

# Bulletin

OF THE WORKERS PARTY

## CONTENTS

|   | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| RESOLUTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION - By National Committee .....   | 1           |
| RESOLUTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION, THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE WORLD SOCIALIST REVOLUTION - By J. R. Johnson ..... | 30          |

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RESOLUTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

The Outcome of the War

The end of the war brought about the collapse of the axis powers, Germany, Italy and Japan and the empires they established in the course of the war. This collapse underlined the important fact that this is not the epoch for the establishment and consolidation of new world empires but rather the epoch of disintegration of imperialism. Monopoly capitalism is imperialist capitalism. With the world already divided among a few imperialist powers and, given the fact that the living space of capitalism becomes more and more contracted, imperialism takes on a new or, rather, an added form. Each imperialist power is driven not only to the domination of the old colonial world but also to the domination and even the subjugation of modern and equally imperialist states. It is this new phenomenon which is only the logical development of monopoly capitalism that enormously accentuates the contradictions and instability of imperialism itself. The attempt to dominate the modern and advanced states and people and to reduce them to a level approaching that of the old colonial countries produces a more violent and systematic and politically more advanced form of resistance than was ever shown in the classical colonial countries or by the more backward peoples. This was demonstrated during the second world war in the new phenomena of popular national revolutionary movements in the most modern countries of Europe, that is, in countries which, prior to their subjugation by Hitlerite imperialism, were themselves subjugating and oppressive imperialist powers.

On the basis of our analysis of the war, we predicted that it would be of long duration and that it would be brought to an end by a proletarian revolution before an imperialist military decision was reached. This prediction proved incorrect. It was based primarily upon an arbitrary analogy with the first world war which ended in a series of proletarian revolutions, one of which, the Russian, was successful. It was based, furthermore, upon our failure to bring the views we had developed on the national question in Europe into coincidence with the war itself. Although the war was not, to be sure, a short one, its duration was cut down decisively precisely by "revolution", even though not by the revolution in the traditional form in which it occurred at the end of the first world war. It is clear that a simple duel between axis imperialism and allied imperialism would have meant a war of much longer duration. What intervened to cut it short was the almost all-European national revolutionary movement directed against the existing imperialist state power, the axis. Had Hitlerism succeeded in consolidating its European empire, in establishing imperialist "order" in Europe, the war would in all likelihood still be fought today. The revolutionary movement in Europe, embracing all the popular masses, made such a consolidation and "order" impossible. In the first world war, the national revolutionary element played virtually no role, and, as exemplified by Serbia, was of no social or political importance. In

the second world war the national revolutionary movements in Europe, from Poland to France and from Norway to Greece played the decisive role. This contrast is of fundamental importance for the elaboration of the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary Marxists.

However, the national revolutionary movements in Europe, the most widespread and comprehensive in the 20th Century were not transformed into a triumphant proletarian revolution. Capitalism was not overthrown in a single country. This cannot be explained by the "inherent strength" of European capitalism, for it is weaker today than it has ever been. It can be explained only by the exceptional weakness of the proletarian and revolutionary movements in Europe, corroded, demoralized and disoriented by decades of the leadership of the social democracy and Stalinism. The national revolutionary movements possessed a tremendous social strength, in that they embraced all the lower classes, including them to a far greater extent than had even been accomplished by any proletarian revolutionary movement except the Russian Bolsheviks. However, in the absence of an authoritative revolutionary leadership, this social strength proved to be the political weakness of the national revolutionary movements. The social democrats, as agents of bourgeois democracy, in the form of Anglo-American imperialism, and the Stalinists, as agents of Russian imperialism, monopolized the leadership of the revolutionary movements and were a brake upon their political and social development. The sections of the Fourth International which follow its official leadership, despite the heroism and sacrifice they manifested, proved to be politically sterile in face of this situation. They failed to become the most ardent and consistent champion of national liberation, of the central aim of these revolutionary democratic movements, and wasted their exceptional opportunities by sectarian abstentionism (or by inconsistent participation) and by inexcusable ultimatism.

The war brought about the most terrible devastation in all history. Europe is a shambles for the most part. The old world and, consequently, the whole world, have been driven many steps closer to barbarism, thus spelling out in the horribly graphic ruins the inescapable choice before the peoples of the world: socialism or barbarism. The devastation of Europe and the bankruptcy of the ruling classes did not, however, produce the proletarian revolution. The objective situation is rotten ripe for the socialist revolution and the socialist reconstruction of society in the sense that capitalism can no longer assure any serious measure of stability, order and progress. Any real rise in the development of the productive forces is confined to a feverish development of the forces of destruction, which means a frightful economic and human waste which is accompanied by an equally frightful social and political reaction.

But the decay of capitalism has manifested itself not only in the rise of fascism but also in the agitation of the social democracy and the reformist trade unions, and in Stalinism. Together, for the past twenty-five years, they have helped to batter in the ideological skull of the proletariat and to distort

and falsify its consciousness almost completely. It is difficult to grasp the extent to which the independent proletarian movement has been hurled back in Europe. At the end of the first world war proletarian soviets appeared almost everywhere in Europe, and mass communist parties developed almost overnight. At the end of the second world war soviets appeared only as isolated, ephemeral phenomena; the revolutionary vanguard has not succeeded in breaking out of its isolation.

If the proletariat did not succeed in taking socialist power, it does not follow that the ruling classes have succeeded in restoring the world to stability, order and progress, or that they have overcome any of the basic contradictions of capitalist or Stalinist society. Europe is at present still in a state of chaos; Asia not less so. There has never been such a destruction of the productive forces, on the one hand, and the development of the destructive forces on the other. The only important country which experienced a tremendous development of the productive forces was the United States, the land of the biggest war victor. It was precisely this development, however, that assured the devastation of Europe.

The destruction of the economic machinery of Europe makes it impossible for the ruling classes to fulfill the elementary economic requirements of the masses, namely, work or unemployment relief and a subsistence level of life. The destruction of the world market makes it impossible for the ruling class of the United States to fulfill the requirements of its economic machinery which was at one and the same time vastly expanded but undisturbed by the war. That is the situation today. Moreover, the inability of the principal imperialist victors to work out the peace terms, to divide the spoils of war in a manner satisfactory or at least tolerable to the decisive victors, is equivalent to a failure to establish the political prerequisites for a minimum of economic stability. Whole countries remain unaware of the fate in store for them (Italy, Balkans, Germany, France, Spain, etc.). Economic order is impossible under such circumstances. However, continuation of this chaos is likewise impossible for it would signify the immediate extension of chaos and of barbarism to the rest of the world, including the victors in the war and especially the strongest victor, the United States; for it is impossible to have any substantial measure of order and stability in the important sections of the world if there is chaos in Europe. The creation of some sort of stabilization, however precarious, is dependent in the next period and dependent primarily on the development of the main imperialist antagonism.

#### The Main Imperialist Antagonism in the World

Only two real victors emerged from the war: United States and Russia. All talk of a "Big Five" or a "Big Four" or even a "Big Three" is a fraud. Only two powers rule today and all others are dependent upon one or another of them to one degree or another. In any one capitalist country the inexorable trend of monopoly is revealed in the rule by fewer and fewer ever more and more. This trend does not halt at national frontiers. On a world

scale it is revealed in a similar way, by the reduction of the number of independent nations, even of independent ruling imperialist powers, and by the corresponding increase in the number of dependent or semi-dependent powers, nations and peoples who are ruled over. This trend has been clearly manifested for a quarter of a century. It was manifested heavily during the war. It has reached its peak with the rule of the world by Russia and America. Japan is a conquered vassal; so are Italy and Germany. Holland cannot even think of reconquering her colonies by herself. France is now a tenth rate power with very little more than pretensions to an independent imperialist existence. England, her empire falling apart, her homeland bankrupt, at the mercies of Russia and the United States, her position in Europe shattered, is literally fighting for her life. She cannot hope to play the role of more than a junior partner of the United States which is at once her protector, ally and master. If the United States has not at all times sided with England against Russia, it was primarily for the purpose of emphasizing to the once proud British imperialists that without the aid of the United States England cannot stand up against a power as important as Russia. The British empire is not dead, to be sure, but it is in its agony. The main antagonism in the imperialist world today is between the United States and Russia. The stakes of the conflict between these two giant imperialist powers are nothing less than the domination of the entire world. It is this antagonism that will give the basic coloration to the development of world politics in the next period. If the socialist revolution does not intervene, the antagonism cannot fail to break out into a third world war. Consequently, this antagonism will have an equally profound influence on the course of the working class movement.

In the struggle between these two imperialist powers, they are revealed as different historically, socially, and in their methods. Russia is a bureaucratic collectivist state; United States is a capitalist monopolistic state. Russia was economically ravished by the war, not only in war dead but in the devastation of her agriculture and her economic plant; the United States was enormously developed both agriculturally and industrially and even from the standpoint of the increase in its working forces. Russia is a totalitarian state; the United States is a bourgeois democratic, or democratic imperialistic state. Russia has a native mass movement at her disposal in every important country of the world, a movement which is automatically synchronized to her every political move. The United States has no such movement at her disposal except in the form of the undependable social democracy. Russia destroys or seeks to destroy completely the bourgeoisie of the countries she conquers or dominates; the United States subjects this bourgeoisie or reduces it to an agency or vassal of American imperialism. Russia pillages the machinery of the conquered countries in order to restore her own dilapidated plant, plunders the food in order to supply herself; the United States is compelled to feed the peoples of the countries in her orbit, at least to the extent of preventing starvation and revolution, and to invest capital in the reconstruction of their industry.

The continuation of the antagonism between American and Russian imperialism cannot but lead to war to determine which power shall dominate and exploit and oppress the entire world. However, such a war is a matter of years of preparation, and cannot break out tomorrow except as the result of a combination of unforeseeable accidents. The Stalinist regime, characteristically Bonapartist and imperialist, keeps shouting demagogically about an imminent war threat, first, in order to silence the growing restlessness and discontentment at home; second, in order to enlist the sympathies of the peoples in other countries; and third, in order to justify or screen the typically imperialist atrocities which it is committing. The self-styled Trotskyists who repeatedly do the political dirty work of Stalinist imperialism. The war between the two big imperialist powers is inevitable in the end. But for the next period, neither the economic nor political prerequisites for this war exist. They must first be created and developed. An indispensable part of this is the establishment of outposts, the conquests of preliminary positions, the ideological preparations for another war between "democracy" and "totalitarianism", the jockeying for positions, etc., etc. This is at present and for the next period the stage in which the "war" will develop.

In this preparatory period, the struggle is already on - it started in the very midst of the second world war itself - for the division of the world into two camps, that of Russian and that of American imperialism. The principal fronts for this struggle are Europe and Asia. In the struggle, some of the differences between the salient traits of the two imperialisms are already revealed.

Stalinist imperialism, totalitarian by its very nature, and urgently in need of raw materials, machinery and labor power, utilizes its advantageous geographical position for annexing, directly or indirectly, all adjacent territories and peoples possible. Its principal instruments are the army, the GPU and the CP's of the annexed lands. By means of its terroristic regime, it creates as rapidly as possible the conditions without which it cannot maintain its imperial rule: crushing and expropriating the bourgeoisie, "giving" land to the peasants under bureaucratic police management, wiping out all traces of the labor and revolutionary movements, as well as all institutions and rights of democracy and reducing all workers to the level of forced labor. There is hardly a measure adopted by the Fascists in their struggle for power - and their methods were taken over largely from Stalinism and uniquely developed - that Stalinism does not employ in its own behalf. The stripping of the economic plant of the conquered countries and the drafting of millions of slave laborers for work in Russia are a peculiar requirement of Stalinist Bonapartism.

For a number of economic and political reasons, American imperialism cannot or does not have to proceed in the same way. Stalinist autarchy is far less dependent upon the world market than American capitalism, or rather is dependent upon it in a

radically different way. Russia is not a capital-exporting country; the U.S. is. The U.S. does not have the political possibility of maintaining the armed force in peace-time that totalitarian Russia has; moreover, the speed with which the U.S. can create a big armed force, out of practically nothing, does not necessitate its maintenance of the same kind of armed force that Russia must maintain. Finally, to come to grips with Russia requires that America have armed forces, and an economic basis for them, in lands closer to Russia than the United States is itself.

Russia cannot give anything to the conquered territories or the vassal states; given her own poverty, it can only take from them. Hence her control over these states must be of a police character, even more so than was the case with Nazi domination of other lands.

The United States can give something to the conquered countries or to vassal states. Her vast economic power which, for all external suavity, she employs with brutality and blackmailing cynicism, is the basis for her pious pacifism.

To have armies in Europe and - more important - the economic basis for such armies, the U.S. is compelled to engage in the reconstruction of Europe. These armies, agents of American imperialism at bottom, the ones that are expected to initiate the war against Russia so that America can come in toward the end to snatch the fruits of victory, must be paid for by the only power capable of paying - American imperialism. To get people to fight for it, the U.S. must feed them.

The reconstruction of Europe is mandatory upon American imperialism for another reason. Unless there is some economic stability established, these countries will fall, one after the other, into the orbit of Stalinism. Or what is worse from the standpoint of U.S. imperialism, they will be conquered by the socialist proletariat. Another reason: After the last war, U.S. sought to put Europe on rations in the world market, i.e., on reduced rations. The world market today is utterly shattered. There is starvation everywhere; war debts everywhere; mass unemployment and wandering everywhere. Previously, America had to try to reduce the rations of Europe. Today, capitalist society has decayed to the point where America has to try (in the course of restoring the world market to some level) to raise the rations of Europe from the level of "no rations" at all.

The immediate economic requirements of the swollen economic apparatus of America, and the long-term imperialist requirements for the domination of the world - coincide at this point, and manifest themselves in the appearance of America as the provider of food, capital, and "democracy" for Europe and for the reconstruction of Europe. The U.S. has neither the political possibility nor the need FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT of establishing its domination over other lands with the same outwardly brutal methods as Nazism or Stalinism. It is still wealthy enough to afford the mask of democracy, even in its dealings with other countries.

This is manifest not only in Europe, but also in Asia. There the U.S. appears as the bold heir of the decaying British and Dutch and French Empires. Partly under pressure of the masses, but also under the pressure of U.S. imperialism, Britain finds itself compelled to offer additional concessions to India. The U.S. holds as firmly as possible to the line of keeping China out of the Russian sphere of influence or domination, with Russia fighting just as aggressively to conquer at least the northern section of China. In Japan, the United States takes all the measures necessary to prevent that country from playing an INDEPENDENT economic, military or imperialist role, but at the same time plays the demagogical game of "democratizing" the country so as (1) to impress all the Asiatic peoples with its political superiority as patron of the continent over totalitarian Russia, (2) so as to enlist the greatest amount of popular support for itself in Japan for the eventual war with Russia, and (3) by depriving Japan of war-making power, to take over the war-making functions for itself in a future eventuality, and thus have an almost continental base for attack upon Russia.

All the post-war institutions initiated by the U.S. come under this heading: UNRRA, World Bank, UNO, etc., etc..

Naturally, the export of "democracy" to Europe and Asia must be paid for by the other countries, if not in cash then in subtler and more insidious and sinister forms. England is being forced gradually into the position of vassal of America, and the British press is not far wrong in complaining that the relationships existing between the two lands in the 18th century are now being reversed. France, for all her attempts to establish a Western Bloc which she can dominate as a springboard for the restoration of her European imperialist glory, must come crawling to Washington for food, money, and even for permission to exploit her "just share" of the war booty, Western German coal. The price of American support for the reconstruction of Europe is not the abandonment of democracy by the European countries. The U.S. is careful not to make demands which would lead to further chaos, to civil war, for even if the proletariat of the European countries (especially the Western European countries) is not ready for the socialist revolution, it has given clear enough proof that it will fight bitterly against any attempt to establish a regime in any way similar to that of the Nazis against which they fought with such revolutionary courage. But the U.S. does make demands which mean increased restrictions upon democracy. It preferred Darlan to de Gaulle; it prefers de Gaulle to Blum-Herriot or Blum-Thorez. Above all, it prefers the Catholic Church to the social democracy or the petty bourgeois liberals. In the first place, the Church is much more reliable politically than the social democracy, so far as unwavering support of capitalism is concerned. In the second place, it is more reliable than the social democracy so far as unwavering opposition to Stalinism is concerned. In the third place, the Church is not inferior to the social democracy so far as mass support, which the U.S. seeks, is concerned. In the fourth place, the Church has mass support in countries - particularly in Eastern and southeastern countries - where the social democracy has none. Hence, the mutually improved relations between Washington and the Vatican.



## American Imperialism and Social Democracy

Historically, the basis for the existence of the modern social democracy (as distinguished from the revolutionary social democracy of the 19th century) is provided by the organic upswing of capitalist economy, the amassing of super-profits from colonial exploitation, and the consequent development of a labor aristocracy and an equally conservative labor bureaucracy.

With the decay of capitalism, especially in Europe, with the decay of European imperialist powers, with the disappearance, apparently of the historic economic basis of the social democracy, some Marxists drew the arbitrary conclusion during the war that the social democracy had disappeared. This conclusion, attesting an ignorance both of theory and politics, has been sufficiently refuted by the first post-war period. The European social democracy has had a significant rebirth, as witness England, Italy, France, Holland, Belgium and even Germany. The social democracy, it is true, has degenerated further politically and socially. Its ranks as well as its leadership are increasingly petty bourgeoisie. But in all countries it is still a petty bourgeois workers' party, and in some countries it still retains the allegiance of the bulk of the working class. The idea that because the economic basis of the social democracy in Europe has "disappeared", it too has disappeared, has been proved to be preposterous. The corollary idea that the basis for bourgeois democracy has disappeared in Europe and that therefore there could be no "democratic interlude" between the fall of Fascism and the establishment of the proletarian socialist power, has been proved to be equally preposterous, and, so far as the tactics of the revolutionary Marxists are concerned, downright pernicious and disorienting.

As analyzed by the National Resolution of the WP, the fall of Fascism in Europe would in all likelihood be followed by a period of bourgeois democracy. The analysis pointed out that this democracy could not be expected to enjoy the same period of long and organic growth that it knew in the period before the first world war, or even the period between the two world wars; that it would not be even as democratic as it was in those two periods; that it would be heavily overlaid with authoritarian, Bonapartist and dictatorial features of all kinds. But it would be a period that would be so radically different from that prevalent under Fascism as to be unmistakably qualifiable as bourgeois democracy - Bonapartist, distorted, degenerated, restricted, etc., that is, the only kind of bourgeois democracy collapsing European capitalism is capable of yielding.

The sources of this democratic interlude are as follows:

The masses, strangled for years under the most rigid totalitarianism, want, in general, "freedom" - the right to speak, to write, to meet, to organize, to strike, to vote, to be democratically represented in a sovereign legislature, etc. The bourgeoisie, hopelessly compromised and extraordinarily weak, is unable at one blow to suppress the popular movement and the democracy for which it fought under Nazism. The masses resist, in one de-

gree or another, moving directly from one dictatorship to "another" even if the "other" is the opposite of the Nazi dictatorship, namely, the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat. This is especially the case when in the eyes of the masses - many of them - the latter is associated with everything that is represented by Stalinist totalitarianism.

The masses want an opportunity to examine all political programs, which they did not have under the Nazis; they want to see the unfolding in practice of all political programs.

The masses are vastly fatigued. They can summon up strength for new assaults but only with difficulty and under exceptional circumstances. The war and the struggle against the Nazis was a terrible bloodletting for the peoples. They aim, therefore, to have representative institutions of "their own" which they were deprived of by Fascism, their traditional organizations (unions and parties) and the parliament. This is understood by everybody in Europe (except the leadership of the 4th International). Even the Stalinists are compelled to present themselves, at least in words, as the champions of representative parliaments, constituent assemblies, etc., etc.

The masses want a parliament of "their own", one that will regulate the reconstruction of the nation, its economy, in such a way that there will be work for all and food for all. They are not interested in the least in preserving private property or the rule of the bourgeoisie, so badly compromised either by being Fascist in the axis countries or by being Fascists or collaborators in the conquered countries. Hence, their support of nationalization.

The struggle for the masses therefore revolves around so-called "constitutional" or parliamentary questions. In these conditions, the social democracy could not only survive but even flourish.

The social democracy can flourish for another reason. The popular enthusiasm for the Stalinist parties, due to their skill in participating in the popular national revolutionary movements and to the glory reflected upon them by the spectacular successes of the Russian regime and its armies, as well as to the general and vague feeling among the masses that supporting the Communist Parties meant supporting the idea of a revolution in their own country like that of the Russians in 1917 - this enthusiasm is now waning. It is waning because of the repelling maneuvers of the CP's since the "heroic period" of the national revolutionary movements, and above all by what the European peoples are seeing with their own eyes about the robber role of Stalinist imperialism, its looting and ravishing of conquered lands, its imposition of national oppression no different in the eyes of the masses than that imposed by the Nazis. This waning of Stalinist popularity is visible in country after country: in the Austrian and Hungarian elections; in the breaking of the "unity" drive launched by the Stalinists in Italy for the purpose of absorbing and wiping out the SP; in the resistance to the same kind of "unity" drive

in Germany; in the beginnings of a proletarian shift from the CP to the SP in France; in the virtual halt brought to the growth of the CP in England (and in the crisis of the CP in the U.S.A.).

The masses, finished with the bourgeois regime, wanting socialism or steps toward socialism (as they understand it), do not quit the CP in order to become politically indifferent or to join the outright bourgeois parties...individuals do, not the masses. Instead, they rally once more to the social democracy.

Finally, there is another reason, the essentials of which were laid bare by Trotsky two decades ago. Left to itself, to its own resources, there is hardly a country in Europe that can reconstruct its economy and, by virtue of that fact, make possible the preservation of bourgeois democracy to any extent. European economy and the European bourgeoisie are utterly bankrupt on a continental basis. The social democracy does not think in terms of socialism except as a remote and at present unrealizable ideal; it does not think in terms of socialist power or the socialist reorganization of economy. Its own bourgeoisie - in Europe - cannot, however, provide it with the basis for its own existence, which is another way of saying with the basis for the existence of bourgeois democracy and a relatively free labor movement. However, there is a bourgeoisie left that can provide that basis, even if narrowed down and even if obtained on very high terms. That is the American bourgeoisie. It is upon this bourgeoisie that it relies more and more for salvation, at least "for the present." It looks to it not only for food for the people and capital for reconstruction - but also as its guardian from the encroachments of Stalinism. It has no political and social program based upon the independent class interests and class action of the proletariat - the only way in which not only Stalinism but bourgeois chaos and barbarism can be defeated. It has no confidence in the social ability of the working class to reorganize society. It has lost its confidence in its own bourgeoisie. It can no longer rest upon the economic foundations once provided by its own capitalism - that is gone. It therefore seeks the substitute for these foundations which wealthy and powerful American imperialism can provide.

In one way or another, the social democracy (i.e., the leadership of what remains of the 2nd International in Europe), presents this conception of its role and perspective to the working class that follows it. To the extent that it corresponds to the truth, to the bitter reality, the masses accept this conception, even if reluctantly and without enthusiasm. The almost boundless illusions about American or Angle-American imperialism - the "liberators of Europe" - which were entertained by the European masses during and immediately after the war, have since diminished and been dissipated. But many of the illusions remain. As is so often the case with the democratic illusions of the masses, in this case too they are based on a "kernel of truth", namely, the idea that for its own good imperialist reasons, if for no other, the United States will find itself obliged to give some food to Europe, some capital for European reconstruction. The social democracy, by embellishing the "kernel of truth", by its eulogies of

of "American democracy", by presenting American imperialism as a beneficent friend, horribly distorts the "kernel of truth", spreads and deepens the illusions of the people, and conceals from them the big and important truth that the generosity of Uncle Sam is a step, necessary for him, in the process of preparing Europe for a tighter yoke around its neck at a later stage; is the peculiarly American-imperialist way of strengthening reaction in Europe and frustrating the aspirations of the masses; is the indispensable prerequisite to the eventual mobilization of at least the Western part of the continent for service as advance guard, shock troops, in the Third World War to eliminate the Russian rival who is the only power standing athwart America's road to global domination - the only power except for the masses themselves.

Meanwhile, the social democracy has become, and is increasingly, the "State-Department's socialists" or the "Downing Street socialists."

#### Russian Imperialism and Stalinism

At the very outset of the war, the founders of the Workers Party, in opposing the war as imperialist on both sides, set forth the position that Russia's role in the war was imperialist too, and that in two senses: one, that she was participating as an integral part of the imperialist war, and two, that she was pursuing imperialist aims of her own. Hence, the slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" was outlived, had become reactionary, and could only serve the ends of Stalinist imperialism. If this question could be seriously debated among Marxists in 1939-1940, it is no longer possible to do so today. The position of our party has been confirmed to the very hilt. The proponents of support of Russia in the war, prompted though they were by revolutionary proletarian considerations, nevertheless capitulated objectively to Stalinist imperialism and helped to cover its deception and enslavement of other nations and peoples with radical arguments.

Stalinist Russia today is a full-grown imperialist power. The sway of the reactionary ruling class in Russia extends over a dozen other lands and over tens of millions of other peoples. These peoples have been deprived of their elementary democratic right to national independence and self-government and reduced to the slavery imposed by bureaucratic-collectivism. Along with this right have disappeared all their other rights, for the first victim of the victory of Stalinism is the working class, its democratic organizations and rights (more accurately, the very first victim of Stalinism is the revolutionary vanguard of the working class). Revolutionary socialism does not recognize the right of any nation or people or class to de<sup>prive</sup> any other nation, people or class of these elementary rights except in the higher interests of democracy (as in the period of the great bourgeois revolutions) or in the higher interests of socialism (as in the period of the proletarian revolutions). In the case of bureau-

cratic-collectivist Russia, the peoples of the Baltic and the Balkans, of Rumania and Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, of Poland and East Prussia, of sections of Asia and the Middle East, have been thus disfranchised in the interests of Stalinist slavery and of the consolidation of the Stalinist bureaucracy. They have been enslaved as loot and booty of the struggle for the imperialist domination of the world. The revolutionist loses title to his name who does not protest and fight against this enslavement.

The claim that this "expansion" (i.e., imperialist aggression and annexation) is required "merely" for the "security" of Russia is a classical imperialist sophism. The defense of the frontiers of a nation (whether by purely defensive measures or by offensive measures is actually of no importance) is warranted only if it is fighting to acquire or maintain or extend democracy or socialism. "Security" by annexation to a nation which is itself ruled by a reactionary class which tramples democracy and socialism under foot more ruthlessly than anywhere else in the world, and enslaves every other people over whom it extends its dominion, is nothing but a euphemism and justification of imperialist oppression and exploitation. Every nation has the right to be ruled by its own people, even if they choose a reactionary regime, without unwarranted interference by another nation. On the other hand, every nation has the right to come to the aid of another people which is fighting to overturn its own tyrannical regime, provided this assistance is not aimed at replacing the old tyranny with another and thereby strengthening reaction as a whole. This basic socialist principle, observed by the revolutionary workers' state of Lenin and Trotsky, and proclaimed by it, is applicable in judging the policy not only of the imperialism of capitalist states, but as well to the imperialism of the Stalinist state.

The social sources of Stalinist imperialism have already been examined scientifically by the revolutionary Marxists. It is necessary to continue this examination with the greatest scientific objectivity, without prejudices, and through to the very end. It is not necessary, however, to wait until the last word has been uttered on this question in the scientific sphere before arriving at a judgment of Stalinist imperialism as it has already, and sufficiently, manifested itself, or before adopting a political position toward it.

If bureaucratic collectivism survives in Russia until the next war, the Stalinist state will enter the war on the same basis as its principal rival: for the purpose of defending its imperialist conquests and its reactionary rule at home, for the purpose of extending these imperialist conquests and this rule, for the purpose of winning the struggle for the domination of the globe. Whatever the abstract or historically remote possibilities may be, all the present indications, the whole present trend, show that the Third World War, if it is allowed to come, will be a struggle between the two monster imperialisms for world mastery, and consequently, a struggle that would decide the fate of the world for an indefinite period of time. Under such circumstances,

it is impossible for the revolutionary Marxists to speak in any way of "defense of the Soviet Union". The resolution on the Russian question adopted by our party in 1941 deliberately "left the door open" with regard to the possibility of again raising the slogan of defense of Russia (not in the Second World War but in a conceivable later war.). The party took the view that in examining a new social phenomenon that was still in the early process of formation, namely, bureaucratic collectivism, and without positive foreknowledge of the political face of the world in the post-war period, it did not have the right as a scientific Marxian organization to set forth its position categorically on all aspects of the question of Stalinism and for all time. Indeed, even now, the party does not lay claim to a position which applies forever and under all conceivable circumstances. But "all conceivable circumstances" is an abstraction which has its "rights" on the plane of abstraction. What is before us concretely is the development of Stalinist Russia as a full-fledged reactionary empire, oppressing and exploiting not only the Russian people, but a dozen other peoples and nations - and that in the most cruel and barbarous way. What is before us concretely is the overwhelming probability of the next world war being fought between two reactionary imperialist powers for the preservation and extension of their empires. In face of this reality, the Workers Party declares flatly that all talk of defense of Russian imperialism (or of American imperialism) in that war, or in the period of preparation for that war which we are now living through, is reactionary talk and signifies an abandonment of the principles and interests of the proletariat and of socialism.

The concretization of our party's position on the slogan of "defense of the Soviet Union" must be accompanied by an important correction in its resolution on Russia. The resolution, which has otherwise been confirmed so emphatically, contains an error. It declares that in the absence of a proletarian revolution, Stalinist Russia, after the war, "cannot, in all likelihood, escape integration into the capitalist system as a colony or a series of colonies of imperialism." It adds that the stages of development that will be passed "before bureaucratic collectivism in Russia is destroyed either by the proletarian revolution or capitalist counter-revolution, cannot be established categorically in advance." The end of the war has shown, however, that although capitalism has not been destroyed by the proletariat, bureaucratic collectivism in Russia has not only not been integrated into the capitalist system, has not only not been overturned, but has survived and expanded. This provisional forecast of the party's resolution was in error exactly to the extent to which it represented a hangover of the theory rejected by the party, namely, the theory that Russia is a "degenerated workers' state" which could not survive the war. Fortunately, this error was not seriously reflected in the current analyses of the party during the war, nor did it affect the political line of the party - its struggles against the war, against Stalinism, and Stalinist imperialism, for socialism, or its struggle on the theoretical and political planes against the theoreticians of the "workers' state."

Stalinist imperialism is unique in that, among other things, it has at its disposal a "native" mass movement in all other countries, the "Communist parties" and their affiliates. If one major section of the labor movement - the social democracy is more and more an agency of American imperialist democracy - the other major section - the Communist parties - is outrightly the agency of Stalinist imperialism. The theory that the Stalinist parties (like the traditional reformist organizations) are agents of the capitalist class, that they "capitulate to the bourgeoisie", is fundamentally false. They are the agencies of Russian bureaucratic collectivism. To the extent that they serve the bourgeoisie of the capitalist countries, it is only as agents of the Kremlin who are temporarily hired out for service to the bourgeoisie of this or that country but only in the given interests of the Stalinist state, of its diplomatic maneuvers, of its imperialist objectives. The old Communist Parties in the days of the opportunist leadership of the Comintern did tend to conciliate the bourgeoisie and to capitulate to it under stress. The present Stalinist movement has nothing but the name in common with these old parties. It serves, today, a strong imperialist master. In the interests of this master, it is capable of the most irreconcilable opposition to its "own" capitalist class and to its rule. It is imperative to understand this, for otherwise the whole struggle against Stalinism is falsified or nullified. If this is not understood, Stalinism stands to gain by being subjected only to attacks which are aimed at what Stalinism is not, instead of attacks aimed at what it is and at those points where it is really vulnerable. Stalinism is not, however, merely the servant of Russian imperialism. If this were the only role it played, the tenacity and "durability" of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the capitalist countries could not be adequately explained. This bureaucracy is not prompted exclusively or even primarily by such "idealistic" considerations as the preservation and consolidation of the Russian state bureaucracy. It has a material base of its own and its own social ambitions in every country. The Stalinist parties are fundamentally different from all the traditional working class parties, not only from those that are revolutionary socialist in character but also from those that are reformist, centrist or anarchist. The Stalinist parties are the parties of bureaucratic collectivism. As Trotsky set it forth in his ultimate judgment of the Stalinist bureaucracy, it seeks to establish in every capitalist country in which it functions the same social and political regime as prevails in Russia today.

The material basis of the Stalinist bureaucracies is provided by the deepening disintegration and decay of capitalism. The social democratic, the reformist, the old trade union bureaucracy rose and developed on the basis of the upswing of capitalist economy. In that period, a pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy was created. This reformist sector of the labor movement became tied to capitalist democracy. It was nurtured economically by the concessions which capitalism could still afford to give, and it received a satisfying political status from the prosperous bourgeoisie and its democracy. However, as capitalism

decays and is wracked by agonizing crises, it can less and less afford economic or political concessions to the working class in general or to the reformist bureaucracy in particular. The material basis of reformism is narrowed both in the economic and the political spheres. Reformism does not break its ties with capitalist democracy; but decaying capitalism breaks its ties with reformism.

As capitalism decays and narrows the basis for existence of reformism, the bonds linking whole strata of the population to the foundations of capitalism - private property - are loosened. To maintain private property, which means nowadays to preserve the increasingly centralized and concentrated power of monopoly capitalism, requires the economic and political disfranchisement, the economic and political degradation not only of the proletariat but also of the middle and intermediate classes and social strata - peasants, small producers and manufacturers, small traders, professionals, civil servants, scientists, labor bureaucracies, industrial managers and supervisors, etc., etc. Fascism appeals to all these strata with a socially-demagogical program of "anti-capitalism" but with the social aim of maintaining precisely that form of capitalist ownership which is disfranchising, degrading and declassing the social strata to which fascism appeals. Stalinism, on the other hand, while appealing to the same strata, with a no less demagogical program of "socialism", nevertheless aims at removing from power that class - the monopoly capitalists - which stands in the way of the acquisition of social power by the Stalinist bureaucracy. In this sense, too, fascism and Stalinism, while not identical, are "symmetrical phenomena." Stalinism has a grip on the minds of the working class not only by virtue of its usurpation of the socialist traditions of the Bolshevik Revolution. It seeks, and often gains, support of the working classes because, while its anti-proletarian and antisocialist nature is not immediately clear, its anti-capitalist nature is apparent. It cannot be considered an accident that the Stalinist bureaucracy attracts to its ranks, especially in countries where the decay of capitalism has reached an advanced stage, many of the former reformist bureaucrats whom capitalism no longer offers economic or political security. The expropriation of the bourgeoisie by the democratic proletariat means the beginning of the end of all bureaucraticism and bureaucratic privilege. But the seizure of all social power by Stalinism means the legal and police sanctification of bureaucratic privilege and power. It is likewise no accident that Stalinism attracts to itself also such elements as the declassed worker, the disoriented and demoralized petty-bourgeois intellectuals and professionals whom capitalism allows an ever narrowing base for existence but whom the triumph of Stalinism offers exceptional privileges and social status.

The growth and triumph of the Stalinist bureaucracy means neither the victory nor an advancement of socialism and the proletariat. It means the establishment of the totalitarian tyranny known as bureaucratic collectivism. Such a tyranny is



possible only in the absence of a socialist perspective. Inasmuch as the socialist perspective depends, in our period, on the ability of the revolutionary Marxists to establish a party able to place itself at the head of the working class and all other little people, the triumph of Stalinism is possible only under the condition of the absence of such a party. Conversely, it is impossible in the presence of such a party, since all the other conditions for the victory of the socialist proletariat have matured to the highest degree under capitalism.

The question of the perspective of Stalinism cannot, therefore, be resolved in a purely theoretical way. It can be resolved only in struggle. Every advance of Stalinism is not only a defeat for democracy but also a defeat for the proletariat and for socialism. Unlike reformism, Stalinism does not aim at the preservation of bourgeois democracy, let alone at the conquest of proletarian democracy. Stalinism is neither a democratic nor a socialist movement, but a bureaucratic totalitarian collectivist movement, which must be resisted by the organized proletariat at every turn.

The traditional policy of the revolutionary vanguard toward the labor-reformist movements (or bureaucracies) does not, therefore, apply to the Stalinist movements. Given its inability to lead the proletariat directly and in its own name, the revolutionary vanguard is prepared, as always, to give critical support to the reformist bureaucracies in their conflicts with the capitalist class. This makes possible, at least to some extent, the defense of the economic and political integrity of the working class and its movement, or even the defense of bourgeois democracy against fascism, i.e., the defense of the political conditions that are more favorable to the existence and development of the working class. The same policy cannot be applied to Stalinism, since it is neither a democratic nor a socialist movement and has neither democratic nor socialist aims. The revolutionary Marxists, therefore, maintain the general rule of no support of Stalinism of any kind and of irreconcilable opposition to any move calculated to strengthen its position.

Whether or not Stalinism can triumph in the capitalist world cannot be decided absolutely in advance. To repeat, it is a question of struggle. Up to now, it is established that Stalinism was able to triumph by overturning the rule of the proletariat (Russia). It was able to triumph in the Baltic countries annexed to Russia, but only by virtue of the military force of Russian imperialism. In Poland and Yugoslavia, the Stalinist bureaucracy has taken power. In clear refutation of the analysis that it represents a "capitalist" force, the bureaucracy has not only disfranchised and enslaved the proletariat and peasantry, but has systematically expropriated the bourgeoisie and the landlords and converted their property into state property. This phenomenon gives the final blow to the theory that Russia is a "workers' state" because property is nationalized. But it does not establish the conclusion that Stalinist collectivism is

guaranteed to replace capitalism in the world. Both in Poland and Yugoslavia, Stalinism came to power under exceptional circumstances, namely, in the absence of any organized bourgeoisie to speak of and by means of the direct and decisive aid of the armed forces of Russian imperialism. Nowhere has Stalinism shown its social ability to crush a free working class or, more important, its ability to overthrow the rule of the capitalist class. The countries in which it has triumphed are lands where the bourgeoisie was weak to begin with and where feudal remnants were thickly intertwined with capitalist relationships. Nowhere has Stalinism shown its social ability to overturn the rule of the capitalist class in a modern, advanced capitalist country. Hence, our denial and rejection of the theory of the "Stalinist epoch," our reaffirmation of the theory that Stalinist bureaucratic collectivism represents a mongrel social formation, and our reaffirmation of the concept that this is the epoch of the proletarian socialist revolution which will sweep away capitalism and bureaucratic collectivism alike.

#### Perspectives and Tasks: Germany and Eastern Europe

Nowhere did the pre-war perspectives of the Fourth International stand in sharper contrast to the political reality produced by the war than in Germany. If there was still reason to assign to the German proletariat a pivotal role in the strategy of the European revolution up to Hitler's triumph in 1933, the successful mobilization of the German nation in 1939 without internal disturbances, the paralysis of the German proletariat during the Nazi conquest and subjugation of the Continent, and the absence of any repercussions within Germany to the military set-backs beginning at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942-1943, proved the need to re-examine the analysis that designated Germany the "key to the international situation." A refusal to do the latter was only possible on the part of those who, as with the leadership of the SWP, stubbornly denied that the fascist conquest of Europe had hurled back the proletariat in terms of consciousness and organization. Those who insisted that fascism had taught the proletariat the lessons of revolutionary politics and that, consequently, it would emerge from the fascist oppression at a higher political level than before could not but assign to the German proletariat the vanguard role in the European revolution. The colossal blunder of continuing to view the German proletariat in terms of 1918-1933 was an inseparable part of the totally false position which rejected the slogan of national liberation, which led to abstention from participation in the resistance movements, which foresaw the overthrow of Hitler as the proletarian revolution and which posed as the main slogan "the United Socialist States of Europe." Basing themselves upon this completely unreal analysis, its authors momentarily expected, with amazing credulity and increasing desperation, the outbreak of the proletarian revolution as an automatic result of Germany's growing military catastrophes in 1944-1945. This gross misreading of the situation in Germany revealed that its perpetrators sadly lacked even an understanding of the mechanics of the proletarian revolution and conceived of

it in terms of the sheerest automatism and spontaneity.

The defeat in 1933, the twelve-year long rule of Nazi terror, the devastation of six years of war, the conquest and occupation by the victorious powers and the infamous partition of Germany by the four powers for purposes of scientifically bleeding it of its economic potency and political viability as a nation makes it necessary to begin the task of again collecting in class organizations the shattered and dispersed forces of the German proletariat at the most primitive level. Of all the obstacles this task must overcome, the first and the greatest is the military occupation of Germany. Until this condition is ended, the scene will be dominated by the national struggle for liberation. The main slogan around which the German Marxists must orient the struggle in the coming period is "For a unified and independent Germany!" This struggle begins as a struggle for democratic rights against the military authorities of the occupying powers and their quisling supporters. Freedom of speech, of press, of assembly, of movement, of organization, of communication and the right to vote and the demand for a free national assembly will constitute the issues around which the political struggles will revolve and the masses will rally. Unless the German proletarian organizations take upon themselves the lead in this struggle and conduct it in the spirit of socialism and internationalism, this task will fall to the reactionary nationalists. They will utilize it for the reconstitution of the Nazi movement, regardless of the guise or the name under which it will appear. Neither the Social Democrats nor the Stalinists can give the proletariat a lead on this struggle. The former plays the role of adjutant to the Anglo-American authorities and the latter is the creature of the Russian oppressors. This struggle requires the speediest organization of a revolutionary Marxist party and, in turn, affords our German comrades a clear issue upon which to struggle for such a party.

The Marxists of the "victorious" nations have the special task of defending the democratic rights of the German people, by helping, in the first place, to free the land of the imperialist invaders. The reunification and liberation of Germany remains the first step toward the restoration of the truncated economy of the Continent. In this historical sense, Germany remains the key to Europe. The Marxists of Western Europe must link the struggle against American domination of their own countries with the struggle against the oppression of Germany by their own ruling classes. Such an international proletarian struggle in the defense of the German people will be one of the surest barriers to the reappearance of a Nazi movement in Germany. It will restore to the German proletariat the self-confidence and morale which has been its greatest deficiency since 1933. It will pose before the Stalinist-led workers of Western Europe the "German question" as a question of international proletarian solidarity and, thereby, pose before them the "Russian question" from the point of view of imperialist oppression. In this respect the effect of the struggle by the

workers of the victorious powers upon the German proletariat is only an aspect of the whole mechanism by which the revolutionary impetus will be given to the German scene, i.e. via the revolutionary struggles of the international proletariat, above all those of Western Europe.

The conquest of virtually all of Eastern Europe by Stalinist imperialism has, as in the case of Hitler's conquests, burdened the masses with a combination of class exploitation and national oppression. In these countries especially the slogan of the "defense of the Soviet Union" can be nothing but a cover for the rapacity of Stalinist imperialism. The revolutionary Marxists are no less firmly committed to support of the demand for national liberation from the yoke of Stalinism than from the yoke of Hitlerism or any other form of imperialist subjugation and violation of the right of self-determination and self-rule. The Fourth International must adopt and propagate the slogan of national liberation for the peoples and nations oppressed by Stalinist Russia as an elementary internationalist duty and as an indispensable part of the internationalist education of the whole working class. As in the case of the movements which arose against German imperialism, the Workers Party will support every socialist or genuinely popular democratic movement of resistance against the imperialist oppressor in Eastern Europe, without giving any aid or support to reactionary landlord or capitalist fascist elements who seek to exploit the progressive national sentiments of the masses. However, we do not take the Stalinists' word for it that all the partisans and partisan bands in Poland, for example, who are fighting against the invading oppressor or against the totalitarian "native" regime, are "Fascists." We are only too well aware of the Stalinist practice of labelling all its opponents as "Fascists." The struggle for national liberation is inseparably bound up in these countries with the fight for all democratic rights and liberties, including the right to free universal suffrage and a free Constituent Assembly. To attempt to substitute for this slogan the slogan of "Soviets" is false and preposterous. In countries like Poland, etc., there is no tradition whatsoever of the revolutionary Soviets established by the Bolshevik Revolution. What has appeared to these peoples in the name of "Sovietism" is the Stalinist reaction which they abhor and against which they are already striving with all their force. As in the case of Western Europe under the Nazi occupation, our support of the struggle for national freedom is not support for the return or restoration to power of the landlord and capitalists. Our demand for the Constituent Assembly is closely linked with the demand for the preservation of nationalized economy under democratic control, with the demand for the land to the peasants, but free from the police rule of the GPU satrapy.

The attempts of the Stalinist imperialists to consolidate their power and control in Eastern Europe cannot but lead to increased resistance of the masses. This resistance must inevitably take the form of struggle for ousting the invader and establishing the national sovereignty of the occupied lands. The

masses of the conquered countries show, as they did during the war, both the organic need and organic capacity to oust the invader. Wherever the masses have had any opportunity to express themselves, they have manifested their hostility to the Stalinists: Austrian and Hungarian elections, mass demonstrations in Rumania, semi-civil war in Poland.

Failure to give staunch support to the movement for national freedom from Stalinist rule (both in the newly occupied countries as well as in those countries of the "Soviet Union" long ago usurped by the Kremlin autocracy) can only serve, moreover, to delay the inevitable crisis of Stalinism in Russia itself. To preserve itself, to enhance its power and privilege, to maintain its exploitation and oppression of peoples and nations annexed to the Russian empire, the bureaucracy is compelled to saddle the Russian masses with an even vaster bureaucratic monster, with an even vaster police and spy force, with a huge standing army, all of which are directed against the Russian people as well. The bureaucracy is compelled, like the ruling class of the capitalist empires, to deprive the masses of homes and a decent standard of living by concentrating upon preparation for imperialist war and upon production of the means of destruction. The returning soldiers who have seen other lands under circumstances which puts the Stalinist regime in a truer, that is, a less advantageous light, can only add to the restlessness and dissatisfaction which Stalinism generates among the people. The rise of the most brutal chauvinism in the upper ranks of the bureaucracy, especially the military bureaucracy, must clash with the war-weariness and yearning for peace and security of the people. The crisis of Stalinism cannot be too long postponed. It can weather this crisis if the Russian people feel themselves isolated. Their true allies in the struggle for emancipation is not the Stalinist bureaucracy but the peoples of the oppressed nations who are fighting for national freedom against this bureaucracy. The overturn of the Stalinist ruling class in Russia is now the common direct task of the Russian masses and the nations under the Russian heel.

#### Perspectives and Tasks: Western Europe

As was the case at the end of the first world war, a revolutionary situation was created in a number of countries at the end of the second world war. In none of these countries, however, neither in the Axis countries nor in the Western European countries liberated from the rule of the Axis, did the situation develop to the point of a direct proletarian assault upon the bourgeoisie for the seizure of state power. In 1945, the working class did not have the solid bastion and inspiration constituted by Soviet Russia in 1918-1919. It did not have a revolutionary party to lead it in this assault, nor even the substantial nuclei of such parties which could be and were transformed into mass parties almost overnight at the end of the first world war. Instead, the revolutionary groups were either exterminated or completely isolated from the masses, not least of all because of the sterile sectarian or inconsistent course they

pursued toward the national revolutionary movements and in the question of Russia and Stalinism during the war. Above all, the masses of Europe, the West included, were more terribly exhausted by the war than ever before and, under the pressure of fascist rule, were reimbued with democratic and parliamentary conceptions and illusions. As pointed out in the Workers Party resolution on the National Question in Europe during the war, the masses would not be prepared, once fascism was defeated, to replace one dictatorship with another dictatorship, even if the other was the proletarian dictatorship. The political and economic atrocities of fascist totalitarianism could only succeed, under the given circumstances, in evoking among the masses the strongest passion for political democracy, for democratic rights and institutions. Given the fact that decaying capitalism can satisfy this passion less and less, it was necessary for the revolutionary Marxists, as the champions of socialism, to become the champion of all the democratic yearnings of the masses, including their desire for national freedom and representative government, thus demonstrating in practice the inseparable link between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism. This is precisely what the leadership of the Fourth International, faced with an exceptional historic opportunity, failed to do.

The masses quite correctly did not identify their desire for democracy with the restoration of the status quo ante bellum, of the power of the old bourgeoisie, either that section of it which fled or that which remained behind as Nazi collaborators. There is no democracy in the abstract, and democracy was not an abstraction in the minds of the masses. They wanted and want democracy - democratic rights, democratic institutions, political democracy in general - not for its sake as an abstract ideal, but as the only means, in their eyes, of organizing or reorganizing the economic and social life of the country in the interests of the masses and for their benefit. It is for this reason that the masses associate the demand for nationalization - which means to them the removal of capitalist control and ownership of the means of production and exchange - with the demand for abolition of the monarchy, where it exists, for the establishment of a sovereign representative national assembly and for the government in that assembly of "their own" parties, i.e., the Social-Democratic or Stalinist parties or both. To one extent or another, this is perfectly clear in such countries as France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, England, Greece and - presently - in Spain.

The instinctive urge of the masses to revolutionize the social foundations and life of their country, heightened by the terrible advancement of the decaying tendencies in capitalism, manifested itself, in the first post-war revolutionary wave, primarily in the struggle against the openly fascist sections of the bourgeoisie or the collaborators, on the one side, and in the struggles for the most democratic and radical parliamentary institutions, through which they aim to establish their domination over society, on the other. This is shown by the stupendous

victory of the Labor Party in England, the mass movements and struggles against the monarchy in Belgium, Greece and Italy (and to an extent in Holland), the demand for a popular Constituent Assembly in France and Italy, by the revival of the old and formerly so discredited social democracy throughout Europe and even by the fact that the Stalinists, whose ears are closely attuned to the masses in this respect, have become the most vociferous "champions" of the most radical representative democracy, in the same way in which they "championed" the national revolutionary movements during the war.

The "parliamentarism" of the masses today cannot, however, be identified with their parliamentarism following the first world war. The situations are not the same. After the first war, Europe was almost inundated by the revolutionary wave of proletarian Sovietism. Bourgeois democracy, classically represented by the Weimar Republic, was the last line of defense of capitalist society in the main countries outside of Soviet Russia. Following the second war, the struggle for democracy (bourgeois democracy) is directed not against the non-existent wave of Sovietism but against all the decaying and reactionary tendencies of capitalism, against fascism, totalitarianism, military and Bonapartist government, national oppression and humiliation, foreign military occupation, etc., etc.

The task of the revolutionists, therefore, is to approach the masses on the political level to which they have been thrust down since the first world war by the decay of capitalism and the decay of the workers' parties, and to raise them once more to the level of independent class action with an independent class (socialist) aim. This task cannot be performed by counterposing the propagandist abstraction of the "United Socialist States of Europe" to the struggle for national liberation, or the propagandist abstraction of Soviets to the struggle for the most radical and most democratic Constituent Assembly, for the most militant and consistent democratic demands. If the masses are to be led to where they should be - in socialist power - they must be taken where they are - in the field of parliamentary democracy. Therein lies the importance of the insistent stress laid by the Workers Party during the war on the prognosis that the fascist domination of Europe would be followed not by a direct struggle for socialist power but by a "democratic interlude" of greater or lesser duration in the course of which the proletariat, at the head of the nation, could once more be mobilized by means of democratic and transitional slogans, for the struggle for class power. Those who denied the "democratic interlude" or were indifferent to the question, were consequently unable to orient themselves or others in the actual class struggle.

The masses correctly tie their economic requirements and demands to political struggle. The political struggle they are actually carrying on centers, however, around parliamentary institutions - not only when they cast their ballots but when they appear in imposing mass demonstrations. Taking this as

their point of departure, the revolutionary Marxists must work out, in every European country, a concrete program of action - i.e., an adaptation to their concrete national situation of the transitional program and not a ritualistic repetition of every word in it - aimed at deepening the radicalism of the masses, raising their class consciousness and acquiring in struggle the leadership of the masses without which all talk of "revolution" and "seizure of power" is dilletantism or adventurism. This means, in countries where the question of the Constituent Assembly or Parliament is paramount, a program for the most thorough and radical democratization of the constitution or parliament. It means a social and economic program of the most far-reaching significance, up to and including the nationalization of the means of production and exchange under democratic workers' control, and above all, the most unreserved assurance of all democratic rights, not only for the people at home but also for the peoples in the nations ruled by the imperialists (India, Indo-China, Algeria, Congo, Indonesia, etc.). It means a continuous campaign of mobilizing the masses for independent action in demanding of the workers' parties, when they are in office, the most thoroughgoing, unhesitating and consistent carrying out of their own programs, their own promises. It means, in those countries where a bourgeois-labor coalition exists, the demand for breaking the coalition and establishing in its stead a government of the workers' parties (i.e., those that appear to the masses to be the workers' parties).

In those countries where it is indicated by the political situation and the relationship of forces, the revolutionary Marxists must put forward the slogan of a Socialist-Communist Government (or government of the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the trade unions), as part of the work of breaking the workers away from ideological and political collaboration with the bourgeoisie and its political machines. To reject this slogan out of hand would mean to deprive the revolutionary vanguard, in given crises of bourgeois-labor coalition governments, of the central political slogan best calculated to advance the interests and class consciousness of the masses and to bring them in greater numbers under the leadership of the Marxists. To abstain absolutely from this slogan is as sectarian and unjustified - in practice as self-sterilizing - as was abstention from the national revolutionary movements during the war.

However, it is of the greatest importance to understand the limitations and dangers of this slogan. In the first place, it is not identical with the slogan put forward by the Bolsheviks in 1917 for the establishment of a Menshevik-Social Revolutionary government. Both these parties were democratic workers (or peasants) parties. In the present case, this holds only of the social democracy but by no means of the Stalinists, who represent a totalitarian party whose conquest of power means not an extension but the extinction of democracy. Therefore, the Marxists can put forward this slogan only after the most careful examination of the actual political situation has revealed



that the establishment of such a workers' coalition government would not signify the assumption of political power by the Stalinist totalitarian machine or be a decisive step in that direction. By the same token, the Marxists do not in any country put forward the slogan of a Stalinist (CP) government. If they advance the slogan of a CP-SP government, it is only under conditions that give adequate assurances that such a government would not be dominated (as in Poland, Yugoslavia, Eastern Germany, Bulgaria, Rumania, etc.) by the Stalinists. In the second place, such a slogan could be empty at best and treacherous at worst if it were put forward as a cure-all, as a permanent part of our propaganda and agitation (instead of as an exceptional slogan), or if presented by itself. It can have progressive meaning and value only if it is coupled with and subordinated to a practical political program of democratic, transitional demands, without which revolutionists take no responsibility either for the slogan or for the government established in its name.

Finally, in the present European situation, the national question continues to play a role of capital importance for the proletariat of the Western European countries, and that in three respects. First, it is the duty of the revolutionists to make clear to the working class and the middle classes their obligation to struggle against the imperialist oppression that their ruling classes carry on in their own colonies (Asia, Africa, Latin-America). Second, it is their duty to champion the right of national unity and independence of the countries their ruling classes and allies now oppress or occupy in Europe, starting with dismembered and occupied Germany. Third, it is their duty to point out that the small or weakened "independent" countries of Western Europe are themselves being reduced to vassal states, to pawns in the rivalry between Anglo-American and Russian imperialism, and that even the remaining independence of these lands is threatened by eventual domination by either one of these reactionary giants. A correct and active revolutionary position on the national question in the Western European countries is not only mandatory upon the Fourth International but is one of the most effective instruments in freeing the working class from the ideological and organizational control of the Russian Stalinists and the Anglo-American social-democrats.

#### Perspectives and Tasks: The Colonial World

World War II marks a monumental turning point in the struggle of the colonial peoples for freedom, above all in the populous countries of Asia. The war brought about a decisive weakening of the old colonial powers, including Great Britain, the ancient bulwark of the colonial system. The internal rottenness and general impotency of the British colonial regimes in Asia revealed by the easy Japanese conquests, the military defeat and occupation of France and the Netherlands, the utter and obvious dependence of the old colonial powers upon

American military and economic aid, added up to underscore the fact that these powers were no longer able to play their old role in this sphere. The weakening of the old colonial powers in terms of economic strength, military power, finances, independence and prestige was accompanied by a rising tide of national consciousness, aggressiveness and self-confidence on the part of the oppressed peoples, above all in Indonesia, India and Indo-China. The readiness of the colonial powers to offer extensive concessions to the colonies in terms of "self-rule" is an indication, not only of the severity of their plight, but that the traditional "democratic" colonial system of imperialist exploitation is coming to an end. Its place is being taken by the "American system" of reliance upon economic domination and the political manipulation of formally independent or semi-independent native political regimes. However, this system is possible only to a vastly wealthy power, which means, today, the United States. The displacement of the old colonial system is, therefore, simultaneously the displacement of the British Empire and its satellites (French, Dutch, Portuguese, Belgian empire) by American imperialism as the super-exploiter of the economically-backward peoples. The century-old technique of American domination of Latin America is being put to use on a world scale. It is the technique of economic penetration, of corrupting, bribing and subsidizing native bourgeois politicians, of American ideological infiltration (schools, missions, periodicals, radio, press) and of practical "charities" that pay long-term dividends (roads, hospitals, sanitation, etc.).

An aspect of this "American approach" is revealed in the occupation of Japan. Unhurried by economic pressures which force less wealthy imperialists powers to an immediate policy of plunder and enslavement (Germany, Russia), the United States sets about the reorganization of Japan with a deliberateness that aims to constitute it as the bastion of American power in Asia. The American policy in Japan is designed to achieve the following ends:

(a) To undermine and discredit the old ruling cliques in order to eliminate them as rallying points of national resistance.

(b) To utilize the extreme political backwardness of the Japanese masses to secure a mass base for American rule (specifically, for the rule of the new strata of quislings which it is developing) by identifying American occupation with democracy and liberalism.

(c) To appear before the oppressed masses of the rest of Asia as a liberating force in contrast to the old colonial powers and therefore secure mass favor for itself as against the latter.

(d) To secure a base for itself in Japan and through it in Asia from which to oppose the growing pressure of Russia upon the Far East and prepare its strategical positions for the eventual conflict with Russia.

However, the continued economic crises, the tremendous and disruptive political convulsions, and the violent class and national collisions which will keynote the world scene in the coming period will not permit American imperialism the stability necessary to consolidate its world empire. The American latecomers in this field face not the prospects of the British Empire of a century ago but of the sorely pressed British Empire of today. The prospects for Asia, with its billion oppressed people, is for a rising tide of national feeling and increasing struggles for national freedom. The attempts of American imperialism to utilize its favored economic position to secure support for its "benevolent" domination of the colonials has only a short term chance of success.

During the war, the revolutionists found it impossible to support any of the bourgeois national movements in the East. The proletariat was not prepared to lead the national revolutionary movement in its own name and with its own program. The bourgeoisie of the colonial countries, in accordance with its inner nature and social-historical position, was unable to lead a serious struggle for national independence against imperialism and could use the slogan of national independence only for the purpose of hiding the fact of their service to one of the two big imperialist camps or the other. The analysis and prognosis of the Workers Party was confirmed in fact. To give support to any of the colonial countries "fighting imperialism" during the war could only mean giving objective support to one imperialist coalition against the other, in violation of the basic principles of revolutionary internationalism. This has now been demonstrated with sufficient clarity and conclusiveness by the outcome of the war in China. The revolutionary Marxists who supported China, even under the Chiang-Kai-Shek bourgeoisie, against Japan before the world war broke out in the East, could not support China during the war without becoming in fact supporters of American imperialism; any more than they could support the Indonesian bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie which, for "strategical" reasons, found it "necessary" to cooperate with the Japanese imperialists and to take political responsibilities under the occupation of the Japanese. At the end of the war, China finds itself not independent (except of Japanese rule!) but a pawn in the growing conflict between American and Russian imperialism, and, even as a pawn, still deprived of the crown colonies of the British Empire in China.

It is our task to help the national revolutionary movements in the colonies understand the real role of American imperialism; just as it is the task of the Fourth International as a whole to make clear the role of all the imperialist powers in the colonies, Stalinist imperialism included. The colonial movements, now that the war is over, are entirely justified in seeking to play off American imperialism against its rivals and to maneuver among them in the interests of national liberation. That is why the revolutionary Marxists, for all their class criticism, support the nationalist movement in Indonesia and similar movements in other colonies. At the same time we

must constantly warn these movements against permitting themselves to become mere pawns in the hands of the "less harsh" imperialism against a rival imperialism.

In this sense, the Marxists support all genuinely popular national movements in the colonies. This does not hold for such struggles as are now taking place in the Chinese "civil war" where one side, while representing the national bourgeoisie, is now merely the outpost of American imperialism, while the other side, in spite of its peasant composition, is a tool of Stalinist imperialism which aims at dismembering China in order to annex its wealthiest section, the North, to the Russian Stalinist Empire. The reactionary character of modern Stalinism is once again underscored by its work in converting a genuinely plebeian democratic national movement into a tool of totalitarian imperialism aimed at the very heart of the democratic and national interests of China. Support of this movement today can have no other effect than to extend the Stalinist empire and bring under its subjugation a large portion of the land and people of China.

#### The Workers Party and the Fourth International

The Fourth International was established to bring to an end the crisis in leadership which alone has stood in the way of the victory of the socialist proletariat in our epoch. During the war, the Fourth International ceased to exist as an effective, organized, centralized International. A number of objective reasons, including the greatest difficulties under which the revolutionary movement ever had to operate in all its long history, may be adduced to explain this collapse. These are reasons which were beyond the control of any one or any group in the International. However, insofar as the collapse was due to reasons which were under the control of the International, the responsibility for the failure of the International, marked at one and the same time by its silence on the most important political problems of the time and by its unofficial tolerance or encouragement of the grossest political mistakes, lies primarily upon the shoulders of the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party.

The sections of the International survived the great trial of the war, even without international guidance and leadership. They did not, like the Stalinists, social-democrats, anarchists, centrists and syndicalists, capitulate to the wave of chauvinism and social-patriotism, and in that respect they held up the banner of socialist internationalism in the great tradition of Marx, Engels, Liebknecht, Luxemburg, Lenin and Trotsky. They survived a terror, above all in Europe, which both the bourgeoisie and the Stalinists mercilessly directed against them and which martyred the best of our cadres and our militants.

However, in the main political analysis and line which distinguished the International's official leadership and made its imprint upon the course of virtually all the sections, the most catastrophic errors were made. For these too the primary responsibility rests upon the shoulders of the SWP leadership.

By its insistent repetition of the slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" the International capitulated objectively to Stalinist imperialism and contributed its share to the disorientation of the vanguard of the proletariat. The reconstruction and future of the International depend upon the firmest and most clearly-grasped repudiation of this slogan. They require also the abandonment of the now utterly reactionary theory that Russia is a "workers' state" because property is still nationalized. The Workers Party categorically rejects this theory. While propagating its own theory throughout the International and the working class, the theory that Russia represents a reactionary social order, bureaucratic collectivism, the Workers Party is prepared to cooperate most closely with those groups and sections of the International which, while not sharing the full views of the Workers Party, have nevertheless abandoned the reactionary theory of the "workers' state" and the equally reactionary slogan of "unconditional defense." Therefore, without relinquishing its theoretical position or abandoning the theoretical discussion, the Workers Party will make a bloc with such groups as the German Section (IKD), the Minority in the SWP, and others in the International who now reject the theory of the "workers' state" and the slogan of "unconditional defense."

By its position on the national revolutionary movements in Europe, which was tantamount to sectarian abstentionism at worst and inconsistency and failure to understand the revolutionary tasks of the time, the leadership of the International failed to help the European sections seize the exceptional opportunity to emerge from their isolation and into the leadership of wide sections of the revolutionary peoples. In this question, too, which is still at the top of the order of the day, especially now in Eastern Europe, the Workers Party will seek to establish a bloc not only with the German Section, with which it has cooperated in the closest political harmony, but also with those other groups or sections which have adopted a common or similar position with our party and which, in any case, oppose the political nihilism of the official Fourth International leadership on the national question, as is the case with the Minority of the SWP, the Minority in the French Section, elements in the Belgian section, etc.

By its tacit support of and failure to combat the opportunism and the bureaucratism in the SWP, and by its adoption of similar bureaucratic practices against minorities in the International, the present leadership has promoted the evil of monolithism in the movement and placed in danger the entire future of the International. It has remained silent in face of the irresponsible actions of the SWP leadership which effectively liquidated the International Secretariat during the crucial period of the war. It has failed to intervene firmly, and fraternally, against the bureaucratic opposition of the SWP leadership to the unification of the Fourth International in the United States, and failed correspondingly to give support to the wholly progressive struggle for unity conducted by the SWP Minority. It has permitted the most disloyal and ignorant

campaign to be directed against the German section of the International, whose revolutionary/<sup>and political</sup> integrity is beyond question, and has now itself climaxed this campaign by the most bureaucratic act in the history of the Trotskyist movement, namely, reading the German section out of the International because of its theoretical position without previous notification to the German section; without previous discussion of its position in the International, and without affording the German Section the elementary opportunity to defend itself before its accusers.

Nothing less than a complete reorganization of the leadership of the International can give the slightest assurance of a progressive and fruitful future. Nothing less than a loyally prepared and democratically conducted discussion throughout the International of all the questions in controversy, with full opportunity for every member to study the documents available, is required to put the International back on revolutionary rails. This means a discussion, in particular, of the theories and views put forward by the Workers Party, the German Section and the Minorities in the SWP and the French Party.

By its rejection of the Workers Party appeal to be recognized as a sympathizing section, the present International leadership, under the stimulation of the SWP, has taken another step toward that detestable monolithism which the Trotskyist movement arose to combat in the revolutionary movement. The Workers Party nevertheless renews its appeal, inasmuch as it considers today, as it always has, that it is bound by indissoluble bonds to the basic principles of the Fourth International. The Party leadership is instructed to continue unceasingly its efforts to establish a bloc in the International of all those groups and sections which, without seeing eye to eye on every single political and theoretical question, nevertheless represent one basic political tendency in the International, with the aim of having this tendency prevail in the ranks of the Fourth, before the present prevailing tendency, which is a combination of opportunism, sectarianism and bureaucratism, succeeds in squandering the great political capital accumulated by the Fourth and reducing it to an impotent sect.

RESOLUTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE WORLD SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

I. Introduction

The crisis of humanity is the crisis of the proletarian leadership. Such was the opening sentence and the theme of the thesis which established the political position of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International. Today capitalism faces the masses with accomplishing the greatest historical tasks in order to satisfy their simplest demands.

The conflict between the development of the productive forces and the social relations now threatens the destruction of civilization itself. "Modern socialism is nothing but the reflex in thought of this actual conflict, its ideal reflection in the minds first of the class which is directly suffering under it, the working class." (Engels) In London, Paris and Rome, the cry rises from the masses for an end to the barbarism, and the exploitation of the monopolists of capital; in Java, Korea, the Philippines, India, China and Africa, the vanguard of the colonial masses link their desire for national freedom with the destruction of capitalist imperialism as an economic system. In such a world situation, the Fourth International as the only revolutionary Marxist organization in the world faces the decisive period of its existence.

I.

1. The War and the Decline of the Bourgeoisie Class Relations in 1939

In 1939 the bourgeoisie as a whole had reached a stage of degeneration where its representatives were rotting on their feet. Conversely, the proletariat had a deep, organic, insurmountable urge to tear itself free from the bloody capitalist chaos. The European proletariat had lost its democratic and pacifist illusions and had repeatedly taken the road of revolution. Even in the United States it had shown its instinctive striving to raise itself to the level of the tasks imposed upon it by history. But the leaders of the Second and Third Internationals, and the trade union bureaucrats in the U.S. tied to the existing forces of class rule, stifled and betrayed and crushed the revolutionary attempts and revolutionary pressure of the masses. Such was the analysis and such indeed the very phrases of the Fourth International as expressed in the person of its founder, Trotsky. The history of the proletariat is not a history of revisionism, but of repeated attempts to break away from it.

Production and World War II

Never before did bourgeois production accomplish such marvels as during the war, but it was precisely the incapacity to use these miracles except for capitalistic purposes that has accomplished its ruin. The war of 1914-1918 had used the technological developments

of the 19th century to transport great masses of men to the battlefield. By 1939 Nazism used the great developments of the 20th century, the Diesel engine and the radio, to transfer the mobility of men and fire-power to the battlefield itself. The air above and all enemy territory became one vast battlefield. Not to construct, but merely to keep 5,000 first line planes in action required in all a personnel of a million and a half men. The transformation of all the instruments of labor into instruments only usable in common, the economizing of all means of labor into combined socialized labor reached heights which carried to the last stages of antagonism the class contradictions hidden under the fiction of national unity. Not only the social and political relations but the development of the productive forces for total war showed that the length of the war could not be calculated in terms of the military power of the opposing imperialists but only in terms of its effects upon society itself. The defeat of France and the air assault on Britain showed how impossible it was for the war to continue for ten or fifteen years. To this basic consideration had to be added the social impossibility of Hitler's subjugating the advanced populations of Europe to his will.

### The Defeated Imperialisms

With nations thus economically and socially organized, military defeat was synonymous with social ruin. That is the history of the war. The volume of the German blow against Poland destroyed not only the Polish state but the Polish bourgeoisie. A similar stroke against France broke the French state and reduced the French bourgeoisie to beggary. The American victory over southern Italy shattered the Italian state and the Italian bourgeoisie. The combined strokes of Russian and Anglo-American imperialism destroyed not only the military apparatus of the German state but the German bourgeoisie. The atomic bomb merely dramatized the crowning blow which destroyed the Japanese state, and reduced to ruin the Japanese bourgeoisie.

Not a single existing European government could have been restored without the military, economic and diplomatic assistance of the Anglo-American-Russian imperialisms. The ruling classes of Europe in particular are incapable of the most elementary duty of any ruling class - that of feeding, clothing and housing the people. France, for example, is reduced to sending a former Prime Minister abroad to beg for food. Such reorganization of Europe as the victorious imperialisms undertake is carried out without even the formality of representation by a single one of the European powers. The European structure as a whole is shattered from top to bottom and from end to end. The economic structure of Western Europe is a collection of military zones which ration calories and starvation.

In Japan, Korea, Indo-China, the East Indies, Malaya, Singapore, Burma, and the Philippines wherever war passed, the former ruling classes are in a more or less similar position. Either directly or indirectly Anglo-American or Russian imperialism hold together the old social order by arms and supplies and the corruption of the revolution by Stalinism.



## The Victorious Imperialisms

The victorious powers are dominated by and do not dominate the common catastrophe. British imperialism, without American aid, would be unable to prevent itself sinking into a third class power. Little news emerges from totalitarian Russia, but the strain and the devastation of war are not overcome either by propaganda or by the looting of defeated countries. If, alone among the imperialist nations, the United States has developed a tremendous economic power, it has thereby developed to an unprecedented degree, its own internal contradictions. Before it can exploit, it faces the impossible task of restoring some elements of order to half the world. It is in irreconcilable conflict with a Russia strategically placed in Europe and Asia and aided by the far-flung Comintern.

If the Fourth International, despite its small numbers, entered into the war with its banners flying, today it faces its task not with any subjective optimism, but with an unshakable confidence in its own destiny, born of the cruelty, the barbarism, and the helplessness of the bourgeoisie, victim of its own contending passions.

### 2. The War and the Rise of the Proletariat

If the war carried to an extreme the ruin and confusion of the bourgeoisie, it unloosed also a tremendous revolutionary upsurge among the masses. Far from being hurled back to some indefinite period in its past, the proletariat has displayed in the last few years its tremendous reservoirs of class energy in the speedy organization of the resistance movements and immediately after the defeat of Hitler, of its trade unions and political parties. While Fascism at the height of its success smashed the workers' organizations, and demoralized the masses, the perspective and actuality of Fascism in defeat heightened the consciousness and activity of the working class. In few instances has the instinctive power of the proletariat been so displayed as in the organization of the movement in Poland and Northern Italy even under the German occupation. It was the very attempt of bourgeois society to thrust the workers back into conditions of degradation and barbarism which provided the powerful impetus to its bold and courageous revolutionary actions when the chains of Fascism were loosened.

The attack of Hitlerism against Russia was the signal for a revival of the proletariat and its revolutionary struggle against the hated capitalist society. This took the form of resistance movements, by which the proletariat drew after it the peasants and the urban petty-bourgeoisie. With the landing of the American troops in North Africa and the resounding defeat of the Nazi armies in front of Stalingrad, the masses realized that the defeat of Fascism was at hand.

The Italian proletariat, suppressed for over twenty years, reasserted itself in the crisis which produced the fall of Mussolini. The workers themselves helped to drive out the Germans in the larger cities, and were only prevented from seizing them by the

counter-revolutionary Anglo-American armies and their Stalinist tools. The Warsaw proletariat, with a program for the revolutionary socialist reconstruction of Polish society, armed itself against its own bourgeoisie and against both Stalinism and Anglo-Russian imperialism. For that very reason it was betrayed to the German army by Russia with the approval of the British government. In France the forces of the resistance movements seized the power on a program which promised nationalization of the means of production, punishment of collaborators (two-thirds of the French bourgeoisie) and a purge and reorganization of the bureaucratic apparatus of government, including the army. This to the armed masses meant socialism. No lesser program could have retained the leadership of the movement. At the moment of the defeat of Germany, the de Gaulle regime was saved from destruction by the armed masses only by the direct intervention of the Stalinists. In Belgium, and to a lesser degree Holland, violent clashes resulted in the paralysis of government, and once more only the combined efforts of the British armies and the Stalinists saved open civil war.

The greatest achievement of the European proletariat occurred in Northern Italy. As soon as the German armies began to crash, workers' committees and partisan bands seized the factories and saved the territory from Nazi vandalism. They carried out a drastic purge of fascists and although, through lack of leadership, they were compelled to yield to the power of the Anglo-American armies, they held the factories for months and ran them through joint committees of workers and technicians. Their real desires were exemplified by the slogan for a Workers Republic raised by thousands of the revolutionaries in the last critical days.

These are the facts, irrefutable, and not for one moment to be challenged. Yet actual proletarian power was nowhere won even for a period. The fundamental cause of this must be established not only for historical reasons but as an indispensable guide for the present perspectives.

The Third International in its summation of the revolutionary events after World War I placed the responsibility for the failure to establish the soviet power in Europe upon the counter-revolutionary Second International which had the confidence of the masses. Today the Fourth International can sum up the events which followed World War II as follows: Far more than in 1918-1920 the failure to achieve Soviet power over large areas in Europe is due to the fact that in their readiness to overthrow bourgeois society the masses placed their confidence in what they considered to be a revolutionary party, which betrayed them and for the time being saved the bourgeois regime which otherwise would have been and still would be helpless.

### 3. The German Proletariat

As the war developed and the collapse of Hitler became a certainty, the perspectives and policy for Germany, and therefore for national liberation in Europe, assumed two clear conflicting lines. Either the counter-revolutionary perspective that the final blow against crumbling Germany would be delivered by the imperialist

armies or the revolutionary Marxist perspective that the final blow would be delivered by the revolutionary proletariat of Germany. Particularly in France, Poland and Italy, many revolutionary elements, not only Fourth Internationalists, realized that Germany was the key to the European situation. They strove desperately to encourage the German revolution and restore the solidarity of a proletarian Europe against the rival imperialisms. Conversely, the Stalinists, both in Moscow and in the world as a whole, unloosed an agitation aimed at "preventing a repetition of 1918." Caught in the tremendous grip of the German totalitarian machine with armies advancing on four sides, the German proletariat unlike the Italian, proved unable to strike down the crumbling Nazi regime before the entry of the victorious armies. This is the great defeat which prevented the rest of the proletariat in Europe from administering still more complete blows to the European bourgeoisie.

Particularly in Eastern Europe, the failure of the revolution in Germany and the defeat of the revolutionary elements in Warsaw left the revolutionary activity of the masses at the mercy of the invading Russian armies and its Stalinist tools.

The Proletariat and the Peasantry Outside of Europe

In the Far East, the Middle East and the Near East the colonial masses showed their hatred of the existing social order. In the Levant, in Egypt, in Burma, in Java, in Indo-China, in the Philippines, in India and in China, they organized for revolutionary action and in various areas came out boldly for the destruction of the power of the landlords and the capitalists.

In the United States the certainty of victory which gripped the whole world as a result of the German defeat at Stalingrad, unloosed a movement among the masses which seriously disturbed the Roosevelt government. The strikes of the miners, and the readiness to follow them of the steel and rubber workers, faced the administration with the possibility of a general strike. But the labor lieutenants of capital were able to push the rebellious workers back into the factories. The war was no sooner over than the American proletariat challenged the bourgeoisie as never before in its history. The Japanese proletariat and peasantry almost at a stroke, emerged from the domination of decades with trade unions and working class parties, occupying factories and organizing peasant councils. Today, without any experience of class politics comparable to that of the European proletariat, the Japanese proletariat has clearly expressed its instinctive desire to reorganize society on communist beginnings by posing sharply, both in words and in actions the question of workers control of production. This has confounded the Japanese bourgeoisie which has to depend on American bayonets for support. Despite all appearances to the contrary, the actions of American imperialism have not encouraged but rather in reality have restrained and limited the movements of the Japanese working class.

In the breakdown of the social order and the urge of the masses to tear themselves from it are the prerequisites of profoundly revolutionary situations in large parts of Europe and Asia. The solution of the crisis is the solution of the question of leader-

ship.

## II. The Stratification of Production

The future perspectives of humanity are governed by the developing stage of economic and social relations, comprised under the term "stratification of production."

In 1919, the Manifesto of the Communist International stated that it was "impossible to return not only to free competition, but even to the domination of trusts, syndicates and other economic octopuses. Today the one and only issue is: Who shall henceforth be the bearer of statized production, the imperialist state or the state of the victorious proletariat?" After 1919 the imperialist countries were able partially to reverse this economic movement. Today, peace no less than war poses the necessity of nationalization or the stratification of production. It accomplishes itself by war, economic breakdown (France, Germany and Yugoslavia), or economic development (United States), by revolution and counter-revolution, by parliamentary means, with all the frequent contradictory manifestations of the actual historical process. It has not reached the same degree of development in all the countries of the world. But as a world-wide phenomenon, it has already reached the stage where it exercises the dominant influence in all social and political relations. The political evolution of the Social-Democracy in Britain and France, of the Stalinists in Eastern and Western Europe and the Far East, the whole course of economic and political development in the United States can be analyzed basically only in relation to this movement.

### The Contradictions of Stratification and Stalinist Russia

It is in Stalinist Russia that for historical reasons the stratification of production has achieved its most complete and finished form. The example of Stalinist Russia shows that this latest stage of economic organization solves not one single basic economic contradiction of capitalism. The existence of the world market imposes upon all such formations the payment of the worker at his value. To do otherwise would raise the value of the commodity and thus ruin the economy in its competition on the world market, either in the traditional form of exchange or in the present form of struggle for world mastery by force, or a combination of both. The large masses of the population, free of legal restraint unlike the slave, the serf, or the guild-artisan, and free of property unlike the peasant, are thereby condemned to be wage-slaves and creators of surplus value. It is from this that all the basic contradictions of capitalist production flow.

The experience of Stalinist Russia since 1936 has exploded the idea that planning by any class other than the proletariat, can ever reverse the laws of motion of capitalist production. Planning becomes merely the stratified instead of the spontaneous submission to these laws. Regulation by the capitalist state consists only in the power to exploit value production more ruthlessly than ever and suppress the most obvious manifestations of the old-fashioned commercial crises by means of terror and the degrada-

tion of the masses. Stalinist Russia, driven by the internal contradictions of value, production, i.e. capitalist production has defeated Germany only to embark upon the same imperialist program, reproducing in peace the economic and political methods of German imperialism, direct annexation, looting of men and material, formation of chains of companies in which the conquering imperialism holds the largest share. Such also was the economic movement of Japan in the Far East. The United States in modified form, follows the same essential course.

The backward countries, far from being able to escape this movement, more than ever are compelled to seek to overcome their economic weakness by statification of the means of production. All classes in India and China clearly recognize that the economic future of these countries is bound up with an advanced development of statification (combined development). The very ruin of the economy of Germany imposes upon the occupying imperialist states the need for statification.

### The Social Structure of Statification

The economic movement brings with it social and political consequences which form the objective arena of contemporary society, confusing the bourgeoisie and objectively driving the masses to the world socialist revolution. Whereas before the war, the bourgeoisie was symbolized in the 60 families and the 200 families, etc. the diminishing number of magnates, as in Fascist Germany, now tend to hide themselves behind the state and the needs of "the nation" as a whole; where the Social-Democracy rules as in Britain, the uselessness of the bourgeoisie as a class is demonstrated to the workers. Thereby, is reinforced the concept of production and property as social and not as private relations.

The bourgeoisie of the subordinate countries, caught between the two dominant imperialist states (Russia and the United States) and the revolting masses, become increasingly and obviously an anti-national class (the bourgeoisie in Eastern Europe). Thus statification of production increasingly poses national independence openly in terms of the proletariat leading the masses of the people against the exploiting classes, native and foreign.

Statification of production increases the proletarianization of the middle classes. Through subsidies to agriculture (e.g. U.S.) or as hired functionaries statification ties the petty-bourgeoisie closely to the political fluctuations of the regime. The middle classes as a whole begin to lose their sense of separate identity and tend more and more to see themselves either as adjuncts to the bureaucracy of the rulers of statified production or as part of the struggle of the proletariat against capitalist oppression and for the control of the state power (Great Britain and France).

But it is the proletariat that experiences more than any other class the revolutionizing effects of statification of production. Far more than Lenin noted in World War I, statification unifies the economic and social organization and consciousness of the world proletariat and tends to lessen the distinction between the workers

of advanced and backward countries. It socializes labor on a vast scale and assumes the direct social responsibility for the industrial reserve army of labor.

Under statification production relations develop to a stage of unbearable antagonism. In the totalitarian countries, the labor front (Germany) or the completely totalitarianized trade unions (Russia) become state organizations. But even in the countries which still retain the forms of parliamentary democracy, production becomes impossible without the direct intervention and control by the labor bureaucracy (Bevin in England during the war) on behalf of the state, or even in peacetime through collaboration with the government or the employers, as is seen most clearly in the United States.

In France and Britain any movement of the masses brings them immediately into direct conflict with their own leaders as rulers or direct representatives of the government. The simplest of immediate demands concerning the high cost of living or the right to strike become questions of state policy and continually pose before the workers the fundamental question of state power. Thus, the social structure of state power in statified production places the workers in a situation where any determined struggle compels them to face the problem of creating their own organization in order to bring pressure upon, and if necessary, to break the power of the labor leadership as virtual functionaries of the existing government.

### Statification and Bourgeois Democracy

Upon the basis of the production relations of statification, the functions of government even in a democracy are carried out to an increasing extent by the executive, with the help of the labor lieutenants. Parliamentary bodies, (most conspicuously in the U.S.) become more and more mere talking shops. The state, even in its most democratic form, is compelled increasingly to assume the characteristics of Bonapartism. Every crisis of production, whether resulting in increase or decrease of wages, becomes merely an opportunity of the bourgeois state, behind constitutional forms, to limit and circumscribe the most elementary rights, right to strike, etc. of the masses. Thus, the struggle for democracy, particularly in the advanced countries, is no longer the struggle for the extension of popular rights. Liberalism is now the advocate, instead of the enemy, of the rights of the state. (Wallace) Today therefore, the struggle for democracy becomes a struggle against the encroachment of the Bonapartist state, aided by its agents, the trade union and labor bureaucracy. Thus, in the statified production, the consistent struggle for democratic rights becomes the struggle for militant independent mass organizations by which the workers can mobilize themselves to bring pressure upon, control, renew and ultimately overthrow the trade union bureaucracy and the labor leadership on the road to the proletarian revolution. This is the strategic basis for the tactical orientation towards the struggle for democratic demands in this period.

Statification of Production - The Ideological Struggle

Today, when the proletariat says democracy, it means above all, not bourgeois democracy. The bourgeoisie, having arrived at statification with totalitarianism (Fascism) the proletariat now desires no return to any previous condition of private enterprise but statification with democracy. Its social concepts are dominated by the idea that the catastrophes of modern society are caused by the private ownership of the means of production. The necessity that these be taken away from the monopolists and be returned to the nation to be planned for the good of all has now achieved the "fixity of a popular prejudice." This is one of the greatest advances ever made by human consciousness both in its implicit rejection of the concept of class distinctions and in the scores of millions who hold it.

That this is the fundamental ideological problem of modern society is proved by the unanimity with which the bourgeoisie concentrates its propaganda on this issue. This high stage of development is least advanced in the United States. It is therefore of great symbolical importance that more than anywhere else it is in the United States that the bourgeoisie with unerring instinct and understanding preaches incessantly that (a) free institutions are inseparable from free enterprise and (b) that no kind of planned economy (which it calls socialism) is possible without totalitarianism.

The bourgeoisie, recognizing what is at stake, misses no opportunity to confuse the masses on this issue. So powerful is the trend to statification that even bourgeois parties pay at least lip service to it. (M.R.P. in France)

Party because of fear of the masses, partly because of the necessities of the economy, the bourgeoisie is compelled to take steps toward the nationalization of production but it fills this nationalization with as much bourgeois counter-revolutionary content as possible. In the Balkan countries that section of the native bourgeoisie, which is excluded by the Stalinists from the power raises the slogan of free elections, stimulated by Britain and the United States. Thus it confuses the masses who are torn between the nationalization and land-distribution programs of the Stalinists (directed against the native ruling class) and the Stalinist social and political tyranny. The Stalinists add to the confusion by calling their combination of economic reform and totalitarianism an anti-fascist democracy of a new type. In defeated Germany and Japan, the imperialist powers masquerade with the form of bourgeois-democracy in order to more surely stifle the revolutionary aspirations of the masses. Whereas in France, the masses look to the Constituent Assembly to solve for them the contradiction between statification of production and the hated totalitarianism, the Social Democracy and the Stalinist manipulate the slogan so as to put a new fig leaf on the disgraced and bankrupt parliamentary regime.

Being unable to mobilize the petty-bourgeoisie on the pre-war

basis of Fascism, the bourgeoisie now uses the ideology and philosophy of Christianity, the rights of the individual and the family, as a weapon against the proletarian movement to socialism. In almost every country of Western and Central Europe, the reorganization of the Catholic Church and the growth of religious parties is today the mass basis of the European counter-revolution, particularly in France. That in the fifth decade of the twentieth century this should be the last ideological stronghold of the European bourgeoisie is but another proof of the desperation to which it has been reduced in every sphere. Thus, both objectively and subjectively it is the most dangerous and pernicious of falsehoods to say that the mass struggles today are for the restoration of bourgeois democracy. The very opposite is the truth. The dialectic of historical progress and the defeat of Fascism have initiated a period in which the manipulation of the concepts of bourgeois democracy become the last feeble weapon of bourgeois reaction against the developing socialist consciousness of the masses.

### III

#### The Fourth International and the Self-Mobilization of the Masses

The combination of statification and democracy can be achieved only by the Soviet Power. Both the objective and the subjective results of statification and the desperate attempts of the bourgeoisie to confuse the masses places as the main task of the day the exposure of the difference between bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy.

The Fourth International, therefore, particularly in Europe and Asia, undertakes a many-sided and powerful propaganda on the history, theory, successes and failures of the dictatorship of the proletariat with special reference to the first workers state. But in harmony with the objective relations posed by statification of production and by the violent conflicts in production, politics and ideology between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, it bases its agitation upon the adaptation of the program of transitional demands to the concrete circumstances of the day.

The task of the transitional program consists in systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution. In large areas of Europe and Asia today, the situation imperatively demands that the Fourth International today seek by agitation "to stimulate the masses to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the problems of mass struggle in bourgeois society; not stopping, if necessary, even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions." (Founding Conference). In bankrupt Europe and Asia the factory committees, the workers defense guards, consumers committees, soldiers committees, etc. become now the forms which the revolutionaries must hold before the masses as most suitable in the struggle for their immediate demands against the dominating state power, in the struggle against Bonapartism and against the encroachment of the bourgeois democratic state on its democratic rights. "Trade union bureaucrats (and all the agents of the bourgeoisie) in accordance with their general conduct, will resist



the creation of factory committees as they resist every bold step taken along the road of mobilizing the masses. However, the wider the sweep of the movement, the easier it will be to break this resistance...The prime significance of the committee, however, lies in the fact that it becomes the militant staff for such working class layers as the trade union is usually incapable of moving to action. It is from these more oppressed layers that the most self-sacrificing battalions of the revolution will come..." (Founding Conference)

In this respect the part now played by the black market in the European economy offers exceptional opportunity to the Fourth International to teach the masses the necessity of their own direct intervention for the solution of their problems. Where governments themselves organize or sanction black markets and where black marketing activities are insured (France), the alert revolutionary party will find opportunity especially on a local or regional scale to stimulate the wrath and indignation of the masses to the point where they organize themselves and take drastic action against the individual and official fatteners on the festering bourgeois regime. It is on the basis of revolutionary actions on concrete events, explosions, partial risings, with successes and defeats, that on the basis of the general situation in Western Europe today and the general revolutionary propaganda of the Fourth International, the proletariat gradually will recognize its own strength, recognize the Fourth International as its leader and nerve itself for greater and more shattering assaults upon the shaky fabric of bourgeois society.

In many areas of Europe and Asia today, class relations have reached a pitch where the Fourth International can carry on a serious propaganda for Soviets in order not to be caught unawares by the feverish explosions of the revolutionary masses and the whip of the counter-revolution. While it bases itself unequivocally upon the self-mobilization of the masses in the manner proposed by the Transitional Program, the Fourth International does not itself attempt to form any of these mass organizations; it does not call anarchistically for direct action or the seizure of power nor does it neglect to use to the utmost possible degree all bourgeois forms or constitutional and parliamentary forms and procedure. In the explosive situations which exist in many parts of the world, there will arise conjunctures in which, in accordance with the high stage of contemporary class struggle, it will be possible for the proletariat to link constitutional methods with its own self-activity. The classic example for our epoch is the election of Blum to the government and the seizure of the factories simultaneously by the self-mobilized masses. Particularly in countries where the Stalinists and the Social-Democracy are duping the masses by the refurbishing of parliamentarism with socialist trimmings, the Fourth International poses before the masses this combination of constitutional procedure and revolutionary action as the road to the exposure of the labor leadership and the mobilization of the masses for proletarian revolution.

## IV

Socialism and the ContinentsThe Socialist Reconstruction of Europe

The rebuilding of Europe and the reorganization of world economy must be carried out either by the bourgeoisie or the proletariat, by the capital-labor relation or by socialist relations of production.

For this reason the Fourth International does not merely pose the struggle for immediate demands in terms of the actual intervention of the masses (factory committees, consumers' committees, etc.) It must ceaselessly propagandize to the masses the genuinely transitional character of the relationship between factory committees, etc., the social revolution and socialist relations of production. To the masses, who, lacking leadership are bewildered by the magnitude of the problems which face them, the Fourth International must place the organized rule of society by the workers as the only way to pull Europe and Asia out of the chaos and ruin in which capitalist society has placed them. It must categorically say to the masses there is not hope for a reconstruction of society except by means of the productivity of labor and social reorganization which only socialist relations of production can initiate. Basing itself on the necessity of these new relations, the Fourth International poses also the abolition of the bourgeois bureaucracy, the abolition of the bourgeois standing army and their replacement by the armed people and their elected representatives. It does this in the confidence that the bourgeoisie is unable to present to the masses any serious plan to overcome the existing barbarism and in any serious manner alleviate the exasperation of the masses.

Contrary to the belief of the timid petty-bourgeois radicals and the Mensheviks, it is precisely where the ruin and degradation of society are most obvious that the Fourth International makes the closest relation between the intervention of the masses in the struggle for immediate demands, and the struggle for the social revolution and the socialist reconstruction of society.

The Fourth International must at the same time pose to the workers in broad outline a plan for the reconstruction of Europe on a continental scale. Thus, in Europe, it poses the socialization of production on a national scale. But it responds to the concrete situation by linking this demand to the industrialization of Germany and its incorporation into a European economy as the indispensable basis not for some distant socialist well-being but for the satisfaction of the elementary needs of the masses and for the salvation of European civilization.

The Imperialist Reorganization of Europe

In no other way can the Fourth International meet the combined attempts of Anglo-American and Russian imperialism and their agents to enslave Europe and Asia. The Anglo-American bourgeoisie and

the second International seek to bribe the proletariat to accept the overlordship of American imperialism in return for bourgeois democratic forms of government and American economic aid.

Russian imperialism and its Stalinist satellites seek to tyrannize and then to bribe the proletariat to accept the virtual overlordship of Russian imperialism under the guise of the unity of the European continent in a new social order. So strong is the objective necessity for unification of the continent that even the bourgeoisie (for its own purposes) proposes internationalization of the Ruhr and the waterways of Europe; while Stalinism plays upon the obvious chaos and the deeply felt need for a unified Europe, now an organic part of the psychology of the European people.

Nowhere is this imperialist struggle so sharp and so crucial as in Germany, the heart of Europe where it appears as a battle between the unity of the working class movement (Stalinism) or the independence of the Social-Democracy (Anglo-American imperialism).

### The Socialist United States of Europe

Under these circumstances it is a matter of life and death for the Fourth International to oppose both these ruinous roads, and it can do so only by linking the struggle for national economic rehabilitation to the struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe.

A Socialist France in a Socialist United States of Europe  
A Socialist Poland in a Socialist United States of Europe  
A Socialist Germany in a Socialist United States of Europe

The Fourth International bases its policy unequivocally on the following: during the war it was necessary to hold before the proletariat the proletarian struggle for the overthrow of Hitlerite Germany so as to fortify the vanguard against subordination to the armed forces of Anglo-American imperialism. So today in the continuing crisis of capitalism, the Fourth International must pose the proletarian solution to the great social questions placed concretely before the masses. It is by this means that the proletariat in Europe and Eastern Asia can recognize in the propaganda of the Fourth International the subjective answer to its objective desires and revolutionary instincts for national freedom and a new social order. It is by this means that it can repulse the insidiousness of American and the brutality of Russian attempts to reduce Europe to an appendage of imperialism.

In Eastern Europe the proletariat faces the colossal task of overthrowing not the delegated but the direct military power of the Russian state. In its rear, it has the armed forces of Russia occupying Germany. Under these circumstances, the movement against Russian domination in the separate countries must therefore orient towards the unification of proletarian struggle in the directly oppressed states, including Germany. A mass revolutionary movement with a common program and an advanced social goal has the best possibility of shaking the discipline of the Russian armies and re-awakening in them the traditions of the October Revolution.

With this perspective, the proletariat is assisted in the carrying out of the daily struggles against the oppressing imperialist power. Without a perspective of international struggle, the advanced workers will be less fortified against Stalinist propaganda or the defeatism which will await intervention on the part of another imperialist power as the only means of ridding itself of the Russian domination, exploitation and plunder.

A similar situation in Eastern Asia, (Korea, Manchuria, etc.) poses similar tasks for the Fourth International.

## V

### World Socialism

#### The Class Consequences of Atomic Energy

Side by side with the objective movement toward the organization of production on a continental scale, the unloosing of atomic energy and the enormous social and political explosions that are concentrated in it, have turned the minds of the masses of the people in every country towards world government not as an ideal but as an imperative necessity for the salvation of humanity from total destruction or barbarism. Atomic energy and the perspective it unfolds has given a violent shock to national aspirations, chauvinism and patriotism. World socialism and the struggle for it can no longer remain in the archives of the Fourth International but must become an integral part of its propagandistic approach to the masses.

Even before the launching of the first atomic bomb the bourgeoisie had recognized the accumulated hostility of the masses to the deceptions and barbarism of the war and their distrust of bourgeois society. It was only after World War I that the bourgeoisie organized the League of Nations, carefully avoiding giving to the League any economic function. Long before the end of World War II, however, the bourgeoisie organized conferences at Atlantic City, Bretton Woods, Dumbarton Oaks, all aimed at giving the impression to the workers that a new economic structure was to be organized which would correct the ills of the old. More than that, the bourgeoisie organized at San Francisco the United Nations Conference designed once more to assure the masses of a world organization to prevent the possibility of a third world war and recompense humanity for its present sufferings. But the insolubility of the imperialist conflicts and the scepticism of the masses, both aspects of the death agony of capitalism, have turned all these efforts into propaganda not for the strengthening but for the weakening of capitalist society. Whereas after World War I it was possible to deceive the masses for a period, today their scepticism is reinforced by the incapacity of the imperialist bourgeoisie even to come to any reasonable agreement on the vital issues of the day. The bourgeoisie is being driven more and more to make the most extravagant statements even to the degree that it is necessary to have a world assembly directly elected by the people of the various nations (Bevin). In the period of the extreme sharpening of antagonisms and the decay of capitalism, these and similar state-

ments only stimulate the political distrust of the masses without leaving any sedative effect.

The entire planet is now driven to see itself objectively and subjectively as one unit. For the bourgeoisie this can mean only the intensified struggle for world domination under one single imperialism. For the proletarian vanguard the only answer can be the most vigorous propaganda for world socialism.

### The Fourth International and the Propaganda for World Socialism

The Fourth International recognizes that the drive to war by the bourgeoisie and the fear of war and devastation by the masses are today organic parts of contemporary society far more than after World War I. It recognizes that the explosive character of the world situation brings a World War far nearer than the previous twenty-five years interval. It therefore poses before the masses the only solution. To the world government of the petty-bourgeois radicals and the dishonest proposals of Bevin, it holds before the masses the idea of a world socialist federation. To the immediate continuing struggle of the imperialists for world power which now fills the mind of the masses everywhere, it poses the conception of the world wide struggle of the masses for social revolution. Only by recognizing the degree to which capitalism itself poses the most fundamental questions to the masses, can the Fourth International seize the opportunities presented to it and show itself to the masses not only as valiant fighters for immediate demands but as heralds of a new social order.

The rush of bourgeois society to an unmitigated barbarism, the helplessness of the bourgeoisie, the unexampled awareness, fear and disgust of the masses in every part of the world, these signs of the death of an old order and the birth of a new demand from the Fourth International on a world scale the iron determination, will to conquer and belief in victory which have always distinguished our great predecessors. It demands that today, inextricably linked to the masses in their day to day struggles, we counter the bourgeois helplessness by the boldest, the most vigorous, the most uncompromising posing of the socialist revolution in its greatest sweep and in its most far reaching ramifications as the only solution to the ills of society. Above all in Europe and Asia the very chaos of society enables us to pose the transitional demands in terms of the self-activity of the masses, as the most immediate, the most practical, the most realistic alternative to the burdens by which capitalism is crushing human society.

## VI

### Questions at Issue

The Fourth International impresses upon all its section and sympathizers the necessity of following the movements of the masses in every concrete situation with the greatest attention to national peculiarities and the specific stages of the class struggle at a given time. But in the great tradition of Bolshevism it declares that today more than ever it is only in the light of the

general character of our epoch that concrete situations can be examined, analyzed and acted upon.

The failure of the Fourth International to grow, the unspeakable treachery of the Stalinists and the Mensheviks who refuse to lead the proletariat towards the new social order which it so passionately desires, have created in our movement retrogressive currents which have brought confusion over fundamental strategy and tactics long accepted by revolutionary Marxists. While it is impossible and indeed it would be ridiculous to attempt to lay down a program of action for individual countries, it is necessary here to restate some of these principles of the Fourth International and to give examples of their concrete application.

### Democratic Demands and Social Revolution

The Fourth International, like the revolutionary movement at all times, raises the slogans of right of free press, right to organize, free elections, wherever these democratic liberties are denied or are in danger. In the Balkan countries and in Poland, where the totalitarian states are not firmly established and the whole situation is in flux, the Fourth International raises these slogans in terms of their realization by the independent mass actions of the workers. It would be an illusion to raise the slogan of free elections to be organized by the would-be totalitarian regime of Tito or to be supervised by the regime of British imperialism in Greece. The Fourth International does not exclude mass rejection of participation in elections where the elections are notoriously totalitarian plebescites even when the next immediate step may not be the seizure of power. Such rejection of fraudulent elections can become a valuable means of protest and mobilization of the masses. These slogans are tied always, whether in defensive or offensive actions, to the rejection of the existing governments and the call for a Constituent Assembly.

The Fourth International must at all costs avoid posing the question of democratic demands in such a way as to lead the masses to expect that parliamentary legality will be any guarantee of its rights nor any protection against reaction. To do so, particularly in critical periods as at present in Europe and Asia, flies in the face of the whole experience of the working class movement and of the most fundamental tenets of Bolshevism. The bourgeoisie, the Stalinists and the Social-Democrats by encouraging illusions about parliamentarism and legality, aim as always, at suppressing the instinctive tendency of the masses to take matters into their own hands. The Fourth International must recognize that for the masses in general and in its own defence (against the bourgeoisie, the Stalinists, and Social-Democrats) it must, above all in this period expose the fraud, the hypocrisy and treachery of confidence in bourgeois parliamentarism and the necessity of the proletariat and the revolutionary organizations defending themselves by mass organization and class strength.

### The Constituent Assembly and the Social Revolution

The Fourth International can call at any period for a Consti-

tuent Assembly, recognising that in the shattered countries, the slogan becomes in the mind of the masses a medium for the construction of a new social order and not for the reconstruction of bourgeois society. The bourgeoisie and its agents, however, use the slogan in order to once again gild the chains of the bourgeois parliamentary regime. The Fourth International therefore separates itself from the counter-revolution by raising the slogan of a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly. It proposes that this assembly destroy capitalist society by expropriating the bourgeoisie. It proposes that the Constituent Assembly abolish the bourgeois state, the bourgeois bureaucracy and the bourgeois army and substitute a workers' militia of the whole people, workers committees, peasant committees, consumers committees, etc. It proposes that this assembly organize the planning of the economy by qualified representatives of political and social organizations, democratically elected. It proposes that all planning be controlled by the workers themselves in the process of production.

### The Permanent Revolution in Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries

The high stage of capitalist development in the world today has already imposed upon the ruling classes of India and China not only concrete steps but grandiose plans for the statification of production as an indispensable stage in the development of the economy. This universal trend is already expressing itself in the most backward countries. (Korea, Nigeria, West Indies, etc.) To its traditional propaganda and agitation in the colonial countries for the permanent revolution (Soviets, agrarian revolution and Constituent Assembly), the Fourth International adds the slogan of nationalization of the means of production under the control of the working class.

### Democratic Republic and the Liquidation of Monarchies

Under no circumstances does the Fourth International raise the slogan of any bourgeois constitution, however democratic, for countries like France, Italy or Belgium. It continues its traditional practice of using these institutions as a tribunal for the denunciation of the hypocrisy, fraud, corruption of bourgeois parliamentarism in any shape or form. It mercilessly attacks any Marxist tendency which advocates for these countries any constitution which is not based upon the Soviet Power.

The Fourth International is in the vanguard of any struggle for the liquidation of reactionary institutions like the monarchy, but it repudiates the conception that its struggle against the monarchy demands its advocacy of any democratic republic or any kind of bourgeois constitution. Particularly in Italy and Belgium it proposes concrete steps such as the immediate arrest of all members of the royal family and their close supporters, the confiscation of all their property, the abrogation of all laws, customs and constitutional forms in which the authority of the monarchy is either directly or indirectly organized. While maintaining its own banner of the Workers Republic, it proposes a United Front for struggle against the monarchy with those proletarian organizations which advocate the democratic republic. It defends the bourgeois

democratic regime by similar concrete actions against attacks by monarchial or fascistic groups. But such concrete actions are under no circumstances to be accompanied by advocacy of any democratic republic.

The Fourth International does not at all exclude in advance participation in any body called together by the masses for the consideration of the future course of the state, e.g. recall of the members of a former parliament. However, in such an organization, today more than ever, it brings before the masses its own proposals to substitute proletarian forms, organizations, methods and actions for the rotting and discredited structure of bourgeois democracy.

#### National Liberation, Reunification of Germany, Etc.

The Fourth International in Germany, like the revolutionary movement at all times in its history, takes the lead in the struggle for the withdrawal of the occupying troops, for freedom of press, for right to organize and the other concrete demands of the German people. The Fourth International, however, repudiates the conception that because of the material ruin in Germany, the disorganization of production, the social and political disorganization of the proletariat, the domination of foreign imperialism, and the partition of Germany, that on account of these, Germany has therefore been hurled back to any stage which places before the German people the struggle for the bourgeois-democratic states as an arena for the struggle for socialism. Exactly the opposite is the case.

The course of the war, which has brought these difficulties upon the German nation, has also destroyed the power of the German bourgeoisie. Thus, the German proletariat is forced point-blank to reorganize itself not to reconstruct bourgeois democracy but to lead the nation. Whereas in the United States, the comparative stability of the traditional bourgeois society does not pose in all their nakedness the fundamental problems of bourgeois society to the American proletariat, precisely the breakdown of bourgeois society in Germany makes the German proletariat from the first moment of its resurgence see all its struggles for its immediate demands in relation to the fundamental problem of state power, posed inescapably precisely because of the alien domination and the ruin of the bourgeoisie. The Fourth International stands uncompromisingly upon the position that the very ruin of Germany imposes upon the German nation one of two roads, orientation toward the ruling classes of Russian and Anglo-American imperialism, or orientation toward the European and world proletariat. The Fourth International points out that the German bourgeoisie, in order to regain some pitiful remnants of its former power, will strive to orient it in the imperialist direction. The Fourth International, on the other hand, from the very beginning poses before the German people the unification of Germany under the leadership of the German proletariat in a Socialist United States of Europe. This theoretical postulate is amply demonstrated by such political life as exists in Germany today. The occupying powers battle to control the proletarian organizations of Germany, the only social base by which they can pretend to rule Germany with



some pretence of harmony with the people. Marxists will note that the very ruin of bourgeois Germany has strengthened the relation of the German proletariat to all other classes in Germany. It is this which, among other reasons, necessitates domination of Germany by foreign imperialism and it is this on which the Fourth International must base all policy including the struggle against alien domination.

### The Russian Proletariat

The Fourth International does not abandon a revolutionary perspective for the Russian proletariat. It is confident that the contradictions of the productive and social relations in Russia must inevitably drive the Russian proletariat to the road of social revolution. The Fourth International seeks to mobilize the Russian proletariat against the bureaucracy, by slogans for the restoration of the Soviets, etc. At the present time, however, it devotes itself mainly to determined propaganda among the Russian troops abroad. Particularly it stimulates the revolutionary proletariat in the occupied countries to appeal to the Russian armies in the name of the social revolution and the traditions of the October Revolution.

## VII

### The Second and the Third Internationals

#### The Second International and World War II

Between 1917 and 1939 imperialism, by means of super-profits, was able to maintain the labor aristocracy which formed its main social support. In the view of Lenin, it was by this caste alone that imperialism was able to bar the road to socialist revolution. Today the basis of super-profits on which it rested is gone - never to return. For this reason, whatever incidental influence it may have in the course of politics, its role in Europe as the main bulwark of bourgeois society against the revolutionary proletariat is finished. It has no perspective, except feverish maneuvering between the bankrupt bourgeoisie on the one hand and the highly organized Stalinists, on the other. Like every other non-revolutionary political grouping in the world today, it finds itself compelled to choose between the United States on the one hand and Stalinist Russia on the other. In Western Europe, it is ready to sell out the national interests to the United States for protection against both the revolutionary proletariat and the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. In Eastern Europe, it wavers between capitulation to Stalinist imperialism and frantic appeals for Anglo-American support for free elections, and democracy. Nowhere on the continent of Europe can it play an independent role. In the social crisis which now grips Britain, it is only owing to the weakness of the British Stalinists and of the Fourth International that the British Social Democracy maintains for the moment its undisputed hold on the allegiance of the British proletariat.

#### The Counter-Revolutionary Role of the Third International

If the Second International saved capitalism in the period

following World War I, it is infinitely more true to say that the Third International saved capitalism in the period following World War II. The political weakness of the Social Democracy placed upon Stalinism the role of chief political bulwark of imperialism against the socialist revolution. In their road from bourgeois society to soviet power, the revolutionary proletariat of Europe and the great millions of revolting Orientals (in all Eastern Asia, Burma and the Philippine Islands) have mistaken the reactionary party of Stalin for the revolutionary party of Lenin and Trotsky.

It is therefore a major task of the Fourth International to examine carefully and define its policy in regard to Stalinism.

The key to Stalinism as a political force is the contradiction in which it finds itself between the counter-revolutionary ruling class of Russia, on the one hand, and the revolutionary masses on the other.

The ideology of Stalinism is fundamentally bourgeois.

Stalinism, outside of Russia, serves always the interests of the Russian bourgeoisie, and for that reason also it is the mortal enemy of the revolutionary masses in their road to soviet power. Thus it is, always has been and always will be the agent of capital in the capital-labor relation. It is typically bourgeois in that it nowhere can dare to submit itself to the creative strength of the self-mobilized masses. For this reason, whatever power Stalinism may hold anywhere, it cannot under any circumstances solve one basic contradiction of the capitalist mode of production.

Like all organizations which live in fear of the revolutionary power of the proletariat, Stalinism outside of Russia can willingly take drastic economic and political steps towards the consolidation of power only as long as it is assured of the support of Stalinist Russia to oppose the revolutionary proletariat and/or give it protection against rival bourgeois powers. It will collaborate with the native bourgeoisie, or sometimes oppose it when it is a rival to the Russian bourgeoisie. But it never opposes any bourgeoisie to the extent of initiating and preparing proletarian seizure of power (e.g. in Germany during World War II).

#### Stalinism and the Revolutionary Masses

In the Western European countries and Asia, the growth of the Communist Parties in no way expresses the triumph of bureaucratic collectivism over capitalism. Such a conception can only disorient the party and the proletariat as to the nature of the epoch and the tasks which face it. The turn of the masses to the Stalinists expresses the extraordinary sharpness of the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The basis of revolutionary policy in general and the attitude toward the Stalinists in particular must be the recognition that the proletariat, in turning to the Stalinists demonstrates its readiness for the most drastic solutions to the chaos and agony which engulf Europe today.

In an advanced country like France or Italy, Stalinism can

reach the stage of threatening the bourgeoisie only through the revolutionary development of the masses. The Stalinists can only defeat the bourgeoisie by means of the revolutionary proletariat. The defeat of the bourgeoisie would leave the Stalinists face to face with the revolutionary proletariat, without any class base of their own. The Stalinists can defeat the proletariat only with the assistance of the bourgeoisie and only in a desperate civil war.

For these reasons, not only historically but concretely, the apparent strength of Stalinism contains the elements of its greatest weakness. In these countries today it has the opportunity of assuming power only under conditions in which it will face its mortal enemy, the developing power of the masses. Every serious step it takes against the bourgeoisie only helps to break the influence of bourgeois ideology upon the workers and creates the possibilities of their realizing their own enormous social power. The presence of Russian imperialist troops, as has been shown in Eastern Europe, turns the Stalinists into an anti-national party and mobilizes against them the growing antagonism of the proletariat and the great masses of the people.

It is in the clear understanding of this contradiction that the Fourth International has its great opportunity of developing itself. It bases itself upon the revolutionary sentiments of the masses who must increasingly find themselves in irreconcilable contradiction with counter-revolutionary Stalinism. But in order to do this, the Fourth International must base its strategic line upon the strength of the masses, and not on the strength of Stalinism. The Stalinists do not constitute a social class. They seek to profit by the struggle of the fundamental classes of modern society, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Except where the Stalinists hold state power with the help of the Red Army, the Stalinist party is a monolithic, not a totalitarian party. Membership in the Stalinist party is voluntary. The party holds no power of life and death over its membership. It cannot prevent secession and the formation of other parties.

To call the Stalinists in Western Europe a totalitarian party is to sow irretrievable confusion in the minds of the revolutionary vanguard and the proletariat. It leads to confusing the fascist party based on the petty-bourgeoisie with the Stalinist party with its mass base of the revolutionary proletariat.

To call the Stalinist party totalitarian is to capitulate to the conception that the masses of the workers in France and Italy are as much subordinated to the Stalinist leaders as are the workers of Russia to Stalin or the workers of Germany were to Hitler.

To call the Stalinists totalitarian carries the implication that the workers following the Stalinist parties in Western Europe are not the dynamic creative force of modern society, capable of learning from their own experience but are the docile tools of Stalinist reaction. To believe that the Stalinist accession to complete state power in an advanced country like France or Italy means the totalitarianization of the state is to express in its crudest form the idea that Stalinism is not the result of the at-

tempt to build socialism in a single backward country but is an inevitable stage following the development of capitalism. All these conceptions lead straight to demoralization and abstentionism in the ranks of the revolutionary party.

### Stalinism and the United Front

With the above being borne in mind, it is necessary for the Fourth International to reaffirm unequivocally and with the utmost firmness that both the Social-Democratic parties and the Stalinist parties are working class parties. Neither of them is a working class party because of the character and aims of the bureaucracies which control them. They are working class parties because their program and practical activity appeal to the working class on the basis of the class struggle against the capitalist class for the socialist society. Both these parties have shamefully deceived workers and mercilessly suppressed revolutionary elements. The Stalinists, for historical reasons, have been able and forced to carry these practices to an unexampled height of treachery. But the revolutionary party has traditionally based its relation to the masses in the Social-Democratic parties on the contradiction between the desires of the workers striving to release themselves from capitalist society and the illusions sown among them by the social-democracy. Similarly, the revolutionary party must base its relation to the masses in the Stalinist party upon their desire to release themselves from capitalist society despite the illusion sown among them by Stalinism as the direct agents of capital in the ranks of labor.

The revolutionary party, therefore, basing itself on the perspective of a struggle for power by the proletariat, exposes the treacherous character of the Social-Democratic and Stalinist parties and organizations by calling upon them, wherever they have the support of the masses of the workers, to break with the bourgeoisie, to take the power into their own hands. In following out this policy, the Fourth International, in accordance with the practice and traditions of Bolshevism, exposes with redoubled energy the theoretical falsities and criminal practices of the Stalinists, both inside Stalinist Russia and in the world at large.

The proletariat cannot be saved from the dangers of Stalinism by reliance upon the bankrupt Social-Democracy, but only by its own power for revolutionary actions. The Fourth International, must, therefore, raise the slogan of the Communist Party to power even where there is no Social-Democracy (China, Greece) and the Stalinists as the only working class party have the support of the broad masses against the bourgeoisie.

In the crisis of society those many-millioned masses who today follow the Stalinists will learn through their own experiences of the treachery of Stalinism. As they become disillusioned with the Stalinists, they will turn back to the Social-Democracy (or in the case of some of the petty-bourgeoisie to Fascism) only to the degree that the Fourth International fails to link itself to the immediate demands of the masses while at the same time holding before them revolutionary perspectives corresponding to their most profound desires.

It is on the tactical slogan of critical support of or a United Front with the Stalinists that the Fourth International all over the world will demonstrate its understanding of the revolutionary yearnings and power of the proletariat. This question will in many instances determine whether the forces of the Fourth International will doom themselves to sectarian isolation from the mass movement or whether they will be able to use not only the struggles of the masses out the living conflicts between political parties to demonstrate their claims for leadership.

Finally the slogan of raising the Stalinists to power can only be posed in the traditional sense in which Lenin and Trotsky posed the question of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries to power, i.e. as transitional to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Any political organization which refuses absolutely to raise the slogan of the Stalinists to power, or raises the slogan with illusory safeguards (e.g. the Social-Democracy in France) against the danger of thereby facilitating a bureaucratic collectivist social order, makes it impossible for the party and the vanguard of the proletariat to reap the fruits of this slogan and this experience.

### VIII

#### The Fourth International

#### The Fourth International Since the Death of Trotsky

The outstanding fact about the Fourth International is that it has failed to break the hold upon the masses of the Second and particularly, the Third Internationals. The main reason for this was not its program or platform but the association in the minds of the masses, of the Third International with revolution, the dynamic successes and apparent solidity of the Russian state and the Stalinist work in the resistance movements. Today the Fourth International remains essentially what it was at the beginning of the war, a small propaganda sect.

The years of preparation, however, have not been empty of all results. During the war the Fourth International maintained its principles of uncompromising resistance to all aspects of the imperialist war. The European sections, in particular the French and Belgian, were in the forefront of the class struggle against the Nazi regime and the native bourgeoisie. They firmly maintained both theoretical and practical solidarity with the German troops.

The Workers Party in the United States confounded the baseless and slanderous predictions of the Socialist Workers Party that their differences which led to the 1940 split represented for the WP the road back to social patriotism and capitulation to the bourgeoisie. The Workers Party was the only political party in the United States which issued a manifesto against the imperialist war when the United States entered it in 1941.

#### Historical Retrogression

The defeats of the proletariat and the rise of totalitarianism in Europe have had deep repercussions within the ranks of the

Fourth International. The defeat of France and the threat of Hitlerian domination of Europe produced from the German section (IKD) the theory of historical retrogression. For the IKD the decay of bourgeois society is more disastrous for the proletariat than for the bourgeoisie. To be historically consistent and to justify their theories, they have been forced to deny the very existence of the labor movement (e.g. in France 1945) and to introduce an intolerable confusion between the concept of the labor movement and the concept of the revolutionary vanguard party. They claim that the proletariat has lost "the characteristics of its rise and its formation", and has been hurled back to the conditions of its birth. They write away forty years of the most intense revolutionary struggles in human history and stultify the analysis of these years by Lenin, by the Fourth International and by Trotsky. Not basing themselves upon the opportunities presented to the workers by the breakdown of bourgeois society, they substitute, for the socialist revolution, conceptions of a "democratic-political revolution" for national freedom, thus confining the ideas and movement of the masses within the limitations of the bourgeois regime. By substituting the distinction into means of production and means of destruction for the traditional formulas of Marxism, they have played into the hands of petty-bourgeois moralists of all sorts and obscured the fundamental fact that means of destruction are in reality the basic means of production misused by capitalism. They have vilified the activity of the Fourth International during the war, claiming that its internationalism did not exist, and have thus given comfort to our enemies.

The Fourth International in the United States split in 1940 under the impact of the Nazi-Soviet pact upon Trotsky's indefensible position on Russia. But the threat of totalitarian domination in Europe also brought out retrogressionist ideas in the Workers Party leadership. Instead of the theoretical dogmatism of the Germans, the Workers Party leadership maintains a vacillating empiricism, which is dominated, however by retrogressionist conclusions and retrogressionist politics. It correctly urged participation in the resistance movements. But instead of posing the problem of workers power as the task of the proletarian insurrection against Hitlerism, it posed as the fundamental task of the day the revival and reconstruction of the labor movement. For the theoretical proof of the degeneration of the masses as a result of capital accumulation (IKD), the Workers Party majority substitutes the exhaustion of the masses and their consequent incapacity for revolutionary struggle. By supplementary resolutions, contradictory articles, long periods of silence and tacit support of the militant retrogressive theories of the Germans, the Workers Party leadership has been unable to clarify important revolutionary crises as they presented themselves or even afterwards. It has not been able to clarify whether there was a national or a civil war in Greece or the meaning of the dual power in France or in Northern Italy. It has vacillated between declaring that the European revolution has begun and that the center of revolutionary action for the world revolution has moved from Europe to the United States.

It now governs itself upon the theory that there can be no revolutionary situation except where there is actually in existence

a mass revolutionary party, a theory which is in contradiction to the whole theory and practice of Bolshevism. Governed by the idea of the retrogression of the masses, it raises the slogans of the most democratic constitution for France and gives tacit support to the slogan of the democratic republic for advanced countries in Europe.

### The Fourth International and the World Revolution

Neither the threat of Nazi nor Stalinist domination of Europe shook the majority of the sections of the Fourth International from the correct strategic perspective of proletarian revolution in Europe. The International, however, led by the SWP took an opportunist position on the "defense" of China during the imperialist war. Far worse however was the sectarian refusal to recognize the significance of the resistance movements. Thus the European parties deprived themselves of valuable opportunities for increasing the strength and the prestige of the Fourth International both at home and abroad.

However, in its statement of January 1946 on this question, the European Executive Committee of the Fourth International has attacked both the sectarianism of the Cannonites which refused to enter the national liberation movement and the opportunism of the IKD retrogressionists and the majority of the Workers Party which saw these movements as devoid of social revolutionary content because the proletariat had been hurled back to the circumstances of its birth. The leadership of the Fourth International has adopted the position that the demand for self-determination of all nations belongs on the revolutionary internationalists program but that it is inseparable from the struggle against capitalism and for the Socialist United States of Europe. Thereby, it has adopted the position held consistently by the minority in the Workers Party since 1943.

Just as the threat of Hitlerian domination of Europe disoriented the IKD toward the theory of historical retrogression, so the threat of Stalinist domination of Europe produced in the Socialist Workers Party a minority which, while bitterly opposing the actual theory of retrogression, has shown powerful tendencies to retrogressive political conclusions. This tendency was reinforced by the sectarian policy of the Fourth International in Europe and the Socialist Workers Party majority toward the national liberation movement.

Only the minority in the Workers Party both rejected uncompromisingly the whole theory of retrogression and recognized the tactical importance of the national liberation movements, without in any way abandoning or equivocating on the strategic perspective of proletarian revolution created by the class relations in Europe and the breakdown of the bourgeois regime.

The failure of the German proletariat to revolt, the failure of the proletariat anywhere to seize the power, have unloosed among the retrogressionists of all shades, condemnation of those who based their policy on the perspective of revolutions which failed to come. The Fourth International rejects all such criti-

cisms as they have had to be rejected repeatedly in the history of our movement. The recognition that revolutionary situations may fail to produce not only a successful but any revolution at all has always been clearly understood by Marxists. But Marxism has always maintained an irreconcilable antagonism against those who point to the end results of a specific revolutionary crisis in order to denounce the revolutionary policy advocated before or during the crisis itself. The Third International under Lenin and Trotsky dealt mercilessly with this type of criticism. And particularly in the present situation is it to be rejected, for otherwise the road is left open to treating Trotsky's abstract speculation of a possible bureaucratic collectivist social order as concrete reality. From this will flow inevitably currents of thought that the world revolution has failed to come, of the impotence of the proletariat, exaggerated conclusions as to the role of the party in relation to the socialist consciousness of the masses and pessimism and defeatism of all kinds.

### The Fourth International and the Russian Question

Central to the development of the Fourth International is the position of Trotsky on the Russian Question. This position was held by the majority of the International all through the war. It resulted in the shocking misleadership of the working class as to the motives and objective results of Stalinist intervention in Europe. The climax came when the Fourth International sowed the most criminal illusions in the minds of the masses in Eastern Europe at the approach of the Red Army. This policy flows neither from the sterility nor the confusion of the Fourth International, in Europe or in America, but is the direct and inescapable result of the attempt to apply an untenable political line based upon the theories of Trotsky.

Today, when the imperialist aims of Stalinist Russia are patent to the whole world, the Fourth International continues to preach and base policy upon the theory that Stalinist Russia is a degenerated workers state to be defended by the working class. In an effort to defend its indefensible stand that the Stalinist bureaucracy could not survive the rigors of war, the Socialist Workers Party has been driven to the ridiculous position that the imperialist war is not yet at an end. For the same reasons, it disorients the working class and confuses its own position with that of the Stalinists by emphasizing that the expansion of Soviet Russia is due to the necessities of self-defense. By this means, it can do nothing else but strengthen Stalinism in Russia, weaken the critical elements in the Stalinist and other working class parties, handicap itself in its attacks upon Stalinism, grievously disorient the concept of a workers state and associate the Marxist doctrine with the defense of totalitarianism. The persistence in this indefensible doctrine has undermined and will continue to undermine the political and organizational strength of the Fourth International.

By its stand against the defense of Russia in the imperialist war, the Workers Party distinguished itself as the only party in the Fourth International which clearly and consistently warned the masses well in advance against the dangers of Stalinism and the Red Army.



However, despite the correctness of this position, the Workers Party has been unable to win adherents in the Fourth International because among other historical reasons, it has had no theoretically sound basis for its defeatist position and to this day is unable to find one. In October, 1941, it proclaimed Russia to be a bureaucratic collectivist state, a part of the collectivist epoch of human society. It left open the possibility of a defensist position on Russia in the event that Russia was attacked by capitalism. When Hitler attacked Russia, the Workers Party continued its defeatist policy on the ground that Russia was a subordinate partner of American and British imperialism. This empiricism was soon left without a base by the development of events which demonstrated that Stalinist Russia was playing no subordinate role.

Today, the Workers Party wavers between the conceptions that the Russian state is equally reactionary with capitalism, a slave state worse than democratic capitalism, and the conception that Russia is a part of the collectivist epoch of human society. It now experiments with the idea of a bureaucratic collectivist epoch for the whole world which expresses itself most clearly in the political attitude to the Stalinist parties in Europe and Asia.

The minority in the Workers Party has taken the position that Russia is a capitalist state subjected to the fundamental contradictions of capitalist production. It has always based its defeatist policy for Russia upon the economic structure of the Russian state.

International Conference

In the light of the above, the WP proposes to the Fourth International -

That an international conference be immediately prepared, whose main tasks would be:

- a) The unification of all Fourth International groups which stand on the principles of the Fourth International.
- b) A re-examination of the Russian Question.
- c) A reaffirmation of the Marxian analysis of our epoch as a conflict between proletarian power and the degeneration of society into barbarism.

J. R. Johnson