former leader of the Belgian C P and then of the Belgian Trotskyist organization, arrested in 1941, who died in deportation in Germany, and A Léon, a remarkably gifted young leader of the Belgian organization, the author of the only book with a materialist conception on the Jewish question, who was arrested and died in deportation; of the Italian comrade Blasco, former leader of the Italian C P, founder of the Trotskyist Left Opposition in Italy, imprisoned by the Nazis and later assassinated by the Stalinists; of dozens of Greek comrades assassinated by the fascists or by the Stalinists (in December 1944), among them the renowned name of Pantelis Pouliopoulos, former secretary of the Greek C P; of several Polish, Chinese, and other comrades.

Not long before the liberation of Paris, at the beginning of the Spring of 1944, the Gestapo arrested four Trotskyist militants, two women and two men, among whom was Comrade Widelin. Taken to police headquarters, each had an extraordinary fate. One of the men comrades succeeded in jumping from the

second storey of the building and escaping, an almost unique exploit in Nazi-occupied Paris. Comrade Widelin was taken to the Bois de Vincennes and left there executed. He was not, however, quite dead. Transported by a passer-by to the Rothschild Hospital, he was able to get word to the comrades outside, who went to work to organize a way to carry him off from the hospital, if necessary by force.

But the day before the plan was to be carried out, the Gestapo, tipped off by a member of the hospital staff, was able to get its hands a second time on the victim and to finish him off.

This year (1958) there died in Belgium, in the most complete anonymity, Comrade Gallois, a mine worker, who was deported during the war to Buchenwald. One day there the S S, laughing, displayed to the assembled deportees, themselves prostrated and scarcely able to stand on their feet, a mass of human beings who were only skeletons, stinking and covered with vermin. They were Jews whom the S S were getting ready to "gas," except in case — they stated — some "charitable soul" would take it on himself to clean them up one by one. Nobody in the camp, Christian or otherwise, stirred to undertake the work, save Comrade Gallois who stepped humbly out of the ranks and offered to accomplish the task, on condition that the S S would respect their promise and spare the lives of these Jews. And for weeks on end Comrade Gallois steadily carried out his mission.

The death of Comrade Pouliopoulos is no less characteristic of the human quality and the mettle of several of our comrades who carried the banner of the Fourth International during the Second World War. Comrade Pouliopoulos, in prison since 1939, was executed with three other Trotskyists in June 1943, chosen among the first victims of fascist repression in Greece. He made a speech to the soldiers of the execution squad in their own tongue, producing a real mutiny among them so that they refused to fire. And it was finally the officers who had to fire, killing Comrade Pouliopoulos and his companions. Our comrades fell, not for the "Fatherland," not for "Democracy," but for the Revolution and for Socialism.

The young militants of the Fourth International will know how to perpetuate the memory of our heroic dead of the Second World War who, under various names, whether they be called Widelin or Léon or Lesoil or Hic or Blasco or Pouliopoulos or Gallois, succeeded in showing the same countenance: that of the revolutionary Marxist militant, intrepid against the stream, intrepid against the class enemy, proud to defend against wind and tide and in every place and circumstance the banner of the Fourth International.

[In the next issue: *The Fourth International Since the War (1945—1958)*]

IV

From the End of the Second World War to the Second World Congress (April 1948)

When one examines a posteriori the history of the Fourth International since the Second World War, one soon realizes the need to distinguish a first period running from the end of the war until the Second World Congress (April 1948), marked by the following general thought: *The new international situation is dominated by the power which the conjuncture of the war conferred on the United States and the U S S R and by their reciprocal relations. In the trial of strength between these two powers, which threatens to culminate in the Third World War, American imperialism, more powerful than ever, sets out as the favorite. Only the intervention of the proletarian revolution under the leadership of a new revolutionary Marxist vanguard would be able to prevent the U S S R from succumbing in this test.*

The estimate of the global correlation of forces in favor of imperialism — particularly American imperialism — was based at that time on a series of real facts as they emerged from the world conflict: the world-wide expansion of American imperialism, enormously developed and enriched during the war; the economic weakening of the U S S R; the ultra-opportunist policy of the Soviet bureaucracy and the Communist Parties, thoroughly spoiling and even bringing into mortal danger the revolutionary positions and possibilities in the countries occupied by the Soviet army, the capitalist countries of Europe, and the colonies.

But the specific weight of each of these data, as well as the dynamism of the evolution of each of them, and especially their interaction, had not yet been properly evaluated. What handicapped a correct estimate of the dynamics of the situation at the outcome of the Second World War was especially the disappointments generated by the foreshadowed failure of the European revolution and by the behavior of the Soviet bureaucracy in the countries occupied by the Red army.

To the degree that it was becoming evident that the chances of the European revolution, real in a whole series of countries such as Italy, France, and Greece, ran the risk of being wasted by the ultra-opportunist conduct of the Communist Parties, and to the extent also that dual power continued in the occupied countries, our movement had a tendency to underestimate the Soviet

Union's ability to recuperate and victoriously to resist the pressure of American imperialism, then in full economic upsurge and at that time the sole possessor of the atomic bomb.

We were basing our revolutionary outlook especially on the aggravation of the contradictions of capitalism, on the advances of the colonial revolution, and on the role of the revolutionary Marxist vanguard in replacing the opportunist traditional leaderships.

In April 1946 was held the first postwar International Conference of the Fourth International, gathering together the representatives of the British, French, German, Belgian, Dutch, Swiss, Irish, Spanish, Canadian, and Palestinian sections, and those of certain other countries of the Western hemisphere and of the colonies.

The political orientation of our international movement at that period is quite clearly reflected in the principal political documents worked out by this conference: the Resolution on "The New Imperialist Peace and the Building of the Parties of the Fourth International," and the Manifesto entitled "Only Victorious Socialist Revolutions Can Prevent the Third World War."

The conference documents stressed the economic and social difficulties of capitalism on an international scale. They noted the development and concentration of the productive apparatus of a series of countries, first of all the United States and Canada, and the industrialization of new countries, a process accompanied on the other hand by the exhaustion, decomposition, and destruction of the economy of other countries. They emphasized the "enormous diminution of the specific weight of Europe in the world economy, accentuating in the extreme its economic dependence on the other continents, and particularly on America."

On the specifically economic plane, the April 1946 conference fixed the evolution and outlook as follows:

Thus, the war facilitated the development and the concentration of the productive apparatus of certain countries, and above all the United States, raising the productive capacity of world economy as a whole to levels above those of 1939, but simultaneously it created the universal impoverishment illustrated by the colossal national debts in all countries including the United States, by inflation, by the crisis of agricultural production, and the resulting drop in the absorptive capacity of the world market.

The war has not only failed to resolve the crisis of the markets, but on the contrary, has enormously aggravated it.

On the basis of this evaluation the April conference sketched out the following general economic prospect:

The revival of economic activity in capitalist countries weakened by the war, and in particular continental European countries, will be characterized by an especially slow tempo which will keep their economy at levels bordering on stagnation and decay.

American economy will soon experience a relative boom, since it is the only country capable of satisfying the immediate needs of the world market. This fact will facilitate the full functioning of its productive apparatus.

This increased production, however, will in a short while run up against the limited capacities of the domestic and world markets.

The United States will then head for a new economic crisis which will be more deep-going and widespread, whose repercussions will shake the whole of the world economy.

Setting out from a general analysis of the economic, social, and international situation, the documents of the April conference set up the prospect of "*a lengthy period of grave economic difficulties, convulsions, and partial and general crises.*" From this point of view, the documents insisted:

Thus it is impossible to draw conclusions about the real dynamics of the revolutionary upsurge when limiting ourselves to the European scale, and simply noting the absence, for a certain time, of the German revolution, however important this absence may be.

What confronts us now is a world-wide crisis transcending anything known in the past, and a world-wide revolutionary upsurge, developing, to be sure, at unequal tempos in different parts of the world, but unceasingly exercising reciprocal influences from one centre to another, and thus determining a long revolutionary perspective.

It is naturally easy to criticize a posteriori the underevaluation of the revival of the European economy, or the speculation about an American crisis of the classic type. It is necessary, however, to make an effort of imagination and place oneself in the concrete conditions of that time, with the European economy really collapsed, its productive apparatus broken up in the majority of

countries, its workers in revolt, and American aid limited to foodstuffs aimed at confronting the genuine want that reigned more or less everywhere on the continent, beginning with Germany.

The real revival of the European economy took place after 1948 or even 1950, and its genuine boom began only in 1953 — i.e., several years after the systematic aid of the United States had powerfully contributed to the revival of the economy, and *after the capitalist economy had been reconstructed by the European proletariat, urged on and misled by the reformist and Stalinist leaderships.*

At the end of the war, with the European capitalist economy dilapidated and the proletariat in revolutionary ebullition, the Fourth International was absolutely right to stake on the masses' refusal to pay the bill for the imperialist war and to agree, to the detriment of their own living standards, to patch up the collapsing capitalist regime.

The prospect of a boom in the European economy could result only from a certain defeat of the revolutionary possibilities and prospects of the European proletariat.

The Fourth International, during those years, was not ready to accept this defeat in advance as inevitable. It was staking on the struggles of the European proletariat, and casting its own weight, limited though it was, into these struggles, for a revolutionary solution to the undeniable crisis of European capitalism. It was that, furthermore, which marked the political differentiation that took place at that period in the ranks of our European and world movement.

A basically right-wing tendency, disappointed by the fact that the European revolution had not immediately taken place following on the end of the war, and impressed by the mass influence of the Communist Parties, began to wager on capitalist stabilization in Europe, on a basis of economic prosperity and bourgeois democracy. It blurred over the jerky and convulsive character of the evolution of the international situation, punctuated by crises and abrupt turns, in favor of a much more controlled, "peaceful," "democratic," and parliamentary evolution.

Tainted by an undeniable pro-Stalinist opportunism during the apogee of the parliamentary strength of the Communist Parties in the years 1945 to 1947, this tendency later, with the hardening of the "cold war," swung over to sectarian anti-Stalinist positions tainted by pro-Western opportunism.

Other tendencies, on the contrary, during this first postwar period — disappointed by the ultra-opportunist policy of the Communist Parties and the behavior of the Soviet bureaucracy in occupied countries, pillaged, dismembered, and op-

pressed — revived the discussions on the nature of the U S S R and of Stalinism, defending on these questions the revisionist positions of “state capitalism” or “bureaucratic collectivism.”

But the bulk of the forces of the International held fast between these two tendencies, demonstrating a growing capacity for better adaptation of its revolutionary reorientation amid the extraordinary developments marked by the new situation created by the liquidation of the Second World War.

Granted, one might still pause now over one central prospect held by our movement at that period which seems not to have been verified: *a crisis of a classic type in the United States.*

Since the war the American economy has experienced *recessions* but not *classic crises*, and this question naturally requires an answer.

Our movement began to raise it only relatively late, toward 1955, following on the extraordinary boom that the capitalist economy went through from 1953 to 1957, and the undeniable effects of this boom on the evolution of the international and social conjuncture. We shall return to this question later. For the moment it suffices to say that the prospect of an American economic crisis, counted on in the near future and in a classic form, naturally had as a consequence the over-estimation of the possibilities of revolutionary crisis in the advanced capitalist countries, and especially the United States.

This estimate, combined with the importance assigned at that period to American imperialism, caused a premature advancing of the hour of the American revolution. In such a prospect, the meanwhile very real progress of the colonial revolution seemed dim and lacking in the specific weight which it must now be recognized it had in the concrete development of the proletarian revolution in our period.

The important document, “Theses on the American Revolution,” adopted by the XIIth National Convention of the S W P in the United States, is characteristic of this state of mind. The document is centred around the perspective of “the coming economic crisis” of the classic type in the United States: “In the wake of the boom must come another crisis and depression which will make the 1929-32 conditions look prosperous by comparison.”

The document, furthermore, is dominated by the idea of the “decisive” role of the U S A in the world. It draws therefrom the following conclusions:

Should the European and colonial revolutions, now on the order of the day, precede in point of time the culmination of the struggle in the U S, they would immediately be confronted with the neces-

sity of defending their conquests against the economic and military assaults of the American imperialist monster. The ability of the victorious insurgent peoples everywhere to maintain themselves would depend to a high degree on the strength and fighting capacity of the revolutionary labor movement in America. [...]

The issue of socialism or capitalism will not be finally decided until it is decided in the U S. [...] The decisive battles for the communist future of mankind will be fought in the U S.

★

The year 1947 was marked by important developments on the international and social planes: Truman’s 12 March speech which as it were inaugurated the “cold war” and the active intervention of American imperialism in Greece and Turkey; the launching of the Marshall Plan for the consolidation of European capitalism; the formation of the Cominform in September; the liberation of India; the progress of the Vietnamese revolution; the second civil war in Greece; the war in Indonesia; the great workers’ struggles in France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Japan, etc.

The Fourth International, reorganized at the time of the April 1946 conference, took a stand on all these events and participated actively in the class combats. The April 1946 conference took the decision of dissolving the International Executive Committee and the International Secretariat, which had during the war had their seat outside Europe, and to elect a new I E C and a new I S, predominantly European, based on the nuclei of the European Executive Committee and the European Secretariat.¹

Beginning with this date, the leading organisms of the International began to meet and function regularly. The First Plenum of the new I E C met from 15 to 18 June 1946. It adopted a series of important resolutions on the subjects of: the withdrawal of occupation troops from all the territories of Europe and the colonies; the situation in Spain; the unification between the S W P and W P in the United States; the opportunist deviation committed by the majority of the Central Committee of the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (the French section) on the question of the 5 May 1945 referendum in France; the tactic of the Revolutionary Communist Party (the British section) toward the Labour Party. For the first time since the war, the I E C took a stand in favor of a decisive orientation of the British Trotsky-

¹ There were unanimously elected, as members of the new I E C, 2 British, 2 French, 1 German, 1 Italian, 1 Spaniard, 1 Belgian, 4 North Americans, 1 South American, 1 Vietnamese, and the secretary. Among the alternates were 1 Hindu and 1 Chinese.

ists toward essential work in the ranks of the Labour Party.

In October 1946 there was held the IInd Plenum of the I E C, which declared international discussion open in preparation for the convocation of the Second World Congress of the International. This discussion was to bear especially upon: the question of the U S S R and the policy of the Communist Parties; the meaning of the Transitional Programme and the way of applying it; the tactic to be followed for building mass revolutionary Marxist parties. The agenda planned for discussion broadly reflected the main questions which concerned the International at that period, and on which divergences had appeared.

The IIIrd Plenum of the I E C, meeting at the end of March 1947, adopted a series of important documents: an open letter to the workers of Japan; an appeal for solidarity with the Indochinese masses fighting against imperialism; an appeal to the workers of Europe and the United States to oppose the projects of the imperialists and the Soviet bureaucracy concerning Germany, especially the exploitation of the Ruhr.

The Manifesto against the war in Indochina ended by calling on

all the workers' organizations to demonstrate their solidarity with the struggle of the Indochinese and colonial masses against imperialist oppression, and to boycott the production and transport of matériel to the imperialist armies.

The Manifesto concerning Germany took a stand against

the plans of brigandage of the Big Four, [against] annexations, reparations, and attempts to dismember Germany, [and for a] German republic of workers and peasants, united and free.

The IVth Plenum of the I E C, the last before the Second World Congress, was held in September 1947.

The reorganization of the forces of the International and its development are clearly reflected in the activity, both ideological and practical, of its different sections and of the new organizations that were being formed. The central press of the International at that period, essentially represented by the theoretical review, *Quatrième Internationale*, is a faithful mirror of this activity.

The holding of the Second World Congress afforded the opportunity to observe how strikingly the International's organization had progressed and its ideology and policy had matured since the war.

The labors of the Second World Congress of the Fourth International, beginning in early April 1948, lasted three weeks. About 50 delegates, representing 22 organizations of the Fourth Inter-

national and 19 different countries, were present at the congress, held in Paris.

Among the delegates were representatives from most of the European countries, including some still under American or Soviet occupation, from North and South America, from Africa, and from the Middle and Far East. The number of representatives from the colonial and semi-colonial countries was already particularly high. The main documents adopted by or worked out at the congress were:

The general political resolution on "The World Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International"; the theses on "The U S S R and Stalinism"; the resolution on the struggle of the colonial peoples and the world revolution; and the programmatic Manifesto, "Against Wall Street and the Kremlin! For the Programme of the *Communist Manifesto!* For the World Socialist Revolution!" addressed to the exploited masses of the entire world; the new Statutes of the Fourth International; and lastly the organizational report of the International Secretariat bearing on the "ten years of combat" of the Fourth International. Various minor resolutions concerned settlements of political and organizational questions of the different organizations of the International.

The delegates to the Second World Congress did not fail to hail the fact that they were meeting on the hundredth anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto*, the first programmatic declaration of revolutionary Marxism and of the worldwide workers' movement that it inspired. [Editorial on the Second World Congress in *Quatrième Internationale*, March-April 1948.]

The moment of the congress seemed crucial:

Scarce three years after the end of the second imperialist war that ravaged the planet and pushed to the pitch of paroxysm all the contradictions of the capitalist regime, mankind finds itself once more before a concatenation of calamities inherent in the nature of this regime as long as it continues to last: the prospect of a new world economic crisis, threats of dictatorship and fascism, the atomic Third World War. [Ibid.]

Indeed, we were already fully in the "cold war," which had considerably changed the aspect of the international and social situation since 1946. Since that date, the congress resolution on the world situation said,

there have occurred developments on both the economic and political fields, allowing a more precise definition of the character of the present period, as well as the prospect and tasks in the near future.

Basically, the period opened by the war remained that of

an *unstable equilibrium*, i.e., a period of economic and political difficulties, of convulsions and crises, which inevitably generate great struggles of the proletarian and colonial masses. By spreading and growing exacerbated, these struggles endanger the capitalist regime itself.

[Nevertheless,] in the absence of a revolutionary outcome, the stepped-up crisis of capitalism threatens to lead once more to fascism and war, which this time would imperil the existence and future of all mankind.

On the level of economic prospects, the Second World Congress, while recording the advance in reconstruction of the European economy and the effects of the Marshall Plan, insisted on the irregular and precarious character of the revival. It noted, furthermore, "the signs heralding an oncoming depression" in the United States, without overemphasizing this time an imminent crisis of the classic type.

The Second World Congress continued to evaluate the global correlation of forces as being in favor of imperialism. American imperialism, according to the Second World Congress, had succeeded in tightening its stranglehold round the U S S R and the countries controlled by it, and has continued its offensive against the U S S R on every plane: diplomatic, economic, political, military, and propagandist.

Nevertheless, "despite its superiority in atomic arms" and its various successes, it was not getting ready to start the war.

The reason for this was the following:

American imperialism, before plunging into war, must feel itself in a real economic impasse and must have stabilized both in Europe and Asia solid support that will permit it to believe that it will be able rapidly and effectively to master the world chaos that would inevitably result [from such a war.] [Political Resolution.] ²

Confronted by the aggressivity of American policy, the Soviet bureaucracy, which had meanwhile recorded notable progress in the reconstruction of its economy, reacted

by consolidating its control over the countries of its zone and by stiffening the oppositional attitude of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries that are entering the American orbit.

The Second World Congress, while having

² "The launching of a war under present conditions would mean its rapid transformation into an international civil war with uncertain results." [Ibidem.]

taken steps in the direction of the thesis of "the structural assimilation" of the countries occupied by the U S S R, continued to characterize them as still essentially bourgeois states. But there was no longer unanimity on this question among the international leadership, and internal discussions were beginning that brought into question the validity of this position.

It is true that, under the pressure of the "cold war," the Soviet bureaucracy itself was forced to speed up the liquidation of the vestiges of "dual power" on both the economic and political planes. The "coup de Prague" was already there, and not in Czechoslovakia alone.

The theses on "The U S S R and Stalinism" contained a section relating to the historical discussion on the Russian question, which happily made short work of the revisionist arguments put forth by the various "pro-Stalinist" or "anti-Stalinist" tendencies that had shown themselves in our own ranks.

With the discussion that took place both during the preparation for and at the Second World Congress, the "Russian question" has since then ceased to be a matter of controversy as to the social character, "worker" or not — although degenerated — of the U S S R.

Another merit of the Second World Congress was that it began an orientation toward real mass work for the organizations of the International, despite the fact that it still placed the main emphasis on the essentially independent work, and only exceptionally entrust work.

The Second World Congress furthermore reaffirmed the democratic-centralist character of the World Party, the International, by unanimously adopting new and more complete statutes, based both on those of the Third International and on the statutes voted at the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in 1938.

The document on "The Struggle of the Colonial Peoples" laid the emphasis on the new forms of indirect colonialism.

Seen a posteriori, the Second World Congress appears in an overall way as having closed the first period in the International's life and postwar development, during which our national forces were regrouping, sifting themselves, and re-orienting themselves in the complex new situation bequeathed by the Second World War.

During that period, the forces of the Fourth International, grown more homogeneous politically, were gradually getting rid of sectarian habits and, here and there, of opportunist weaknesses, were becoming conscious of new international and social realities, and were making their way confidently toward their well-thought-out and effective integration in the real mass movement of each country.