

B U L L E T I N

RESOLUTION OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BRANCH
ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

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The Socialist United States of Europe

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The Capitalist Slogan, "National Liberation" and "Democracy"

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RESOLUTION OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BRANCH OF THE WORKERS PARTY

ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

THE SOCIALIST UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

VERSUS

THE CAPITALIST SLOGAN, "NATIONAL LIBERATION" AND "DEMOCRACY"

The Imperialist War and "National Liberation"
Of the Capitalist States

On November 1, 1914, at the beginning of the last imperialist war, Lenin wrote: "Imperialism has placed the fate of European culture at stake. After this war, if a series of successful revolutions do not occur, more wars will follow -- the fairy tale of 'war to end all wars' is a hollow and pernicious fairy tale".

We call this prediction to mind! The present world war -- the second imperialist war -- is not accidental. It does not stem from the will of this dictator or that "democrat". It was predicted long ago. Its origin is rooted in the contradictions and antagonisms of the interests of international capitalism. Contrary to all stories circulated to fool the people, the chief cause of the war as of all other social evils -- unemployment, the high cost of living, fascism, colonial oppression -- is the private ownership of the means of production together with the bourgeois state which rests on this foundation.

In this fundamental sense the Second World War is a continuation of the First World War. The second imperialist war has lasted more than four years already and is only now entering into its decisive stage. Almost twenty years of unprecedented advance in technology, whose benefits in peacetime are unavailable for the welfare of the people, is being unleashed during the war in unexampled murder of millions of human beings and in the destruction of centuries of labor.

All the phenomena which characterized the first world war are being exhibited in the second, only on a much greater scale. Speedy victories and defeats, alternating with each other, shifts in the war fronts, the violation and occupying of territories, the fall of states, great and small, the toppling of regimes, the uprooting of millions of the peoples, the death and mangling of many more millions, combatants and non-combatants alike, hunger and disease, unprecedented oppression, war weariness, the rising of the masses from their stupor, the consequent resistance in all its forms: guerrilla wars, national movements, strikes, revolts, sabotage and -- revolution! That is the picture of Europe and of the world today.

Only in one important respect was the beginning of the present war different from the last. In 1939, the rulers of the capitalist classes together with the chauvinists of all shades were not nearly so successful in promoting the widespread chauvinism among the masses that characterized 1914. The masses had still not forgotten the useless carnage of the last world war. Added to this was the defeatism disseminated by the Stalinists in the countries of the "democratic" camp in the interests of Russian nationalism. Relatively small, but fortunately not smaller than in the last war, are the internationalists struggling against the present war. If with Hitler's attack on Russia the Stalinists have become the most violent of chauvinists, it is no less true that the forces are multiplying which stand against the current.

The reactionary forces in the camp of "democratic" imperialism which stand behind the war have attempted to exploit the masses' legitimate hatred of fascism in order to mobilize them behind the imperialist war. If this appeal did not meet with too great success at the beginning of the war, the violation, pillaging, and oppression which the masses of Europe are experiencing under the German iron hell, has had the effect of re-creating in them, as an elementary reaction, the national hatreds and chauvinism that is expressed in their determination to kill and oust the Germans from their soil. Despite the heroism and sacrifices of the members of the undergrounds, it must never be forgotten that this is the main aspect of the national movements today.

The masses' response to nationalism has been prepared by years of continued disorientation by the reformists and Stalinists, during which, alternating between the national unity of the popular front and the

adventurism of the third period, they suffered one defeat after another. The Second World War was possible only because of this. The absence of a clear class line then and now of the leading organizations among the working-class has made possible the fact that, by and large, the masses of workers and the petty-bourgeoisie, as yet unorganized in a military sense, look to the armies of the "democratic" imperialists as their chief "liberators" from the tyranny of the German conqueror. It would be sheer blindness on our part to overlook this.

The presence of the German overlord in Europe as well as of the native bourgeoisie gives rise not only to nationalism but to the unceasing class struggle. The German conqueror, to the extent that he has replaced the native bourgeois economically and politically, occupies the place of class antagonist of the worker. The class struggle against both the German and native capitalist in the occupied countries rages more each day. The breakdown of European society prepared by years of capitalist decay is speeded up enormously by the titanic clash of the rival giant imperialisms, which is tumbling to the ground the structure of European society. Objectively, the class struggle is advancing to the highest stages and is culminating in revolution. If "defense of the fatherland" rises in the breast of the European masses, so also does the will to turn the imperialist war into a war for socialism. These are the two contradictory tendencies which compete for the heart of the worker. The victory of the one would mean the perpetuation of capitalist slavery; the victory of the other would mean his final emancipation. The task of the internationalists of today is just the same as the task which Lenin set himself: to free the masses from their nationalism in order to lead them in the final class attack against the whole bourgeois social order.

The bourgeois state rests upon the foundation of the private ownership of the means of production. Together they have become the main obstacles to political, economic, and cultural freedom. The defense of the great nations has since 1871 become a reactionary task. In the past 72 years no Marxist has ever permitted this to become inscribed on his banner. Even the renegades from Marxism, the chauvinists of the last war, never defended the great imperialist states as such. To justify their betrayal of socialism they hid behind the "national liberation" of the small defenseless states or the oppressed backward peoples. In the large states they insisted that they defended not the state per se, but the organizations, the press,

the liberty, and the social advances of the workers against reactionary Czarism or German militarism depending upon which imperialist camp they were in.

At no time in over seven decades have Marxists called for "national liberation" of the great states, war or peace. During an imperialist war they were usually against the struggle for national independence even in the small or backward states, because this struggle usually ended up in one or another of the rival imperialists camps.

Only today during an imperialist war, is the attempt being made to include in the program of a Marxist party the struggle for "national liberation" of the great states of Europe. (National Committee resolution and Johnson resolution.)

Only one thing can justify such a major change in the Marxist program -- the definitive victory of one of the imperialist camps leading to a long enslavement of the European peoples of the large, small and backward states.

If such a condition existed, we would be forced to rewrite the Marxist program and include in it the support of their national wars, national uprisings, national rebellions, national movements, national liberation, national independence, or ousting of the oppressor -- whatever might happen to be the forms and stages of the national struggle since there is no important difference in their content.

After the formation of the great bourgeois states which ended with 1871, this single possibility was posed by Lenin in 1916 and by Trotsky as late as 1938 as a theoretical possibility the realization of which they considered highly improbable. Let us first see how Lenin dealt with this problem:

"It is highly improbable that this imperialist war of 1914-16 will be transformed into a national war, because the class that represents progress is the proletariat, which objectively is striving to transform this war into civil war against the bourgeoisie; and also because the strength of both coalitions is almost equally balanced, while international finance capital has everywhere created a reactionary bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that such a transformation is impossible; if the European proletariat were to remain impotent for another twenty years;

if the present war were to end in victories similar to those achieved by Napoleon, in the subjugation of a number of virile national states; if imperialism outside Europe (primarily American and Japanese) were to remain in power for another twenty years without a transition to socialism, say, as a result of a Japanese-American war, then a great national war in Europe would be possible. This means that Europe would be thrown back for several decades. This is improbable. But it is not impossible, for to picture world history as advancing smoothly and steadily without sometimes taking gigantic strides backward is undialectical, unscientific and theoretically wrong." (Works. Vol. 19, p.203)

No such situation, of course, exists today. We have only to look at the first point. How can we tell today whether the proletariat would remain impotent for twenty years after the end of the present war, even if we make the wholly invalid assumption that it will end in the Napoleonic victory in Europe of one of the imperialist powers. Obviously, therefore, the proponents of "national liberation" do not base themselves on this single situation posed by Lenin to justify "national liberation" for the states of Europe.

Let us now see how Trotsky in 1938 posed the same problem, also as a theoretical possibility but extremely unlikely of realization:

"Naturally if a new war ends in the military victory of this or that imperialist camp; if a war calls forth neither a revolutionary uprising nor a victory of the proletariat; if a new imperialist peace more terrible than the Versailles treaty places new chains for decades upon the people; if unfortunate humanity bears this in silence and submission--not only Czechoslovakia or Belgium but also France, can be hurled back into the position of an oppressed nation (the same supposition can be made in regard to Germany). In this eventuality the further frightful decomposition will cast all humanity back for several decades.....Even then, we, or rather our sons, will have to determine the policy in regard to future wars on the basis of the new situation." (Social-Patriotic Sophistry. The Question of the

Defense of Czechoslovakia's "National Independence",
New International, November 1938)

Twenty two years after Lenin, Trotsky put the question the same way. Need we say again that no such situation exists today? Again we stop only at the first point. It is plain that the war has not yet ended, much less in a "military victory of this or that imperialist camp." Obviously, also we cannot base "national liberation" on the above unrealized conditions.

Were the imperialist war to end in a decisive military victory of one of the imperialist camps leading, because of the future impotence of the world proletariat over a long period of time, to the enslavement of the peoples, then.... "our sons will have to determine the policy in regard to future wars on the basis of the new situation."

In that case, we, or rather our sons, would be able to see "how a truly national war must be distinguished from an imperialist war camouflaged by pseudo-national slogans. To be able to distinguish between the two, we must see whether the war in question is 'based' on a 'long process of national movements, on 'the overthrow of national oppression'" (Lenin. Works, Vol. 19, p. 217, our emphasis)

In this hypothetical case which would give rise to a "long process of national movements" the real social content of the national war would in all probability, be the oppressed peoples struggling against the imperialist enslaver of Europe, without at the same time being in the service of a rival imperialist enslaver. That is our criterion in judging a progressive movement. In the present imperialist war the real social content of the forces that stand behind the various "national movements", despite the masses in them, is the bourgeoisie of Europe, behind which stand one or the other of the reactionary imperialist coalitions.

That is why it was possible for Trotsky to say in 1940 "at a moment when, after overwhelming Holland and Belgium and crushing the initial resistance of the Allied troops, the German armies 'were' rolling like a tide of fire towards Paris and the Channel..." that "... we do not forget for a moment that this war is not our war. In contradistinction to the Second and Third Internationals, the Fourth International builds its policy not on the military fortunes 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 ruling classes of all countries, on the world socialist revolution. The shifts in the battle lines at the front, the destruction of national capitals, the occupation of territories, the downfall of individual states represent from this standpoint only tragic episodes

on the road to the reconstruction of modern society" and "In recent years and even months, the world has observed with astonishment how easily states vanish from the map of Europe: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Albania, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium,.... The political map has been reshaped with equal speed in no other epoch save that of the Napoleonic wars. At that time it was a question of outlived feudal states which had to give way before the bourgeois national state. Today it is a question of outlived bourgeois states which must give way before the socialist federation of peoples." (Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution, May 1940. Our emphasis throughout).

At the time that this was written France was already defeated militarily, and besides her, only two other states, Greece and Yugoslavia, were yet to be included in the roll of the nations conquered by Hitler, and yet for Trotsky "the occupation of territories, the downfall of individual states" represented "only tragic episodes on the road to the reconstruction of modern society."

We hold that the addition since then of two or three more states in the roster of Hitler's victims can create no decisive change in our attitude toward the national states while the imperialist war still rages. Politically we view this addition as a mere extension of the battle lines upon which it would be fatal for us to base our policy. And together with Trotsky we say: "We do not link the question of the fate of the Czechs, Belgians, French, and Germans as nations with conjunctural shifts of military fronts during a new brawl of the imperialists, but with the uprising of the proletariat and its victory over all the imperialists." (Social-Patriotic Sophistry, The Question of the Defense of Czechoslovakia's "National Independence". New International, November 1933).

That is our point of departure. The existence of the national movements affects our principled line on the national states during an imperialist war just as little as the chauvinistic moods of the masses alters our opposition to the imperialist war. We put principle above the transient moods of the masses. In 1917, following the February revolution, in the period of dual power, the Russian masses were swept by an intense mood of "revolutionary" patriotism. They wanted to defend the "revolution" against the "counter-revolutionary" German invader. Here is how Trotsky described this situation and Lenin's reaction to it:

"The first two years of the war greatly undermined the patriotism of the masses and moved the (Bolshevik) party to the left. But the February revolution, having transformed Russia into a 'democracy' gave rise to

a new powerful wave of 'revolutionary' patriotism. The overwhelming majority of the leaders of the Bolshevik party did not withstand it even then. In March, 1917, Stalin and Kamenev imparted to the central party organ a social-patriotic direction. On this basis a rapprochement and in the majority of the cities even a direct fusion of Bolshevik and Menshevik organizations occurred. Protests by the firmest revolutionaries, chiefly in the advanced districts of Petrograd, were needed; the arrival of Lenin into Russia and his irreconcilable struggle against social-patriotism were needed to straighten out the party's internationalist front. Such was the case with the best, most revolutionary, and tempered party." (War and the Fourth International, June 1934.)

If, during the last world war, the dual power in Russia was not yet a sufficient basis to justify the defense of the "revolution" against the menace of German militarism how much less is the justification today of the far less progressive struggle for the bourgeois states of Europe behind which stand the armies of imperialism! When the masses rush to the support of an imperialist war they think that they are fighting for their nation. When, during the imperialist war, the Russian masses wanted to defend Russia against Germany, they thought they were fighting for their revolution, just as the masses in the national movements today think that they are fighting for their nation against the German conqueror. What the masses think, and what is the real social content behind the nation, are two different things. Only the proletarian revolution can give to the socialist state in the context of the imperialist war the proletarian content that can justify the support of that nation against an imperialist or capitalist power.

Unless there is some new Marxist contribution to our understanding of war and "national liberation", we must assume the traditional internationalist stand on these questions!-- not dogmatically, not with shut eyes to all the developments which unfold before us, nor to the new ideas that are brought forward. But woe to us if we allow secondary developments to stand above our principled program or if we accept "new" ideas that turn out to be a rehash of that which Marxism has long rejected.

Imperialism and its Political Masks

Between the first and second world wars, the content of imperialism have not undergone a qualitative change. In November, 1938, the group of Palestinian Bolshevik-Leninists, concerned as they were with the fear that "Hitler's invasion would signify the slaughter of the workers" and that "fascism

might be victorious" argued that:

"Monarchist reaction in the last war was not an aggressive historical character, it was rather a survival; whereas fascism nowadays represents a direct and immediate threat to the civilized world." (A Step Towards Social-Patriotism, New International, July 1939.)

To this argument the Fourth International replied:

"It is only natural if we become suspiciously wary: such a narrowing down of the revolutionary tasks--replacing imperialism by one of its political masks, that of Fascism-- is a patent concession to the Comintern, a patent indulgence of the social patriots of the 'democratic' countries.

"...They do not take sufficiently into account the fact that in the epoch of decaying capitalism, shifts and semi-shifts of political regimes occur quite suddenly and frequently without altering the social foundation, without checking capitalist decline. On which of these two processes must our policy be based in such a fundamental question as war: on the shifts of political regimes, or on the social foundation of imperialism, common to all political regimes and unflinchingly uniting them against the revolutionary proletariat? The fundamental strategic question is our attitude towards war, which it is impermissible to subordinate to episodic tactical considerations and speculations....." (A Step Towards Social-Patriotism, Editorial Board, Bulletin of the Russian Left Opposition, New International, July 1939.)

The common social foundation of all imperialism is monopoly capitalism and the technology and industrial capacity which it has developed, and which compels it to search for its empires. Due to its peculiar historic and geographic position, German imperialism has for its object the reconquest of the colonies of the "democratic" imperialists as a stage towards world domination. For this the conquest of the European states was necessary as a preliminary stage and as a base for German operations. For her aims, all of Europe had to be converted into an arena which worked for and facilitated the further march of German militarism. Upon its socio-economic foundation, German fascism, in prostrating its working class, and concentrating on war, brought forth the greatest military machine the world had yet seen, enabling it to bowl over its enemies in Europe like nine-pins, while giving to its military

conquests the most ruthless character. As a have-not nation, Germany could proceed exclusively through violence, much like a pauper who can get rich only through a hold-up. Fascism was only the "super-charger" to the German imperialist "motor".

Basing themselves on their own rich empires, England and America did not feel this German "compulsion". However, already England begins to think in "German", though not as yet "fascist", terms, about Europe. Feeling her empire slipping away from her, and confronted by the most formidable of rivals, the United States, the English ruling class is beginning to discuss the prospect of a more direct intervention in Europe after the war in order to secure for itself a more stable base with which to hold its declining position in Europe and in the world.

Marshall Smuts, to whom Churchill assigned temporarily his post of Prime Minister while he was away at the Tohoran Conference, proposed, as a solution to British decline, the extension of the British commonwealth to the continent to include "those similar democracies of Western Europe which are of our way of thinking....entirely with us in our outlook and way of life, and....of the same political and spiritual substance as ourselves."

And if England is beginning to orient herself to including Western Europe, is her sphere, it is only because she has conceded the same role in Eastern Europe to Stalin, whose specialty is incorporating territories in the "fascist" manner. Together, the British hope, they may prove to be a match for America. But America has the pile of chips and the hand to play them with. Huge loans to Russia and the other European nations; food, the products of her tremendous technology, even temporarily markets, will go a long way toward frustrating the designs of her much weaker imperialist rival.

America has no intention of abandoning Europe to either Britain or Russia. On the contrary, her intentions and activities are leading to a most intense intervention in the affairs of Europe. The United States espouses most vigorously the "independence of the European nations", in order more successfully to perpetuate the division of the European states and to prevent them from uniting against her under the leadership of England, Russia, or a revived Germany, or a combination of them.

The different power politics of the various great states, which we should follow very carefully, stems from the peculiar historical development of their respective imperialisms -- not from their fascist, "democratic", or Russian "totalitarian" masks. It is not the latter which decides for us the question of war or national independence.

To speak of imperialism colonizing Europe while its conquests are not definitive and consolidated is un-Marxian. Marxists define a colony as an area exploited and dominated by imperialism, which is so backward economically and culturally that its industrial development is a matter of the future, and can be realized ultimately only by the proletariat in its march toward socialism.

In this decisive sense of eliminating industry and the proletariat the German conquests of Europe can hardly be called "the colonizing of Europe". By and large, the industries of the conquered countries have not been obliterated or taken over by German fascism. On the contrary, Germany has put them to full use in turning out materials for the German war machine.

If the Germans have destroyed, or rather transferred, some factories from the conquered countries to within their own borders, as may be the case with Poland and the areas conquered from Russia, it is no less true that the Russians have done the same with respect to the factories of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland. This retrogressive characteristic is therefore not peculiar to German fascism. Moreover, the "democratic" imperialisms are confronted with the same "problem" in case of a victory over Germany. To eliminate the latter "permanently" as an imperialist rival is possible only by stripping Germany of her advanced technology and industry or by putting obstacles in the way of its operation. What specific plan Stalin and the "democracies" have in the way of curbing Germany we have no way of telling but it is not excluded that they may tackle the fundamental "problem" of deindustrializing Germany to one degree or another.

Manifestly false is therefore the statement that "Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, the Ukraine, White Russia, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Luxemburg, Greece-- all these are now colonies, to all intents and purposes, of the German empire."

No less false is the statement: "German fascism has not only enchained the European proletariat but it has completed the ruin of the native bourgeoisie of Europe as the intermediate strata between itself and the masses." (Johnson resolution.)

To say that "fascism represents a hurling back of society", and that, "it finds itself compelled to reduce to a most barbarous colonial slavery tens of millions of advanced and civilized peoples!" or to speak of the "capitalist degradation of European civilization by German monopoly capitalism" is this not "replacing imperialism by one of its political masks-- that of Fascism"?

And is it also not "a patent concession to the Comintern, a patent indulgence of the social-patriots of the 'democratic' countries" to exempt from the "hurling back of society" and the "degradation of European civilization" the violation by "democratic" and Russian imperialism of the "national independence" of Italy, Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, and their violation tomorrow of the "national independence" of Germany and of all the subject peoples in accordance with the war map of their victory?

Were it so, if it were really a question of fascism representing "a hurling back of society", or a fascist "degradation of European civilization", then fascism would stand in relation to "democratic" capitalism, as feudalism stood in relation to classic democratic capitalism more than a century ago. In a war between the two we would have to support the more progressive one. Only within a single state, in an isolated struggle, outside of the context of an imperialist war, is it permissible to support the bourgeois "democratic" struggle against fascism. And even there, it is the workers, their rights, and organizations which we defend. We do not defend the "democratic" bourgeoisie against the fascist bourgeoisie since they both rest on a common imperialist social foundation, and for that reason we do not express any confidence in the government of the "democratic" bourgeoisie. This was the situation in the Spanish civil war. In that struggle the main enemy was fascism. Let us recall that we were ready to abandon that limited struggle--democracy versus fascism-- had the Spanish war developed into an imperialist war. Our task would then have been to see as the main enemy both the "democratic" and fascist oppressor within Spain and our duty would have been to turn the imperialist war into a class war for socialism. Have we forgotten this so quickly?

Under imperialism it is the technological development and industrial capacity, and not the political state form which determines the relative power of the robber nations. In order to see this, one would only have to compare German fascist imperialism to Italian fascist imperialism. Finance capital at the base of Italian economy and militarism was too weak to give to Mussolini's imperialistic adventures in Africa more than a bloody opera bouffe character, which ended in bankrupting the nation and contributing in no small way to the later overthrow of the fascist regime. On the other hand the tremendous technology and industry at the base of German economy enabled German militarism to sweep over Europe like a mechanical reaper over a field of grain. German fascist imperialism fights off the whole world today but it should not be forgotten that German imperialism of the Kaiser fought off the world for four long years.

Also it is American technology and wealth that is

making possible the reverse march of both Germany and Japan. It is the United States, on the same basis, which is playing the most reactionary role in the world today. The revolution will have to defend itself above all from the counter-revolutionary efforts of American imperialism, and not only in Europe, but in the whole wide world. Should we then say that American imperialism is hurling society backward? This would be just as un-Marxian as the other contentions.

None of the areas conquered by fascist, "democratic", or Russian totalitarian imperialism can, from a political standpoint, be regarded as colonies, semi-colonies, or oppressed nations while the imperialist war still rages, while the opposing imperialist coalitions are not yet exhausted, and while the proletariat has not yet had its chance to upset the skull-cart of imperialism. At present, the military conquests, no matter how ruthless in character, must be considered by Marxists as shifts in the war fronts, as tragic episodes on the road to the reconstruction of modern society. The fate of these nations, their "independence... belongs to the program of the international proletariat against imperialism", which means the proletarian fight against the imperialist war and for socialism. This is the stand of the Fourth International and its founder Trotsky, who expressed himself over and over again in this spirit, who understood best the murderous character of fascism, and who could still say:

"That policy which attempts to place upon the proletariat the unsolvable task of warding off all dangers engendered by the bourgeoisie and its policy of war is vain, false, mortally dangerous. 'But Hitler's invasion would signify the slaughter of the workers!' And so on, without end. Of course, the dangers are many, very many. It is impossible not only to ward them off, but even to foresee all of them. Should the proletariat attempt at the expense of the clarity and irreconcilability of its fundamental policy to chase after each episodic danger separately, it will unfailingly prove itself a bankrupt. In time of war, the frontiers will be altered, victories and defeats will alternate with each other, political regimes will shift. The workers will be able to profit to the full from this monstrous chaos only if they occupy themselves not with acting as the supervisors of the historical process but by engaging in the class struggle. Only the growth of their international offensive will put an end not alone to episodic 'dangers' but also to their main source: the class society." (A Step Towards Social-Patriotism; Editorial Board, Bulletin of the Russian Left Opposition. New International, July, 1939.)

We must not act "as supervisors of the historical process". We cannot now stand from the heights of the future and proclaim: "Fascism represents a hurling back of society" and "Fascism is reactionary (among other reasons) because it removes from the top of the order of the day, the direct struggle for proletarian, socialist power, and puts in its place the historically outlived anachronistic struggle for 'democracy' and "national independence".

Fascism has not hurled society backward. Such an assertion could only be made in the future when, long after the war, on the basis of the realization of "a perspective of passivity, capitulation, defeat, and decline, oppressed classes and entire peoples" will "climb on all fours in sweat and in blood over the historic road once already traversed." Viewed from the future, a hurled back society, that is, a society in which the European states are all colonies of a giant imperialist oppressor, would include the elimination, not only of state independence, but also of monopoly capital in the former advanced states, the big bourgeoisie in the former smaller and less advanced states, the elimination or removal of modern industry from these states, their reduction culturally and technologically to the status of the present colonial areas, the deproletarianization of millions to the status of coolies and peasants, etc., etc.

In such a hurled back society, the weak native bourgeoisie would unite with the mass of peasants, and the not very numerous proletariat in a struggle, at least up to a certain point, against the common giant oppressor. This situation would remove "from the top of the order of the day, the direct struggle for proletarian, power, and put in its place the historically outlived anachronistic struggle for 'democracy' and "national independence".

Fascism and "Democracy"

But even today, not to speak of the future, before the imperialist war has ended, monopoly capitalism and the big bourgeois of the conquered countries baton on their proletariat, peasant, and small bourgeois masses while conspiring with the Nazis in robbing and persecuting the countless foreigners, refugees and Jewish pariahs.

Objectively, fascism and imperialist war has brought the social antagonisms to a razor's sharpness. In this objective sense fascism never did, and does even less now, "remove from the top of the order of the day, the struggle for proletarian power".

Only in a limited sense is it correct to speak of the reactionary historic role of fascism. In the period of fascist

consolidation, before the war, the proletariat, while objectively more than ever the social antagonist of the bourgeoisie, is thrown back to a former stage through the loss of its organizations and its rights and in its consciousness, inasmuch as democratic illusions are nourished.

Thus in 1933, right after the victory of Hitler, Trotsky was able to say:

"Theoretically, the victory of fascism is undoubtedly an evidence of the fact that democracy has exhausted itself; but politically the fascist regime preserves democratic prejudices, recreates them, inculcates them into the youth, and is even capable of imparting to them, for a short time, the greatest strength. Precisely in this consists one of the most important manifestations of the reactionary historic role of fascism." (Fascism and Democratic Slogans, New International, July 1943)

In consolidating itself, Fascism throws back revolutionary consciousness. The masses are most apt to begin to stir temporarily for the most elementary rights and "in the revolutionary awakening of the masses, democratic slogans will inevitably constitute the first chapter."

Before the war, the reactionary historic role of fascism meant no more than the need to include democratic slogans as a first chapter in the revolutionary awakening of the masses as part of the tactics of our unchanged strategy: the struggle for proletarian socialist power. This is perfectly clear from the following: "Fascism will not eradicate the past political experience; it is even less capable of changing the social structure of the nation..... Even if the further progress of the struggle should in general not permit, even for a single day, the regeneration of a democratic state-- and this is very possible--the struggle itself cannot develop by the circumvention of democratic slogans!" (Trotsky--Fascism and Democratic Slogans, July 1933., New International July, 1943. Our emphasis.)

We would be foolish to reject democratic and transitional slogans in the struggle for socialism. Before we can put forward agitationaly the culminating socialist slogan "Workers' Power!" we would undoubtedly have to put forward many prior democratic and transitional slogans. However, the nature of these tactical transitional slogans is dictated by the first point on our strategical agenda: the struggle for proletarian, socialist power and not the struggle for formal or bourgeois democracy.

There is a difference even in the tactical slogans put forward under a "consolidating" fascism and those put forward under one rocked by the savage impact of the imperialist war. The imminent collapse of fascism does not require slogans that will awaken the proletariat. Rather what is needed are slogans that will guide an already awakened proletariat to take the power into its own hands.

The difference between the fascist and the "democratic" political regimes when fascism is first consolidating its power, and those regimes when fascism gambles all by plunging into an imperialist war is most graphically described together with our present tasks as follows:

"Naturally there exists a difference between the political regimes in bourgeois society, just as there is a difference in the comfort between various cars in a railway train. But when the whole train is plunging into an abyss, the distinction between decaying democracy and murderous fascism disappears in the face of the collapse of the entire capitalist system.

"By his victories and bestialities, Hitler provokes naturally the sharp hatred of the workers the world over. But between the legitimate hatred of the workers and the helping of his weaker, but not less reactionary, enemies, is an unbridgeable gulf. The victory of the imperialists of Great Britain and France would not be less frightful for the ultimate fate of mankind than for that of Hitler and Mussolini. Bourgeois democracy cannot be saved. By helping their bourgeoisie against foreign fascism, the workers would only accelerate the victory of fascism in their own country. The task which is posed by history is not to support one part of the imperialist system against another, but to make an end of the system as a whole." (Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution. May 1940)

The task which is posed by history is not the fight for bourgeois democracy and national independence, that is, recreating the "democratic" part of the imperialist system, "but to make an end of the system as a whole."

In the historic period in which we live, the historical top of our agenda is the struggle for socialism. In the struggle for this first point we naturally do not begin with the slogan of workers' power. We do not begin with this

for any country in the world, not even when there is a revolutionary situation in a particular country. In such a situation it is our culminating slogan, and comes after the establishment of soviets and the hegemony of the revolutionists in the soviets. Everything prior to this is in the nature of a transitional slogan, and even workers' power is transitional to the agitational slogan, The Socialist United States of the World.

We don't have to have the national question to understand that workers power is not an immediate action slogan for Europe. But the national question as it appears today cannot eliminate workers' power as the first point on our historical agenda. If it is true of the United States it is certainly true of Europe, or are there people who wish to maintain that there is an historical top of the agenda within an historical top of the agenda, that is a sort of "sub-historical" agenda? In that case one would have to abandon the idea of the reactionary role of fascism in the sense of hurling back society and of its having made colonial slaves of the masses of the European countries. The reactionary role of fascism would then have to be given a more limited interpretation in the sense of temporarily throwing back revolutionary consciousness as a result of an ignominious capitulation to fascism, and the resulting blotting out of the organizations and democratic rights of the workers during the period of fascism's consolidation. But even this situation would not eliminate workers power from the top of the historical agenda but only from the top of the "sub-historical" agenda, whose first point would be the struggle for "democracy" as a first stage only, as a means of awakening the workers from the passivity of their defeat. However, even this is valid only when there is no imperialist war which rocks the fascist structure to its very foundation, and not only awakens the worker, but prepares him to rush directly to soviets at the very first crash of fascism.

Hence, instead of proposing to the workers of Europe the historical or "sub-historical" strategy for the restoration of the independent capitalist states and bourgeois democracy, our duty today is to participate in their class battles in order to lead them away from these reactionary objectives through the strategy of the struggle for socialism and the Socialist United States of Europe under which we propose the appropriate tactical democratic and transitional slogans.

The Italian Experience

The most important event of the war thus far, is the revolution in Italy. It is also the most instructive experience. Italy is today the best laboratory for all programs. The fall of Mussolini and the rise of Soviets in Milan and Turin took our party completely by surprise because we did not understand that when the "whole train is plunging into" the

abyss of war "the distinction between decaying capitalism and murderous fascism disappears in the face of the collapse of the entire capitalist system." In other words fascism, far from hurling back society, was itself hurled back by the war.

The workers of Milan and Turin did not have to be awakened with tactical democratic slogans, particularly those which are dictated by the strategy of the fight for formal or bourgeois democracy. At the first crash of the fascist structure, the workers proceeded through soviets on the road forward to the "establishment of an 'authoritarian' socialist, proletarian government".

That they did not go farther than they did is due not only to the German troops who rushed in to overcome the revolutionary workers, but also to the air fleets of the "democratic" imperialists who did not hesitate to unload blockbusters upon the workers who came out into the streets, burying them in the massive ruins of their cities. Tragic indeed, but all too true, are these words: "the social foundation of imperialism, common to all political regimes....unfailingly" united "them against the revolutionary proletariat."

German fascism in Northern Italy did not colonize this area any more than it colonized the other conquered areas of Europe. They did not eliminate Italian fascist industry nor the Italian fascist bourgeoisie. On the contrary, they made common cause with the native fascist bourgeoisie against the revolutionary workers. The appearance of at least six organizations competing for the support of the Italian masses demonstrates how untrue is the assertion that "From end to end of Western Europe, at the wars close there will be no European social force, with any claim to state power except the proletariat".

German fascism in the north Italian areas oppresses the Italian workers but with the Allied armies hammering at the German lines in Italy it is easy to see that this oppression is of too transitory a nature to make it, politically speaking, assume the character of national oppression. It is easy for us to see that the German occupation of northern Italy is only a shift in the war front, but essentially there is no difference between this and the other German occupations. Just because the war has not ended, the German occupation of Europe will, with every passing month, appear in its true character: as tragic episodes in the war, as shifts in the battle lines. No one in the party apparently advocates the slogan of "national liberation" for northern Italy, nor does anyone seem to think that there is a hurling back of society by the fascists there. Equally invalid, because the situation is qualitatively the same, is the slogan of "national liberation" for the rest of occupied Europe.

At the same time no one in the party advocates the slogan "national liberation" for the Italian area under Allied control. Apparently the Allies are not the national oppressors of Italy, though they very definitely aid the Italian bourgeoisie in its class oppression.

From all information available the main anti-fascist organizations in Italy before the fall of Mussolini were: the Party of Action, the Christian Democratic Party, the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Liberal Party of Reconstruction, and the Italian Trotskyist Party.

"....According to Pietro Troves, right wing Socialist leader, writing in 'Labor Discussion Notes' for August, of the six democratic and workers' parties which made their appearance on the fall of Mussolini, the only party which stood for the Socialist Republic was the Italian Trotskyist Party..." (Socialist Appeal (British) October, 1943).

At the time of Mussolini's fall, the workers thought of soviets and a way out of the capitalist impasse. This was the revolutionary situation, and in it was an Italian Trotskyist Party standing for the Socialist Republic. The bourgeoisie was confused and disoriented. It was bolstered by the entrance upon the scene of both German and Allied imperialism. German imperialism uses its armed might to quell the workers of the north, and in this they are aided by the air arm of the Allied imperialism. Badoglio is set up by the Allies. He is given every aid in organizing a new army which will stand for order and "national liberation" and which will replace the disorganized old Italian army. Badoglio is put at the head of the Italian crusade for "national liberation" against the German fascist oppressor. The Allied imperialists insist that he should be given this opportunity to help reclaim the tarnished reputations of the Italian monopoly capitalists and their politicians and generals. The parties uncompromised by fascism, bourgeois and working class, form a front with them for "national liberation". We hope the exception is the Italian Trotskyist Party which came forth boldly for a socialist Italy.

Within German occupied Italy the monopolists see the handwriting on the wall and shift to the Allied imperialist camp. At the same time the anti-fascist front becomes converted into a "national liberation" front which includes this time the monopolists who were behind Mussolini for years. "National liberation" becomes the touchstone for friend, obscuring the class antagonisms and even the crimes of the past. The "national liberation" front within the German occupied territory is linked to the "national liberation" front in the territory under Allied control. The extreme left of the

"national liberation" front lends its prestige to the party just to the right of it, and this party in turn helps to absorb the next, until the extreme right -- the party of monopoly capital--benefits from the general ablution.

The revolutionary actions of the masses against the native monopoly capitalists has become transformed under "national liberation" into a struggle of all the classes to oust the German oppressor. The great specific weight of the proletariat -- its hegemony in the struggle -- is replaced by the hegemony of the monopolists and the imperialists in the "national liberation" struggle. The military organization of the workers, which can become a serious force only by undermining the armies of imperialism with a revolutionary program, becomes under "national liberation" an auxiliary guerrilla force preparing the way for the main forces of the Badoglio and the Allied imperialists. Thus the bourgeoisie, using all its resources and backing to struggle for the right to exploit its masses independently of the German foreigner, inexorably puts its hegemony upon the "national liberation" struggle.

The burning class issues, even the questions of democracy, are hypocritically "postponed" in the name of the main and first task: the ousting of the German conqueror. "National liberation" permits the staggering and punch-drunk bourgeoisie to recover from its helplessness, to rebuild its army of order, its state forces, to regain its lost reputations, in short to put itself once more into a position where it can best deal with the burning class issues, and where it can also best afford to put forward its more liberal representatives.

This pattern is being repeated in all of Europe. The antidote to it is the struggle for socialism and the class fight against the imperialist war, and not the very thing which is promoting this pattern -- "national liberation" and the struggle for formal or bourgeois "democracy."

The appearance of soviets in Italy is the most important fact that has emerged from the war so far. Any attempt to play this down and to force it into the framework of bourgeois democracy reveals a complete misreading of the events.

"Soviets can arise only at the time when the mass movement enters into an openly revolutionary stage. From the first moment of their appearance, the soviets, acting as a pivot around which millions of toilers are united in their struggle against the exploiters become competitors and opponents of local authorities and then of the central government." (Program and Resolutions of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International, 1938)

The appearance of soviets in Italy confirms dramatic-

ally our strategic struggle for socialism and puts the stamp on what we propose as the tactical democratic and transitional slogans for the Italian workers which come under this strategy. To counterpose democratic slogans to spontaneous soviets and almost to regret their appearance because tested parties do not exist at the time or because as yet "the masses do not have an authentic revolutionary party of their own", is to urge just the kind of patience on the masses of which we accuse the bourgeoisie when they want to "postpone" democratic rights for the masses.

Where, if not in the soviets, are the parties, - including the one that is not yet the authentic revolutionary one, - to be tested as revolutionary parties? What other period if not the soviet period is most conducive for the speedy growth of the revolutionary forces so that they can become the "authentic revolutionary party of the masses"?

Of course, the soviets in Italy have been momentarily crushed and the promising revolution of the workers aborted. But their appearance heralds the character of the struggle and the next revolutionary offensive of the workers will bring soviets inevitably to the fore. When this happens it will be the duty of the Italian Trotskyist Party to enter actively into the soviets in order boldly to direct their revolutionary development. This does not mean that it does not at the same time put forth democratic slogans nor even reject the parliamentary struggle should such exist at the same time.

But if at such a time the party shifts its emphasis to the parliamentary struggle and overlooks the soviets, instead of exploiting the parliamentary struggle for the purpose of increasing the specific weight of the soviets and itself in it, then it will unfailingly become bankrupt.

Between the present and the next revolutionary situation in Italy exists an interim in which it would be foolish to call for soviets, but we must not overestimate this interval. To-morrow, as a result, let us say, of a hurried German withdrawal in the north of Italy for reasons of military strategy, during which the Allies are not able to follow up with the necessary rapidity, a new vacuum may develop which may be filled once more with the content of soviets. This is only one of the possibilities which it is impossible to forecast except as a possibility. In any case, however the revolutionary situation may arise, the policy of clinging to the "democratic" epoch will catch us unawares again.

At the present time, when the bourgeoisie is momentarily reinstalled and backed by the superior forces of imperialism, we do not call for soviets, nor is there any "danger" of their arising spontaneously. In the present Italian situation, democratic demands and their parliamentary refraction

should be our concern, and in view of the imperialist and bourgeois effort to either deny democracy to the masses or to limit its character, we should give them the most resolute and audacious character; but everything would hang in the air if we did not at the same time press the boldest economic demands or participate and lead the extra-parliamentary struggle. The emphasis on only democratic demands sounds like the following passage from Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution:

"And since the bourgeoisie is driven into alliance with the reaction not by heated phrases from orators and journalists, but by independent activity of the toiling classes, the Mensheviks tried with all their power to oppose this activity -- to oppose the economic struggle of the workers and peasants. 'For the working class', they taught, 'social questions are not now of the first importance. Its present task is to achieve political freedom.'"

The struggle for political freedom in indissoluble connection with the economic and extra-parliamentary activity dictates, at present, such demands as universal suffrage for men, women, and the youth which has reached the age of 18. The bourgeoisie and the imperialists are on record for a Constituent Assembly at least verbally, but they say they want to postpone its election until after military victory has been achieved. This dictates a bold struggle on our part for elections now, and not only for the Constituent Assembly, but also for elections to all the municipal electoral bodies, etc.

The slogans for political freedom, the slogan of the Constituent Assembly, were raised by the Mensheviks, Cadets, etc., as well as by the Bolsheviks during the February revolution. The difference between the way the Bolsheviks raised these slogans and the way the others did flowed from their respective strategies -- socialist revolution or the bourgeois "democratic" revolution. The strategy of socialist revolution dictated to the Bolsheviks an increasing aggressiveness of their slogans in all spheres, political, economic and extra-parliamentary, and resulted in shifting the specific weight of the struggle onto the soviets, from which they emerged as the authentic revolutionary party of the masses leading them to the victorious proletarian revolution. On the other hand the attempt by the Mensheviks to limit the struggle to the bourgeois "democratic" revolution gave their democratic slogans a hollowness and impotency for which they tried to compensate with a desperate dependence on the Constituent Assembly, which in turn they dared not even convoke and which ended in their bankruptcy and dispersal from the scene of the scene of the revolution.

In Italy today, democratic demands are surely important, but the socialist perspective requires not only a sharpening of these demands and those in the economic sphere, but also so important a slogan as the demand that Italy get out of the imperialist war of both robber coalitions. At the same time the vanguard promotes revolutionary propaganda to undermine the imperialists who are making of Italy a bloody shambles and an arena for counter-revolutionary schemes against the workers and peasants. This slogan will grip the heart of the long suffering and war weary Italian masses, and expose at the same time the Stalinist, reformist, bourgeois, and liberal supporters of the war. This is the kind of a tactic flowing from a socialist perspective that can most profit the Italian Trotskyist Party and develop it into the authentic revolutionary party of the masses! *

By the same token, the revolutionary struggle of the German workers will be obstructed to the extent that "national liberation" and the struggle for bourgeois democracy comes forward to derail them from the struggle for soviets and the socialist revolution. At the present time in Germany the advanced workers should come forward more and more with the demand that the German soldiers be withdrawn from the occupied countries where they are used to oppressing their class brothers in the other nations. It will be the duty of the American, British, French, the Czech, Polish, etc. workers to come forward with a similar demand if the armies of their nations are used to oppress the German workers. This is the essential corollary to the struggle for socialism in all the countries of Europe.

The Socialist United States of Europe

The coming collapse of Hitler which will affect all the European countries to one degree or another will at the same time, compel the Allied imperialists, together with Russia, to use every means to crush the struggle for socialism. This gives a new concreteness to the slogan the "Socialist United States of Europe". The attempt of the peoples to realize their long cherished aspirations will be countered at every turn by the bourgeoisie and the imperialists, and their parties among the working class. They will not stop at drowning the revolution in the blood of the workers.

Hence the strategy of the Fourth International -- the Socialist United States of Europe -- may, in the concrete situation of a revolt threatened by the superior forces of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists, find its only solution in a ringing call to revolution to the workers in the neighboring countries. The content of this call would be the Socialist United States of Europe as an immediate action slogan of the highest importance. This is the living way in which we should determine the efficacy of the Socialist United States of Europe
*see last page for omission

both as a strategy and as an immediate tactic, and not mechanically according to the dictum that the masses must first "have at their disposal independent national states". In the concrete circumstances, the "national liberation" of the bourgeois state may still not be accomplished and, even if it were the masses have never yet had at their disposal a bourgeois state. There is no hard and fast line between the Socialist United States of Europe as an action or as a propaganda slogan. The Socialist United States of Europe must be our real strategy in Europe today, and not "national liberation" and the fight for bourgeois "democracy". This strategy will more and more assume an immediate tactical form providing we engage in the class struggle and the fight for socialism rather than swim with the nationalist and "democratic" current.

The Bourgeoisie and the Nation

The bourgeoisie never defends the fatherland for the sake of the fatherland. They defend private property, privileges, profits. Whenever these sacred values are threatened, the bourgeoisie immediately takes the road of defeatism."

The high point of bourgeois defeatism was the summer of 1940 just after the fall of France. And yet even then the bourgeoisie was not so removed from their private property, privileges and profits that it was possible to say that the proletariat represented the nation. History has taught us that at least for the advanced countries the proletariat represents the nation only when it has achieved workers' power.

Monopoly capitalism at no time wishes to surrender any of its privileges or profits to a foreign conqueror. If its armies suffer a crushing defeat by the armies of a rival imperialism then the monopolists will attempt to conclude that bargain with the conquerors as to their place in the new state of affairs which will best safeguard their profits and positions of privilege. They will then await the future and rise to the defence of their state again when new forces come forward which make possible a recouping of what they have lost, plus an opportunity for new profits and plunder.

To one degree or another this is what has happened to the bourgeoisie of Europe at the time of Hitler's conquests. In none of the countries where real monopoly capitalism existed did the Germans expropriate their properties. They manipulated the chemical, steel or electrical cartels to assure German dominance in the European or world market, but, within each of the specific countries the native monopolists were permitted to exploit their own workers on the basis of their continued ownership of native monopoly capital.

Whatever may have been the ultimate aims of German

imperialism, it is a fact that they did this, and that they raised to full production, by and large, the native industries of the occupied countries in order to supply the tremendous needs of the German war machine. If anything, the ultimate aims of German imperialism could only make the native monopoly capitalists feel more insecure and more willing to assume the role of defenders of the nation.

In France, the Germans collaborated with the Comité des Forges, the Bank of France, the Banque Worms, the Banque de Paris et de Pays Bas, and the Banque de l'Indo-China, to plunder the property of the labor unions, the refugees, and the Jews. This property was taken over by the state and given to these banks. The Germans then bought the property from the banks, using the "occupation francs" which they received from the Bank of France every day to cover the costs of German occupation. The banks were permitted to keep the purchase price of the property paid to them by the Germans.

In this way, as joint plunderers with the Germans, not to speak of their customary monopolistic profiteering, they were able to transfer to Algiers after the Allied conquest of Africa, the sum of \$350,000,000, which Roosevelt, as a friend raised to \$525,000,000, through manipulation of the foreign exchange. How staggering this sum is for the French monopolists can be seen if we recall that the entire French gold reserve in 1940 stood only at \$2,000,000,000, and also that this booty represents about 15% of the entire French budget of the year 1941-42 in which is included the sum of 100,000,000,000 francs to cover the costs of German occupation for that year!

The 200 families in France and in the other countries are hardly in the position of an oppressed class, nor are they non-existent. However, this does not mean that they are not for "national liberation". They would certainly like to reverse the cartel arrangements in their favor, besides having the untrammelled opportunity to enslave completely their own native and colonial peoples, not to speak of whatever loot can be gotten from being on the side of the Allied victors.

That is why the only element in French society that is hopelessly compromised as defeatists, as lackeys of the Germans, are the Lavalists and their "plebian" fascist friends, the Doriotists. All the rest, from De Gaulle, to Giraud, to Potain, are defensists, "national liberators", but each plays this part differently, according to the circumstances in which he finds himself.

Potain the true representative of the 200 families, even in the darkest days of French defeat never considered himself more than a victim of adversity -- by which he meant the Germans. He came forward in order to get the best bargain from the victor, while defending as much as possible the in-

torcasts and the independence of the 200 families. This attitude only stiffened with every defeat suffered by Hitler and with every new evidence of American power. Yesterday, Petain could fight with Laval over submitting France more than was necessary to Hitler's new order. Today, when prevented from broadcasting to the French people a promise of a parliamentary government, Petain further enhances his prestige by declaring that he now considers himself a prisoner of the Germans and, by retiring from an active role in the affairs of the state. He is too clever to retire completely. It is important that he still come forward as the champion of "national liberation" from time to time, even if "innocently". This is the political interpretation that the French masses will give to his apparently innocuous Christmas broadcast that "all Frenchmen will love each other again."

The representatives of the U.S. State Department conspired with the Petainists to produce the "hero" Giraud and the "villain" Darlan on African soil in order to help prepare the American victory. In the glory of this enterprise, in which Darlan was to be embraced by the "hero" Giraud himself it was hoped that Darlan might retrieve some of his vanished honor in order that both he and Giraud - the men of the 200 families -- may take over the strategic and commanding positions of the "National liberation" movement outside of France.

American imperialism is ready to produce temporary disappointments in order to reinstate, the reliable forces of reaction as a native and not alien element of their own nation. Thus the policy of Darlanism and Badoglioism. At the same time the popular De Gaulle is permitted to attain political hegemony of the French Committee of National Liberation, providing the large, growing, modern French army, which will be the spearhead of "national liberation", besides the instrument of law and order, remains in the hands of Giraud.

Despite all the political clashes and clashes of politicians, the essential links in the chain of "national liberation" are as follows: the "national liberation" underground bloc, which is tied to the De Gaulle French Committee of National Liberation, which is tied to Giraud, who is tied to Petain and French monopoly capitalists, who are tied to Allied imperialism. It is through this chain that the exploiting classes and their representatives in their roles of leaders of the armies of "national liberation", intend to reestablish completely their chains over the masses.

The Proletariat and "National Liberation"

Proletarian hegemony in the "national liberation" movement never existed, and can exist even less now. Just as in Italy the proletariat can establish their hegemony over a

revolting movement only when this movement is directed against capitalism itself. The workers are compelled to create their own armies, and their ultimate success will depend to a large degree upon the extent to which they can undermine the armies of imperialism. Otherwise, when it is a national, that is, objectively bourgeois, movement, it is the resources, the strength, of the bourgeoisie and the tremendous backing of imperialism on the outside that assures the hegemony of the bourgeoisie in the movement. The masses are then clearly the dupes who rush to the chains which will enslave them.

On the basis of "national liberation", national unity in France encompasses the classes to such a degree that the erstwhile popular front looks like a sectarian left wing bloc in comparison. The rainbow of national unity ranges from extreme red to the darkest purple of the monarchists and fascists. The man whom the U.S. State Department chose to handle its contacts for the invasion of North Africa was the ultra reactionary Lemaigre-Dubreuil, who is the head of the French Association of Taxpayers, a big business lobby financed by the banks; who worked hand-in-glove with the Comité des Forges, the steel trust, possessing property in Austria and Axis countries; and who led the Fascist riots in Paris in 1934.

Following is a sample of the same sort of the same sort of national unity of the united underground movement whose rallying cry is "oust the invader first". It embraces such various bedfellows as the Stalinists, Socialists, Radical Socialists and the most reactionary representatives of French monopoly capitalism:

"A great sensation was produced in the United Nations, a few months ago, by the arrival in London of two men who had been political adversaries, and whose conspicuous friendship was held out to the world as a sign of the renaissance unity of France. Pierre Brossolette was known before the war as one of the most distinguished members of the Socialist Party. Charles Vallin had been top man in the Croix de Feu organization....

"According to his public statements, Brossolette has not rejected socialism...; it seems that his only real interest, so far as the present is concerned, is to have the Nazis out of France. Charles Vallin also wants to remain true to his former ideals... (he) joined the "National Revolution" and was given a high position by the government of Marshall Petain." (Review of Politics, January 1943, Y. R. Simons)

The "war cry of national freedom" is the essential platform of the united underground movement. It is the slogan which we are told must become the "most important of all the democratic demands that can be made". The reactionaries, the monarchists, the fascists are also for "national liberation", and remaining true to their ideals, their "national liberation" does not exclude fascism, military dictatorship, nor monarchism. We must remember that it is the bankruptcy of "democracy" which gives rise to the most reactionary regimes. "National liberation" can mean not only the enslavement of the masses by "democratic" capitalism but also by fascist capitalism.

Politically, the war cry "first oust the German invader!" means subordination of the class struggle to the primacy of national unity. In May-June 1941, before Hitler's attack on Russia, the French working class was lifted out of the stupor engendered, among other things, by the fall of France, by the magnificent three week general strike of 40,000 miners in northern France. This action, which was not organized by the Stalinists, was directed against the French mine owners. For that reason it was sabotaged by the de Gaullist leaders, who viewed it as a violation of the national front and as a subordination of the first and main task; the ousting of the German invader!

This must be the line of the "national liberation" front! And if ousting of the Germans were the chief task, they would be absolutely right. They are just as right as Roosevelt is when he demands class peace from those who believe in the primacy of the American war effort. When the workers go out on strike, though they may not realize it, they are fighting against the imperialist war. When the French miners went out on strike they were fighting consciously or not, against "national liberation" and for a socialist France. In the strike, the French workers opposed the front of the French bosses, the De Gaullists, the French police, and the German foremen, with the French and German main forces of repression in the background. Paradoxically enough this unity of the French and German capitalists served to promote the future "national liberation" of the French bourgeoisie.

To be the champions of "national liberation", to see it as the main task, means to accept aid, from whatever quarter, that will make its achievement real. Thus it is only natural for the underground, militarily no match for the occupying forces of the German conqueror, to look to the outside, to the armies of Giraud and the Allies, as the chief instruments of their "national liberation". It would be a poor champion of "national liberation" who would try to counsel against this, and if the masses were intoxicated with "national liberation" they would look upon him as an enemy spy in their ranks.

Only to the extent that the Marxists rid the masses of their nationalism and are the foremost participants and leaders in the class battles for socialism, can the workers understand the real nature of the class enemy and the imperialist "liberators". Only in unceasing class struggle carried to its highest stages can the workers prepare their forces against the existing and approaching counter-revolution. To say that the masses want to get rid of the foreign oppressor first and that they will then come to terms with their own oppressors is to be the victim of a mood that can only result in foregoing the preliminary and essential building up of the class forces, and prevents the systematic weakening of the class forces of the enemy, native and foreign. It does not make possible that favorable relationship of forces which ends in victory.

No Support to the Partisans!

However the masses arm themselves in the occupied countries, these military forces of the people cannot, and will not, on the basis of "national liberation", form the core of the future proletarian army fighting for socialism. These forces can only develop, so long as they fight for the same national divisions as Allied imperialism, as auxiliary forces to the main body of the Allied armies. They will be led and controlled by the united underground center, whose aim is the creation of an independent capitalist state, usually of the "democratic" variety. For this reason the popular armed forces cannot come into fundamental conflict with the bourgeoisie or their imperialist backers. The latter's policy will therefore be, not the disarming of the popular forces, but the utilization of them in preparing the ground for the main imperialist offensive against the German armies. They will then become integrated into, and subordinated to, the main forces of Allied imperialism and its general strategy.

If the popular forces are strong, it will tend to give them a relative independence on such secondary questions as bourgeois "democracy", which, they can realize as against the out and out reactionary political program of capitalism. It is doubtful if imperialism will attempt to precipitate a civil war on this question. This can be seen from the shift of imperialist support from Mihailovitch to the Partisans in Yugoslavia.

Once the German armies are defeated the popular armies will very easily be dissolved, by their leaders, providing their bourgeois "democratic" program is realized. The "democratic" leaders will then organize their own regular army standing for law and order and the bourgeois republic.

Only through the workers arming themselves on a program for socialism and class struggle will the attempts be made by "democrats", capitalists, and imperialists of every variety, to disarm them.

Long before that they will try to prevent them from arming, and failing this they will conduct a unceasing civil war against them. All political shakings standing on the common social foundation of imperialism will unfailingly unite against the revolutionary proletariat.

The first swift blows of the onrushing German armies scattered the armies at the base of bourgeois rule and created the most favorable opportunity for the masses in the districts where German domination was not established to organize their own military forces and proceed with measures of social liberation. In this fluid situation the revolt of the people could have developed in a socialist direction, were it not that this revolt became derailed onto the tracks of "national liberation" and "democracy." The further development of the movement in this direction does not bring the masses into basic conflict with the bourgeoisie and the imperialists, but rather establishes the hegemony of the latter in the movement. Whatever conflicts continue involve not a basic attack on the social order but on the secondary aspects of class rule. They develop a competition between the "democrats" and the reactionaries, but at the same time they would not hesitate to unite against the competition of a true revolutionary force.

This is the situation in Yugoslavia. The Partisan movement started out as revolts for true self-determination against reactionary Greater Serb oppression, against the rich landlords, bankers, and clergy, who remained in Yugoslavia and were protected by German imperialism. In the first stages of the Partisan movement the Nazis and the reactionary Yugoslavian classes presented themselves to the masses as class enemies. It was only natural that Mihailovitch should find himself closer to the Hitlerites than to the revolting people. As the Partisan movement came under the control of the "national liberationists", whose chief and first task was to drive out the Germans, social liberation became an increasingly smaller part of their program. Thus on December 15, 1942, the Partisan Constituent Assembly listed as its principal tasks: "the developing and the strengthening of the already existing unity of the front and rear; the organization of supply to the People's Liberation Army and to the guerilla detachments; the strengthening of the work of the people's liberation committees; the safeguarding of personal freedom and property; the raising of the cultural level of the people, the organization of social welfare and the public health protection services."

This program omits completely any real attack on capital, which is the basis for national unity. It embraces all the classes and the clergy, except for the Great Serbian ultra-reactionaries, monarchists and politicians, and is the logical counterpart of the Partisan tieup with the Allied and Russian imperialist camp. In June, 1942, the Partisan Con-

ference of Yugoslav Patriots could say:

"The liberation struggle in Montenegro, Boka, and Sandjak against the fascist imperialist robbers is a component part of the struggle carried on by the peoples of Yugoslavia, enslaved peoples of the European states as well as by our allies-- the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the U.S.A." (our emphasis).

In addition to this, the Partisan General Headquarters issued the order on May 15, 1942, that the "Partisan authorities on the basis of the decisions of the National Liberation Front will shoot everyone who is proved to have attempted to form no matter what kind of armed units, aside from partisan units which are under the command of the general headquarters of the Slovenian Partisan Units." (our emphasis).

On the basis of their "democratic" program the Partisan leaders negotiated with the ultra-reactionary Mihailovitch in order to include him in the national front. The nationalism of the Partisan movement which has led it into the Allied imperialist camp is now so devoid of any basic attack on Yugoslavian capitalism that it is not excluded that the representatives of Greater Serb oppression may yet come to terms with Tito. However, this is not the decisive thing. What is important is that the derailment of the class struggle in favor the national struggle prepares the bridge which will sooner or later reinstall the reactionaries of the old or new variety in the commanding positions of Yugoslavian society.

Clarity on the question of "national liberation" would have permitted us to see at least a year and a half ago the tieup between the Partisans and the Allied imperialists. Now Tito has been made a Marshal and given command over the Balkan sector of the Allied offensive. Now that the Yugoslavian masses see "national liberation" as close to achievement, are we to tell the advanced workers of Yugoslavia to cease being the champions of "national liberation" and to fight against the combined "liberating" forces of Tito and his Allies? How far will such "champions" of "national liberation" get? The experience of Yugoslavia teaches us that the policy which prevents us in the name of being against "sectarianism" from doing our duty and swimming against the current ends up in a desperate and belated attempt to overcome the fully developed torrent, and leads to the completest isolation and to catastrophe.

"The defense of the national state, first of all in Balkanized Europe--the cradle of the national state--is in the full sense of the word a reactionary task." (War and the Fourth International 1934) This is the key to our policy in Yugoslavia. The advanced workers can only fight for a socialist

and federated Yugoslavia as part of the Socialist United States of Europe.

The advanced workers enter as the most active participants in every class and social struggle of the oppressed Yugoslavian nationalities. The overwhelming peasant character of Yugoslavian economy dictates a policy of linking up the peasant struggles with the fight in the factories, mills and mines in order to develop proletarian hegemony over the entire struggle. The advanced workers of the factory and field base themselves on the committees in the factories and the committees in the village, and try through them to organize the independent class action of the oppressed against the German and native exploiters. This will break the stultifying national front, and lead to creation of the independent armed forces of the people fighting against the class unity of German imperialism, Mihailovitch, Tito, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill. The mass support of the latter will be undermined by a class program for the oppressed who now follow them. In the specific Yugoslavian conditions the ultimate victory of the masses can be achieved by linking the fate of the oppressed workers and peasants to that of the European workers and peasants through the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe.

For a Socialist Poland!

In Poland the independent struggle of the workers along class lines was able to develop to a more advanced stage than in any other occupied country mainly because of the great discrediting of Stalinism, particularly in the period of the Stalin-Hitler partnership.

The joint violation by Russia and Germany of Poland, the counter-revolutionary activities of the Russian bureaucracy and the GPU against the revolting Polish workers, led to a clear understanding and formulation of the Polish struggle among the advanced section of the Polish proletariat, who saw as their enemies German imperialism, Stalin, and the Polish reactionary classes backed by Allied imperialism.

Hitler's attack on Russia, the ever closer rapprochement between Russian and Allied imperialism, the program of "national liberation" which the latter have put forth and which they promise to achieve by the strength of their armies, has created a growing and dangerous competition to the revolutionary Polish workers in the form of a united front of "national liberation", which considers itself to be in the camp of Allied imperialism, and which looks forward to the intervention of the latter.

We can offer no better example of a class approach

freed of all nationalism than to repeat the main content of the following illegal leaflet of November, 1940, which was pasted on the walls of the Hitler-created ghetto:

"We are not moved by the fate of the Polish and Jewish bourgeoisie. Money smooths the road for them...The Polish toiling masses... the Jewish toiling masses...the ever more enslaved masses of all Poland see the perspective of the great, bloody struggle for an independent Poland of the toiling people-- a Poland that will realize the great ideal of freedom, justice and equality of all nations. The victory in this struggle will not be brought to us by any army that appears in our land, not by any pacts and treaties -- it will be won only by the revolutionary movement of the popular masses of Poland, in brotherhood with other peoples of Europe who fight on the fronts of the underground movements against fascism and all manifestations of totalitarianism and tyranny.... So long as the love of freedom lives among the Polish and Jewish working masses, the ghetto walls will remain nothing but an artificial partition which will crumble in the dust along with fascism itself.... But not in order that the Polish and Jewish capitalists shall once more conclude a pact upon its ruins, and put the liberating people of Poland in chains of exploitation and oppression again. Where these walls now stand... the walls of the workers' homes of free Warsaw will stand. The vision of this new capital, the vision of the independent Poland of the working people will abolish all oppression and transform our land into the great fatherland of freedom, will fortify us in the severest trials....." (our emphasis).

This is the kind of national liberation and democracy that we put as the first point on our agenda. Not the restoration of the outlived bourgeois states and the struggle for bourgeois democracy, but the struggle for an independent Workers' Poland, a Socialist Poland rid of capitalist exploitation and oppression, which is possible "in brotherhood with other peoples of Europe" fighting against all capitalist tyranny -- the Socialist United States of Europe. The main enemy of the revolutionary Polish workers is Polish capitalism together with German fascism and not just "German fascism". We approve completely this revolutionary "sectarianism" of the best Polish fighters of the underground, who agitate for a Workers', Socialist Poland and the Socialist United States of Europe! This and not the "democrat-

ic" and "national liberation" of the Polish underground front which is in the "democratic" imperialist camp is the policy which will lead to the victory of the European and world working class!

The Class Tasks of the Proletariat

In all the countries of Europe, the proletariat and the masses engage increasingly in class actions against the capitalists, foreign and native, and their forces of repression: the great minor's strike in Northern France, the general strike in Holland,*the mass demonstrations, work stoppages in all the occupied lands, armed resistance, revolts and revolution! In Germany totalitarianism has not prevented the demonstrations of women, of students, the mutinies and desertions of soldiers, the sporadic strikes and stoppages, in which the German workers solidarize themselves with foreign workers of all kinds. Terrific is the significance of 12,000,000 foreign workers in Germany and the over-growing defeatism of the German workers from the standpoint of internationalism and the Socialist United States of Europe.

It would be no exaggeration to say that thousands of class actions over wages, prices, higher rations, shelter, fuel, against brutality, for free speech, press, assembly, against labor drafts, labor organization, freeing of prisoners of war and also political prisoners, adequate protection from the ravages of war, etc. etc. have occurred over the face of Europe to refute completely the unwarranted statement that without "national liberation" the advanced workers will be isolated from the masses. As though it were possible to separate a worker from his factory and from the conditions of his oppression and from all who are victims with him! Not for a single moment does the class struggle stop. We see, rather, that its momentum increases to the drama of soviets in Italy. It is not at all a question of isolation for those who are ready to participate in the front lines of the class battles. On the contrary the problem is one of seeing the direction of events, of not lagging behind, of not being caught unawares, of not having to make a disastrous retreat, of swimming against the initial current in order to ride with the flood of the future.

It would be foolish to deny that the masses are affected with the virus of nationalism. It is so not only with "national liberation" but also when they rush to defend "their" country against an imperialist invader and when they look to the armies of imperialism for their "liberation". Through the abstraction, the nation, the bourgeoisie mobilizes them to defend the very concrete capitalist chains which enslave them. When the worker defends "his" country or fights for "national liberation" he thinks he is defending what little he has against those who would deprive him of that. At the same time he may think that he is also fighting for a better future.

*also the great steel strike in Belgium and the general strike in Luxemburg.

However when everything is reduced to the concrete struggle, when the worker fights for the specific things that he holds dear, that concrete struggle negates the defense of the abstraction. Thus, every concrete class action for higher wages, for better conditions, for unionism, against the rising cost of living, for democratic rights, for all the demands in the struggle for socialism is a blow against the war for imperialist profits and capitalist exploitation.

In the same way the French miners' strike, the strikes of the Belgian, Dutch, and Norwegian workers, the class struggles and manifestations of the Yugoslavs, the Poles and the German workers are a negation of "national liberation" of the capitalist state and a promotion of the fight for a socialist fatherland.

The advanced workers are therefore interested in these specific class actions which alone can turn the masses away from their nationalism and lead them toward socialism. Despite the ruthlessness of German domination it is a fact that in the more advanced of the occupied countries, Hitler and his Quislings, lacking a mass base, have not reduced the workers and their organizations to quite the state of prostration of their German brothers. Thus in France, the trade union organizations of the workers on a regional and local scale remain more or less intact, the forces of reaction still not strong enough to obliterate them. To say that because the German workers eat a little better than their brothers in the dominated countries and are therefore in the relative position of an aristocracy of labor is a vulgarization that plays into the hands of Goebbels' theme of Nordic superiority.

The French workers are still able to come out 40,000 strong in a major struggle against the bourgeoisie and they are still able to demonstrate in the thousands against the labor drafts of the French workers for German industry. We are certain that tomorrow the German workers will go far beyond this, but they may also find it necessary to eat less. All the less reason then to talk of an aristocracy of labor on the basis of the most conjunctural situations.

If anything, in the civilized countries the less the workers are in the position of an aristocracy of labor the more imperious is their struggle for socialism. And yet for the United States, where the workers truly occupy, relative to the other countries, the place of an aristocracy of labor, we are told that the top of the order of the day is the struggle for socialism while in Europe it is the struggle for bourgeois democracy and the reestablishment of the capitalist state.

Whatever forces we have should be in the factory committees, legal or illegal, which prepare the class actions

for higher wages, better conditions, fewer hours; against speedup and the dragging of workers to work in Germany; for unionism, for democratic rights, and political organization, etc. We should participate in and help organize every manifestation economic and political, against native and foreign capital and its forces of repression. We should help to prepare all the forces, including the arming of the workers, for the clashes with the enemy and the greater battles of tomorrow. On these independent class issues we can make united fronts with all workers' organizations and groups who wish to participate in these specific actions. We do not allow ourselves nor the workers to become exhausted in nationalistic acts of assassination and sabotage which can only lead to reactionary results. We base ourselves primarily on the lower organizations and the committees in the factories. The bourgeoisie, the Croix de Feu "national liberationists", the de Gaullist, Stalinist, socialist, trade unionist, and liberal leaders will attempt to sabotage the class actions of the workers. This essential disrupting of the unity of the classes will expose the reactionary character of the "national liberation" and "democratic" front and reveal that the program of "ousting the German invader" is only a means to completely shackling the workers to the chains of the native capitalists and imperialism.

Revolutionary Fraternization Versus "Ousting the German Invader"

We are not for "ousting the German invader", but for revolutionary fraternization with the German soldier on the basis of class brotherhood and the international struggle for socialism. The German soldier, who is away from his loved ones, who is sick of the war and frantic over the safety of his own family subjected increasingly to terrific holocausts from the air, is more and more open to the class appeal against the warmongers in both of the imperialist camps. This and not national hatred and threats to kill him, or appeals to come over to the side of the national enemy, will undermine the German workers in uniform. The German soldier is not interested in a free capitalist France nor a bankrupt "democratic" France. He is interested in the only kind of a France that can help and promote by example his own liberation. He is interested in a socialist France which will not permit the Allied invaders to crush a socialist Germany. The German soldier should naturally abhor the role of a mercenary against even a capitalist France, but he will join forces only with a revolutionary France. Revolutionary fraternization is possible only on the basis of the class fight for international socialism. It is the only way to prevent the unity of German and Allied imperialism against the French, the German and the European revolutions.

The Peasantry and "National Liberation"

In the predominantly agricultural countries such as Poland, Yugoslavia, and Greece, the advanced workers must develop first of all the struggles in the factories, working primarily through the factory mill and mine committees, which will be the workers' soviets of tomorrow. They and the advanced peasant workers must attempt to link up the struggle in the villages to that of the metropolitan workers so that these struggles do not lead, but follow, the direction of the workers' fight. Otherwise the peasant guerrilla struggles degenerate to nationalism and become tools in the hands of the exploiters. The advanced peasant workers should not, and cannot, be bystanders to the developing movements in the villages even when these movements are largely national in their character, and are led by committees dominated by local "national liberationists". However, it will be the struggle for social and class issues that the advanced peasant worker will concentrate on, intensify, and throw fuel upon. He will fight for releasing the

strangle hold of the landlord and the banker upon the peasant, he will fight for greater democracy in the village committees, for food and clothing for the peasants, for a greater share of the taxes imposed by the "national liberationists" going for housing, education, sanitation, and social and economic needs of the peasants. He will warn against the attempts to place the struggle of the peasantry under the hegemony of the bourgeoisie, the priesthood, and the imperialists, and propose instead the hegemony of the poorest peasants and an alliance with the workers of the neighboring towns. This kind of a fight will inevitably meet with the united resistance of the conqueror, the native reactionaries, and the "democratic" "national liberators". It will necessitate the independent arming of the workers and the peasantry against them all, and will call for work within the camp of the enemy and a sustained effort to remove from under them their mass support by means of a social and revolutionary program. The struggle will have to be deepened and widened and led by the workers. Success will be possible only by its taking on the greatest revolutionary proportions and linking the fate of the revolution to that of the revolutionary workers in the more advanced countries under the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe.

This is our approach. We have tried to indicate in a general way what the fighting issues may be in the various countries. Naturally the actual specific program can be formulated only by the revolutionaries in these countries who are familiar with the special conditions existing there. However, the general line is clear enough. The crux of this line is the struggle for socialism and the Socialist United States of Europe.

The Colonial Peoples and "National Liberation"

Outside of Europe, more specifically in the Asiatic countries, the colonies and semi-colonies, we recognize that in countries such as China, Burma, the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, Malaya, etc., that is, those countries that have been sucked into the imperialist war of one or the other of the imperialist camps, the proletariat and the peasantry cannot support the war of these countries so long as this war is an integral part of the Allied or Japanese imperialist struggle. This is the case today and the main enemy in these countries is therefore the bourgeoisie in alliance with imperialism. We do not support any of the movements for "national liberation" in the occupied territories of an imperialist conqueror in these countries if these movements are under the leadership of people who consider their struggle to be part of the war conducted by the bourgeoisie of their country in alliance with imperialism against the rival imperialist conqueror. Thus, in the Japanese dominated areas of China or the Philippines, we do not support any movements or guerrilla struggles to oust the Japanese if they

are connected with the war of Chiang-Kai-Shek, Quezon, and the Allied imperialists. The main enemy in these territories is not just Japanese imperialism, but the native bourgeoisie, together with Allied and Japanese imperialism. Similarly in Burma in the event of an advance of the Allies leading to their conquest of part of Burma, any "national liberation" movement against the Allies led by the Burmese bourgeoisie which would be connected with Japanese imperialism would not have our support. The main enemy in such a situation would not be just Allied imperialism, but the Burmese bourgeoisie together with Allied and Japanese imperialism. We would give every support to a genuine national liberation movement in the colonies which was independent of the native bourgeoisie and their imperialist supporters of either camp. The main enemy of such a movement would be the native bourgeoisie and all imperialism. Our aim in this struggle would be to promote the hegemony of the proletariat in it, to deepen its character and extend it as a revolutionary struggle of all the oppressed peoples of Asia, as part of the revolutionary fight of the workers of the world under the slogan of "Workers of the World, Unite!" and the "Socialist United States of the World", as a final realization of the permanent revolution.

Building the Revolutionary Party

"The basic conditions for the victory of the proletarian revolution have been established by historical experience and clarified theoretically. 1) The bourgeois impasse and the resulting confusion of the ruling class; 2) the sharp dissatisfaction and the striving towards decisive changes in the ranks of the petty-bourgeoisie without whose support the big bourgeoisie cannot maintain itself; 3) the consciousness of the intolerable situation and readiness for revolutionary actions in the ranks of the proletariat; 4) a clear program and a firm leadership of the proletarian vanguard-- these are the four conditions for the victory of the proletarian revolution." (Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution. May, 1940).

These first three conditions are rapidly maturing in the European countries and were realized in the brief period of Mussolini's downfall and the rise of Soviets in Italy. The materialization of these conditions signifies the presence of a revolutionary situation. However, to this must be added the fourth condition -- a clear program and a firm leadership of the proletarian vanguard -- in order to assure the victory of the proletarian revolution.

The main reason for the defeats of many revolutions is that these four conditions rarely mature properly at one and the same time. In the past twenty years the proletariat has suffered one defeat after another and there is no doubt that the outbreak of war found the proletariat in a disoriented and depressed mood. However, we must not overestimate the durability of such moods. Events created them and the impact of the war on the entire capitalist structure is fast dispelling them.

War as well as revolution is made primarily by the younger generation. Millions of youth of the forgotten generation of the capitalist crisis before the war are today finding their places in the armies or in industry. They are fast becoming politicized and solidarized. The war has opened up the possibility for their revolutionary unification, at the same time as it is shaking off the apathy of the older generations.

The struggles in Europe and the revolution in Italy is evidence of the increasing vitality and combativity of both the younger and older generations. The problem is therefore that of a revolutionary party and its creation in time to lead the proletarian revolution.

In view of the relative smallness of the revolutionary forces, it is necessary to pose this question correctly. We recognize that this or that uprising may end in defeat owing to the immaturity of the revolutionary leadership, and to the preponderance in this or that situation of the forces that are moved in against the revolution by the capitalist counter-revolutionary intervention. However, it is not a question of a single uprising, but of an entire revolutionary epoch.

A young revolutionary party must have this outlook. History will provide enough opportunities for it to test itself, to accumulate experience and to grow. The faster the vanguard is formed the more the epoch of bloody convulsions will be shortened. The question of tempo and time-intervals is of great importance, but it does not change our general historical perspective nor the direction of our policy. Our conclusion can only be to organize the proletarian vanguard with tenfold energy.

Those who are pessimistic refer to what they consider are the sad consequences of the last war. But the last war gave birth to the October Revolution and a series of revolutions in Europe and the colonies. Furthermore, the economic position of the imperialist states, including the United States, is infinitely worse today and the destruction of war is infinitely greater. There is every reason to believe, therefore, that this time there will be a much more decisive reaction on the part of the workers and the army. The Italian revolution broke out when the main imperialist protagonists were not yet exhausted. The decisive military clashes are still ahead. Their

resulting wreckage will confirm the warning of the Italian indicator of revolution.

We see that in violation of all democratic opinion, the imperialists postpone their "democratic" program until they have consolidated the reliable forces of the bourgeoisie. This is all the more necessary for them since the large imperialist armies, overwhelmingly plebian, cannot be depended upon to enforce the will of imperialism upon an increasingly aroused population of 380,000,000 in Europe, not including another 180,000,000 in Russia, and the teeming millions in the colonies. The imperialists realize that they cannot keep away from their homes for more than a limited time the war weary and homesick soldier masses of their armies, who will have been increasingly exposed to the contagion of revolutionary ideas. The bourgeoisie is haunted by the spectre of revolution today, and even if they succeed through "national liberation" in installing the bourgeoisie in power tomorrow, so precarious will this installation be that it is certain that life will be for them one series of revolutionary nightmares.

This is how the present war compares with the last. And if we compare the revolutionary forces during the last war with those of the present, we could still not put the present revolutionary vanguard on the same plane with those isolated internationalists who raised their voices during the last war. Only the Russian Bolshevik party was a revolutionary force at that time. But even there the overwhelming majority, except for a small emigre group around Lenin, failed to shed its national narrowness and rise to the perspective of the world revolution.

In numbers, and especially in preparation, the revolutionary forces of today possess infinite advantages over its predecessors of the last world war. They are the direct heirs of Bolshevism in its flower. They have absorbed the tradition of the October Revolution and the experience of the richest historical period between two world wars.

War speeds up enormously the political development. Those great tasks which only yesterday seemed long years, if not decades, away, are looming up directly before us. Programs, including "sub-historical" ones, which are based on habitual peace-time conditions will inevitably remain dangling in mid-air.

If with our small forces we did not hesitate before the war to propose a revolutionary program for the Chinese Revolution, for the defeat of Hitler, for the French Revolution for the Spanish revolution, and for the Second Imperialist War, why should we falter now? Did we not then also have the problem of creating the revolutionary vanguard? But we did it not only because the revolutionary program was applicable to the situation, but also because this was the only way to build

a revolutionary party. Do we no longer agree with Trotsky in his advice to Andres Nin, whose pessimism regarding the lack of revolutionary forces led him to support the popular "democratic" front in Spain? Trotsky wrote Nin:

"We have few forces. But the advantage of a revolutionary situation consists precisely in the fact that even a small group can become a great force in a brief space of time, providing that it gives a correct prognosis and that it issues correct slogans in time" (Letters on the Spanish Revolution. June, 1931)

A revolutionary situation has already come out of the war in Italy and many more will follow. The revolutionary forces are much greater than they were in 1931. There is absolutely no room for the pessimism which sees the revolutionary party created only in the "democratic" period, and still more incredible, with a "democratic" program.

The imperialists' fear of the revolution has to no small degree imparted to them a frantic desire to woo Stalin as the arch instrumentality for heading off and betraying the coming revolutionary wave. Bankrupt imperialism needs to corrode the working class movement from within, and Stalinism is that corrosion par excellence. While Russia's victories and Stalinist activity in behalf of "national liberation" have permitted Stalinism to become the chief claimant for the support of the workers, it is no less true that the openly counter-revolutionary role of the Stalinists in Poland and the Baltic countries, and their stand against socialism in Italy which they will repeat in all the European countries leaves the Trotskyists as the sole claimant for the support of the workers in their inevitable bid for Socialism as the only way out.

The counter-revolutionary record the Stalinists have piled up for twenty years, and the increasing integration of Stalin with counter-revolutionary imperialism will make it less and less possible for the workers to separate the two from their common counter-revolutionary schemes, and is bound to impel the workers toward the Trotskyists.

If, among the Polish workers, there are more Trotskyists than ever before, if among the Italian workers who were crushed for twenty one years under the yoke of fascism there arises overnight a Trotskyist party which alone stands for socialism, can we not believe that the German workers, too, have thought over the reasons for their enslavement?

The Trotskyist movement is growing, and will grow faster than ever as a result of the shocks and shambles of the imperialist war. Revolution will accelerate that growth.

Whoever wishes to do so can discredit himself with pessimism, but we say with Trotsky: "...One should not proclaim victorious the enemy who is still a long way from victory." Whoever wishes to can compromise himself with the struggle for the restoration of the capitalist states and capitalist "democracy". We say with Trotsky:

"The program of the Fourth International states that the freedom of all European nations, both large and small, can be secured only within the frame of the Socialist United States of Europe. ... look ahead and not backward!"

The Tasks of the American Party

The task of the vanguard in America is first of all a reorientation of the readers of our press in the spirit of this resolution. We assume that the absence of the slogan "national liberation" for Italy from both the resolution and the supplementary resolution of the National Committee indicates that they do not propose "national liberation" for Italy. In this case, it is the duty of our editors to correct the line given to the readers of Labor Action by one of its writers in the article "The Fight For National Independence of Italy Still Has To Be Won" which appeared in the September 20, 1943, issue.

The rapidly developing revolutionary period in Europe and in the colonies and Japan dictates a greater attentiveness on the part of our party and press to all the accumulating evidence which will prepare both our members and our readers for the decisive struggles ahead. We do not want to be caught unawares again by events as was the case in the Italian revolution.

We must bear in mind that history again presents the American working class with the opportunity for socialist politicalization as the result of the inevitable impact of the revolutionary struggles on the mind of the American worker. The October Revolution made a great impression on wide sections of the American workers. The European and German revolution will have an even greater affect. We must present to the American worker all evidences of the perfidious role of international Stalinism in order to tear tens of thousands of the advanced workers from the spell of Stalinism. At the same time we must follow the revolutionary struggle of the European Trotskyists in order to show the workers who are the positive fighters for socialism. A victorious revolution in Europe under the banner of the Fourth International will open up the greatest vistas for the revolutionary vanguard in America.

While the presence of millions of American soldiers in Europe will surely lead to their infection by the "isms" of the European revolution, we must never forget the counter-

revolutionary role of American imperialism in Europe and in the world. The working class of America must be prepared to intervene against the treacherous plans of American capitalism by an incessant exposure of every one of its reactionary moves including the deception of "national liberation" and the "four freedoms". The first prerequisite of such a preparation is to engage in and further the class struggle against those who coin profits out of the blood and sweat of the workers.

It is necessary also to reach the negro workers by special exposures of the role of American imperialism among the colored races of Asia and Africa, and by popularizing the revolutionary struggles that will develop in the colonies and in Japan.

The weapons that American imperialism will use to subdue the revolutionary workers will be the force of the armies, the blackmail of food and gold to be pumped into the sclerotic veins of European capitalism. The American capitalists will soon have to discard their "democratic" masks in order to support the naked fascist rule of the European bourgeoisie, as only this can crush for a time the repeated revolutionary attacks of the workers on the social order of bankrupt capitalism.

The party will therefore have to pay particular attention to the American workers' hatred against those who would press them into doing the dirty work of reaction. The closer the contact that the workers will have to this work, the more directly they are called upon to do it, the more will they resist the imposition of such monstrous tasks. The workers in maritime, on the docks, the foreign workers, the American workers in uniform, will be particularly sensitive to the message of solidarity with the revolutionary workers of Europe and the world, and will heed this message by the same deeds of universal indignation and protest that came from the workers who were called upon for similar roles during and after the last war.

In the coming period the party must multiply its energies ten-fold. The peace-time approach is far too inadequate. The press must be expanded and our numbers multiplied. The party must measure up to the great tasks before it and also prepare itself for the coming reaction that will be promoted by the ruling class to stave off the spectre of revolution. Above all, the party must be bold and confident of its future. Its appeal must have the ring of victory. In true American style it must proclaim with the piercing sound of the factory siren: "Long live the Fourth International! Long live the European Revolution! Long live the world Socialist Revolution!"

San Francisco, Calif.
January 1, 1944.

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*insert:

Despite the temporary smothering of the Italian revolution the rise of soviets symptomizes the objectively socialist and not "democratic" period in Europe today. It is true also for the countries of "classic" fascism. Among other things military decisions of great importance brought about the fall of Mussolini and the rise of the revolution. With the coming of great military decisions in the near future, we must look forward to the rise of soviets in a number of European countries, and most important, the rise of Soviets in Berlin!

The German Revolution

Germany is the key to the European revolution. This is true not only because of the specific weight of the German proletariat in European society. It is also true because the collapse of Hitler engenders a revolutionary situation in Germany and simultaneously in those countries where the collapse of the German military removes the main obstacle to the revolutionary action of the masses. Revolutionary actions by the masses will be most difficult precisely in those countries where the fall of the German military is accomplished by, or if the armed forces of Germany are speedily replaced by, the armies of the bourgeois and Allied imperialist "liberators". It can be put forward almost as an axiom: the more the masses are enchanted by "national liberation" and the struggle for bourgeois "democracy", the easier will it be to put them under the domination of their bourgeois and imperialist "liberators".