

Bulletin

OF THE WORKERS PARTY

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THE CRISIS OF SOCIALISM AND HOW TO OVERCOME IT

Introduction

(in the form of a letter to the Workers Party
in the United States of America)

Dear Friends:

A few days ago we received the tragic-comic news that the pre-conference of the Fourth International "condemned" in a resolution the "revisionist" ideas of the I.K.D. The resolution with its equivocal formulations is calculated to provide those who inspired it, in case of need, with a pretext for expelling the I.K.D. from the Fourth. However, this circumstance merits our interest only in so far as with it the lowest point of development has been reached. For, as far as the conference is concerned, we were not even informed, not asked for our opinion, and all resolutions were passed without our participation and consultation. On the basis of this procedure (the death sentence is pronounced without even giving the "defendant" a hearing) the final paragraph of the resolution proclaims:

"It (the conference) invites the leadership and the members of the I.K.D. still abroad to carry out the decisions of the Pre-Conference, to submit to the discipline(!) of the new IEC and IS, and to prepare as rapidly as possible for their return to Germany, in accordance with the instructions and directives of the International."

Thus the SWP leadership with the aid of its international allies achieved a great victory, naturally a "victory" which does not concern us and whose consequences we may leave without worry to the people involved. In any case, nothing has changed and the International remains a sorry spectacle. We shall treat the new IEC and IS with "discipline", resolutions, instructions, directives, etc. as non-existing entities. In other words; The crisis of scientific socialism which was to be overcome by the Fourth has taken on the form of the definite crisis of the Fourth International itself. The question which alone matters now, is this:

How is the overcoming of the crisis of socialism at all conceivable and practically feasible?

In asking the Workers Party to place this question on the agenda of its coming convention as the most important item, we should like to establish and explain our proposal.

We do not know as yet the resolutions which this odd conference has adopted concerning the Workers Party, the minority of the Socialist Workers Party, etc. But it is clear that the differences are merely becoming more pronounced and that they no longer leave any room for illusions. What matters now is to raise at last the long-standing antagonism to a principled level and to recognize it

for what it is: the decisive antagonism between Marxism-Bolshevism and petty-bourgeois utopianism. The convention of the Workers Party must therefore direct its efforts toward taking a principled position throughout without regard to the difficulties within its own party (Johnson faction) and without regard to the vacillations of sympathizing minorities.

To pose the question in its above form is to recognize that the Workers Party has by no means as yet understood the basis of the crisis of socialism (and therewith that of the Fourth). But it has come very close to the solution of the problem because its development was independent of the official Fourth. The prerequisites for achieving the necessary clarification are present in it as in no other organization. It owes these prerequisites mainly to its willingness to discuss, to its interest in theory and its treatment of the national question. (This latter question required political instinct. It was an outstanding illustrative case around which all differences necessarily still group themselves.)

But in spite of the fact that the Workers Party has raised itself high above the level of the rest of the Fourth and therewith has accomplished a considerable achievement, it is nevertheless tainted by the crisis of the Fourth. This is felt deeply (as far as one may judge from published documents and information) in its own ranks. So is demonstrated in a generalized form that the crisis of socialism has deep-rooted causes, the cognition and overcoming of which is a pre-condition for all further development.

If one looks at the separate sections of the Fourth one finds, to be sure, crises of a varied nature. The political and theoretical sterility of the SWP, the French majority, etc. reflects the disintegration and decline of the movement. The unusual many-sided and lively discussions in the WP preview the coming clarification. Rightfully the question is posed why even with a second world war and violent social crises a struggle of nearly twenty years (beginning with the founding of the Left Opposition) has produced no results at all. One is faced, on the contrary, with the disconsolate incompetence of the Fourth. The next question then is why the six years of the independent existence of the WP, too, with all its efforts, have remained without success. The fact that this question is discussed openly and without inhibitions is a good omen of great importance. For the first time, it seems, a relatively large organization (on the whole capable of work) is led to the problem which decides our fate, not because of specific shortcomings but precisely because of specific qualities and virtues. A series of historical circumstances has placed the WP in a situation of unusually great responsibility. If it holds firmly to its qualities and assumes its responsibilities courageously then it is destined to lead socialism out of a crisis which is for its part nothing else than the crisis of all humanity. In the next period the WP must not look forward or backward, left or right. Rather it must concentrate all forces on the task itself and approach the given problem unprejudiced and intrepidly. Obstacles exist only to be overcome. In this sense we welcome the crisis in the WP and place the greatest hope in its convention.

Among other things the Fourth was also founded on the principle to tell the truth and nothing but the truth to the workers and the suffering masses. This lofty principle has been replaced by bureaucratic self-righteousness and dishonesty. Therein consists that part of the contemporary tragedy for which the official Fourth is fully responsible. But going beyond this, the question becomes more complicated and ends after closer investigation with the realization that the degeneration of the Fourth in political respects was already anticipated in its general concept. The basic evil from which the Fourth suffers is a standing evil of the whole political labor movement since the beginning of the century (the Bolshevik party under Lenin is excepted). So far as this basic evil is concerned it was thus impossible for the Fourth even with the best intentions to speak the truth about a point which it had not even recognized. Even the genius Trotsky did not notice (because, we believe, he was fascinated by the Russian problem) that in political and organizational respects the concept of the Fourth represented less Bolshevism than the submission to the spontaneous or "pure" labor movement. The eclecticism which resulted from this impeded the Fourth right from the beginning. After the death of Trotsky, whose constantly correcting direction was now missing, it became the sole ruling characteristic. And in this consists the other, so to speak fatalistic part of the tragedy for which the principle is valid: As long as the decisive error has not been brought to consciousness and its correction has not been demanded, we cannot talk of "guilt". It will only underscore the acuteness of the objective antagonism between ourselves and the official Fourth if we plead "not guilty" for all concerned in respect to the deeper causes of the crisis. Polemic is then applicable only to questions concerning the responsibility for faults within the Fourth International, but the new responsibility arises only where the conditions for a new advance have matured.

As stated before, we consider these conditions to be present in the WP and we are convinced that it will not evade its responsibility. All that is involved for the time being is the decision to recognize the given problem and to make it the center or attention. The problem is no less and no more than what we have called on various occasions the radical break of the Fourth with its past. This break, however, demands a complete change of the whole work in all fields (party, organization and press). In no case can it be achieved overnight within the framework of a convention. But the convention can adopt a definite line, vote the necessary resolutions, set up a commission for further deliberation and charge the responsible bodies with the gradual execution of the reform. If the convention arrives at a decision in principle it will also find the strength to overcome the considerable intellectual and practical difficulties which will result from the new point of view and the necessary change. At the same time it will have gained the only means with which the harmful influence of the SWP in America can be liquidated. It literally depends upon the decision and will of the WP whether or not the SWP shall be removed as an impeding factor.

For a better understanding of the whole problem we append the "Theses for the Construction of the Fourth International" which were officially adopted by the I.K.D. in August 1937. It is easy to see that the practical political line of the Theses is in fundamental contradiction to the line hitherto followed by the Fourth. Therefore an attentive reader might ask:

If the IKD for a long time believed that it had found "the root of the evil" and had been previously ignored in its endeavors --should it then not hold the whole Fourth responsible for the "deeper causes" of its decline? Is it not a contradiction to speak of a "fatalistic part" of our tragedy when it can be shown that attempts were made a long time ago to "raise the problem into the field of consciousness" and to bring about a decision?

In answer it should be said that circumstances were against us and that until today we did not have an opportunity even to raise the question in the International. It has been very difficult for us to penetrate the international press with our "strange" views and in fact we were sabotaged from all sides. To have changed these conditions at all would have required a far greater authority than we possessed. As an historical materialist one must also consider that even the "ideal" vanguard learns very slowly in most cases, only under the pressure of external events and through its own experience. At times it does not learn at all, it ossifies and becomes an obstacle. Moreover, we are all the products of specific conditions: the problems which forced themselves more or less quickly upon the IKD (because of the total collapse of the German labor movement) are felt in America, for example, only today (after the complete disillusionment brought on by the end of the second World War). In any case, we have found political solidarity and support only in the WP (after exhausting all attempts with the degenerating Fourth). Therefore, in using the opportunity offered by your convention we should like to thank you for the aid extended to us. We only regret that we are not able to participate actively in your work and your deliberations. But our most sincere wishes are with you, and we hope with confidence that you will succeed in the "great break-through" which must become the turning-point in the so-tragic history of the labor movement.

Fraternally:

AK of the I.K.D.

London, April 5, 1946

THE CONQUEST OF THE CRISIS OF SOCIALISM THROUGH BOLSHEVIK POLITICS

1. A Short survey

The "Communist Manifesto" will celebrate its hundredth birthday in the coming year. Since its appearance, millions of prophecies, recipes, instructions, declarations, speeches, polemics, articles, pamphlets, books, newspapers, periodicals, handbills, demonstrations, strikes, etc. have been poured over the plagued

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working class, the petty bourgeoisie, the peasants, the intellectuals, the democrats and each and every section of society, Big and small parties, mass movements and sects have tried to free the working class from the yoke of capitalist domination in the name of the new Gospel. Can there be anyone who is capable of denying or even minimizing the tremendous efforts, the gigantic sacrifices, the willingness to fight, the elemental and organized striving of the masses toward their liberation, considering the hundred years which have just passed?

No! The masses have proved themselves gloriously, and they have justified completely the expectations which were placed upon them. To this hour they have shown at all opportunities their revolutionary will, and their willingness to fight, in many instances even without any leadership or under a leadership which was accidental. The hundred years of the "Communist Manifesto" are a hundred years of heroic struggles on the part of the masses which in the overwhelming majority of instances surpassed in courage, initiative, revolutionary elan, and instinctive certainty of goal even their most radical leaders. Not the masses—but the revolutionary leaders in all countries, have failed absolutely, completely, and in every field. We must thank these leaders alone if one hundred fateful years end with this result:

So many battles, so many defeats! And here the degenerated Russian Revolution also passes into history as a defeat at last.

For it is the tragic fate of the working class, with all its revolutionary characteristics, and its elementary urge toward Socialism, that it cannot achieve a clear political or socialist consciousness of itself, and that it is tied for life or death to a consciously striving leadership in the form of a revolutionary Marxist party. Just because of this, the crisis of Socialism does not express itself as a crisis of the movement of the masses, but as a crisis of consciousness or of the leadership. Let us state this openly and distinctly: the leadership has squandered the revolutionary capital of the mass movement in a catastrophic manner and it is just ready to bring about the final catastrophe. Because of this, the crisis of socialism (in the orbit which begins with its scientific founding, continuing with the development of the socialist revolutionary parties to the Russian Revolution, and returning from there to the sad remainder of those who are still working for the revolution today) is nothing else than the crisis of the Fourth International.

We now face the following alternative: Either the present failure has definite and scientifically perceptible causes—or socialism as a science must be abandoned. Another approach is no longer possible and would be a simple deception or childishness.

I. We gladly leave it to J. R. Johnson to regard the indicated development, not as an enormous historical retrogression, but to see in it the most continuous "progress". In any case Trotsky clearly emphasized the historical retrogression which is presented by the decline of the Russian Revolution and the end of the Third International, and he based himself firmly upon this.

The Fourth officially marches under the motto: Speak out what is! In a Marxist organization, however, this device cannot become practically effective without the presumptive complement: Know thyself!

It is therefore, of the most extreme importance to settle our own accounts, to eradicate the last illusions and to state that the failure of the Fourth is, in the present stage, its bankruptcy.

In order to avoid misunderstandings right from the beginning and to show that this is not a question of subjective judgements and arbitrary assertions, we also include ourselves in this bankruptcy completely and without reservation.

Indeed, of what value could it be to try to exclude any section from the general verdict by pointing to one or the other quality. Every section has "certain" qualities just as it harbors certain hopeless individuals who are ideologically as well as politically degenerated. However we are concerned here only with the simple fact that relatively as well as absolutely seen not one section has been adequate to its task and fulfilled in most cases (the war question, for example) even the most elementary duties.² Therefore the Fourth deserves one of Lenin's strongest epithets.

The history of a movement is always the critique of the movement. Why then, deny what leaders as well as followers, the peoples and the governments (in their own way) know, and of which they are more convinced the more they resist it outwardly? Does anyone actually believe that he can inspire confidence in his fellow man when he dupes himself and others with pretty phrases and when he pretends a sorry wreck to be a seaworthy vessel, which has only some insignificant defects? Does he still expect the masses to fall for some common petty frauds? Does not this procedure prove the old rule that those who worship the masses and always have them on their lips, are just the ones who have the most contempt for them?

Don't be fooled! The world has seen that the little ship of the Fourth has stranded badly at every occasion and it is not going to give up its indifference towards us until we have successfully withstood a few trial runs in a more solid vessel. Until such time the unfailing instinct of the masses, which to be sure, we need "so very" badly, will provoke a negative attitude. The masses will retain an absolutely indifferent and even hostile

² Again to avoid misunderstanding: We speak of America and the most important European sections. Especially all colonial countries are strictly excluded. Whatever the mistakes of those sections may have been (we ourselves know too little about this): The Fourth in Europe and America must be accused for their weaknesses.

stand towards the noisy advertising clamor of the Fourth. It is as with a pretentiously praised article which is frightfully expensive but remains always invisible. Newspapers made up in the style of the "yellow" press (only with much less attraction and with more typographical errors) shout without letup in all keys:

"The revolution is the only solution ! The revolution will come! The revolution will be victorious! Workers of all countries: Communism is a great cause for which all goods and chattels, blood and life must be sacrificed!"

The masses, by no means more stupid than their teachers, answer quietly:

"That maybe , but you first have to show us practically how we can get hold of these delicious things for which we have already paid so dearly and for which we probably shall continue to pay into eternity if everything goes according to your plan. Your words sound to us like the ticking of clocks to whose noise one has become accustomed and which one does not hear anymore. Yes, your monotonous noise is there but we do not even have faith in your ability to publish a good paper. Or do J.R. Johnson and other daydreamers of his type believe that they can impress anyone with confident prophesies about the German revolution and an America covered with Soviets (dated for February 25, 1948)? Johnson may intoxicate himself with visions but we have heard for a good many years from the priests of all churches that heaven on earth is near and that our tribulations will be ended with rich rewards. But only Johnson, the leaders of the S.W.P. and (how could one say it differently) "Mr." Etienne of the I.S., etc., have the sorry courage to promise us a German revolution at a definite date and to forbid us to doubt their prophetic gifts after the miracle has not occurred. We call their courage sorry because they boldly told us fairy tales like little children in need of consolation and lead us by the nose. But this is not the main point. We are particularly sorry because Johnson, into the bargain, by answering our question why the revolution which he proclaimed in all seriousness did not come off: "The exact reason for this we do not know and doubtless before very long the German workers will tell us for themselves." Should we then not follow our heavenly priests rather than these earthly ones who call themselves "scientists"?

No doubt the masses as well as individuals, understand very well that Communism is a great idea and that J.R. Johnson may be personally a well-meaning man. But they realize equally as well that a great idea also attracts truly great fools and all kinds of charlatans and ambitious, unstable, immature individuals. Such individuals oftentimes get a hold on the movement and transform it into a bourgeois swindle which only carries a false name. For there is, as Lenin explained excellently, only one alternative: either socialist or bourgeois ideology. For this reason even the slightest mistake or any negligence of our tasks results in the victory of the bourgeois ideology or policy in the given field. It will even be a lasting victory if we can't correct the error and make up for our omissions.

If it would depend upon profusely used Marxist articles of faith then the Second and Third Internationals would be pure Socialist establishments. In reality both are only particularly degenerated bourgeois formations. In no case are they workers organizations, despite their often immeasurably over-estimated workers' following. It is the same thing as with the worker pure and simple. He is dominated entirely not by socialist but by bourgeois notions: But what is more important: The Second and Third International live for the greatest part off the impotence of the Fourth, whose bankruptcy is due to a qualitatively decisive victory of the bourgeois ideology over its abstractly correct Marxist foundation.

Therefore the beginning must be made with a merciless critique which must not recoil before any consequence.

3 - Basis for an Understanding with our Environment

The true state of the Fourth is reflected in the attitude of our surroundings toward us. This surrounding world is not aware of us but it knows, on the other hand, very well that Social-Democrats and "Communists" are opportunists, liars, traitors, imposters and even murderers. Or does anyone imagine that the Stalinist scum owes its "influence" to the "confidence" of the masses? That would be a great mistake and a new victory of bourgeois ideology (in form of the pseudo-scientific "mass psychology" of Messrs. Fromm & Co.) over a Marxist theory of consciousness (which on its part has not the least in common with the Utopian, mechanistic "concepts" of J.R. Johnson). Does one actually believe that in the final analysis the continuing influence of these people is due to the "stupidity" of the masses and not to the evident misery, dilettantism, complete helplessness, indescribable confusion, dishonesty, opportunism (hidden behind radical phrases) and the bankruptcy of the Fourth which is summarized in all this?

If one believes this, then it should be taken into consideration that there is a basic difference between the behaviour of the masses and that of the individual.

Depending upon the conditions of the case an individual is able either to recognize the falseness of a thing or to take it in its falseness for pure coin. An individual may reject with horror the theses and resolutions of the EEC and the SWP, etc., and on the other hand not only accept this mad nonsense but also set it down on paper. Against better knowledge it may even consciously and systematically continue such nonsense in order to avoid, for example, admission of an error, to save embarrassment, to safeguard an official position, etc. In short: On an individual basis an unending number of combinations are possible.

But as soon as we view the slightly larger section of our environment the picture changes and becomes purely negative. Here the predominant bourgeois traits of our movement prevail already as a determining quality and appear in every respect more miserable than the rest of the existing bourgeois institutions. Our bourgeois traits make themselves felt as hopeless Utopianism, are unable to rouse any sympathy and erect an insurmountable wall of indifference between the movement and the masses.

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We then see the following situation: the bourgeois character of the Fourth International has become dominant and becomes apparent in numerous individual acts as opportunism, utopianism, false prophecies, ultra-radicalism, permanent confusion, bureaucratic dishonesty, theoretical putrefaction, lack of political character in factional struggles, revolutionary bragging, etc. In a word, the negative side is overwhelming and it destroys all the sacrifices that have been made. The result is total political impotence.

In such a situation the masses remain simply ignorant and are not approachable in any manner. But it would be completely misleading to call the behaviour of masses opportunist. This name the pretentious leadership of the Fourth alone deserves while the masses remain in a coerced position, created with the help of the Fourth International and, lacking any better perspective, act purely practically. For them the Fourth, as said before, is only a fraud about which they do not know anything.

For a few generations they have experienced practically upon their own bodies that the socialism of the phrase and the socialism of action are two entirely different things. Even without knowing Lenin's name they carry within themselves Lenin's verdict: Socialism of the phrase is in real life simple betrayal, however honorable the intentions of the leaders may be. They are thus directly forced to decide in favor of various (for there are neither homogeneous masses or classes) practical swindles instead of the unknown swindle, or to remain indifferent altogether. Wherever conditions permit the masses have an infallible feeling for the fact that between various classes, sections, nations, etc. there exist certain differences which are based on material interests and which can be exploited in the interest of self-defense. At heart without faith, hope and love, they protect themselves in the best manner possible, try to break through at every occasion and "follow" according to the prevailing conditions, now Stalin, now Roosevelt, now the democrats and now the dictators. Especially in their instinct for revolutionary possibilities the masses tower unattainably high over the so-called "Marxists". To be convinced, one need, for example, only consider the Philistine misery of the Fourth in dealing with the national question. There was a great mass movement and the Fourth preached to it in the manner of a village schoolteacher. The knowledge of the teacher was nothing more than a few misunderstood "Marxist" crumbs. Only the truly backward consciousness of the "vanguard" running to the rear was at stake. This means that the organized backwardness of this vanguard hid behind the so-called "undeveloped" level of consciousness of the masses. Greatest distrust is necessary wherever in the last few years anybody speaks of "class consciousness" or consciousness of the masses. In 999 out of a thousand cases nothing but empty chatter, tautological nonsense, political illiteracy are behind it. At stake is not at all the consciousness of our environment but exclusively the indescribable misery of the vanguard itself. For the rest of the world the Fourth is a non-entity. It represents nothing but its bankruptcy and it has not inherited from its past the material wealth which the Second and Third Internationals command. These are the reasons why the masses are forced to follow under certain conditions all others but not the Fourth.

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Now it so happens that as long as capitalism exists the uneven development even in respect to ideology cannot be eliminated. We therefore believe, justified by experience, that the German catastrophe has provided us with a few insights which differentiate us from the W.P. (as a whole) as much as the W.P. differentiates itself from the rest of the Fourth. Of course, nothing is presented on a silver platter: We concerned ourselves very intensively with these insights and worked on them persistently. And yet the critique must be carried to the end and no doubts should be left: Before history, i.e., measured by what we should have done absolutely and what we actually accomplished, we all are without exception (to use a "loathsome" but exceptionally fitting word) a "little pile of dirt".

This surely is a harsh verdict and yet is the only one to which the masses wholeheartedly agreed. For this reason they have silently turned their backs on us. Whether or not the pile of dirt is filled with the best of intentions (which often enough is not the case) remains totally irrelevant. An apple rotting in a precious plate has no "bad intentions" either, but rightly no one wants to eat it. Only when we have recognized honestly and without reservations the desolate state of the Fourth International shall we finally have a negative base at last upon which a positive agreement with our environment will be possible. Only then we have a chance to save a healthy nucleus from liquidation, to find new capital and to build a healthier, living International.

4 - Struggle Against Demagogues

Let us disregard the various leaderships of our sections which, partly due to deeper insight ("despite everything"), partly due to routine, ambitions or even the salary of \$40 weekly etc., stick to a hardly attractive cause. What keeps the existing Fourth together despite unending crises, splits, factional fights, (without results), etc? In the main two factors, which of course also influence the leadership.

For one thing, it is the perseverance of the petty-bourgeois utopian sectarian movements which find very fertile grounds in the atomizations of the individual in capitalist society and permit manifold "Marxist" shadings. (This aspect of the documents of the Fourth is reflected in mass messianism or permanent chatter about the revolution.)

Secondly, it is this conviction, justly held by the best elements (who see the evil but cannot yet grasp the real roots), that our general foundations and general program is correct but have only to be applied "more correctly", more intensively, more concretely and emphasized differently. (This aspect is shown especially vividly in the various proposals designed to overcome the difficulties which have been submitted so far for the coming W.P. convention).

When already today (as J.R. Johnson indignantly criticized in a bulletin just received) there are "responsible" party members who speak of a non-existent internationalism of the Fourth, they only speak the truth about a matter in which the bankruptcy is epitomized quite vividly. Especially the colonial peoples feel this truth daily quite palpably. Organizationally it found a new

and distinctly visible expression at the European conference⁻¹¹ just passed (what was carried on there, according to the German proverb, "even the hide of a cow could not take"). Therefore the comrades who are to be set straight are not those who say ("roughly" but correctly) that the Fourth is "not worth a pinch of salt" and is a "bunch of political bankrupts", but the one who needs to be set straight most energetically is J.R. Johnson who proclaims that saying the truth is "abusive" and "contemptuous" i.e., who answers an undisputed statement simply with actual abuse.

Such self-righteousness is the mark of demagogues who were rightly called by Lenin the worst enemies of the working class. It is high time to take Lenin seriously and to fight demagogues whose "work" shows the following characteristics:

- A) They "piously" contemplate the "bum" of the proletariat.
- B) They always find reasons to withhold the truth from the masses. (Classical in this respect is the attitude of the SWP press towards the Russian crimes.)
- C) They defend the most obvious falsities and errors with the most disgraceful tricks or conscious distortion of the opposing views.
- D) They slide from one contradiction to the next, improvise constantly, never give any accounting and with confusion bloated by arrogance, they reserve only for themselves the right to toss about expressions like revisionist, reactionary, Menshevik, petty-bourgeois, etc.³)

It is time to unmask these righteous Philistines and to support those forcefully who have the courage to call things by their right name. Not only struggle, but the sharpest struggle against demagogues who at the same time reveal themselves as incorrigible dillettantes and hinder both the intellectual development of the organization and the selection of new forces at every turn. In a mass movement selection is neither possible or necessary, for in it the decisive qualities are not the individuals but the character of the mass movement itself, in which all individual differences are extinguished and take on the quality of the mass movement itself. A revolutionary organization however, that cultivates dillettantism which obstructs selection and training, sentences itself.

5 - The Workers Party as the point of Departure

Let us try now to find the causes of the steady stagnation of most of the organizations (a well known phenomenon to every observer of our history) and the final general crisis of the Fourth.

For this purpose we shall move the field of operation to America and we shall choose the WP as the example with the help of which the problem is to be shown and to be positively solved. Our example has not been chosen arbitrarily, but is based upon the whole past development. For the moment always arrives where forces (they can be individuals or groups) which have already

³ All these characteristics unite J.R. Johnson "wonderfully" with the Cannonites, the EEC and the IS. Our answer to Johnson's polemic is going to bring a wealth of detailed proof.

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been prepared by this development, are capable and must take the initiative. The WP in our opinion is the necessary force to whom history has given the task of initiating the reconstruction of the Fourth.

In order to outline this task very sharply we shall set the present membership figure of the WP minimally (the real figures we do not know and they do not have an independent significance) at 300. Beyond this it of course has its publications (periodical, newspaper, pamphlets, books, bulletins, etc.), a technical apparatus, a number of connections, sympathizers (among them the closely befriended IKD), points of contact at home and abroad, etc.

The balance sheet of the Fourth is already drawn up, the necessity for an unrestrained critique has been recognized, the basis for an understanding with the environment has been found, the struggle against the demagogues has been put on the order of the day. Now we shall go a step further and we must definitely be aware of the fact that every organization will develop a certain conservatism and mechanism of inertia, which under certain circumstances makes it possible that elements standing completely outside can be pushed forwards much easier than the organization itself. In any case it must be accepted as a rule that the leaders as well as the members of the organization can continue to develop only when an actual influence upon the environment is achieved and is reflected on the organization in the form of increasingly rich relationships and always new tasks.

An organism which lacks these interrelations, must decay even with the best dispositions and finally it must fall.

Furthermore it is necessary to have a clear insight into the tendency which is all powerful and murderous under the capitalist system, i.e., to isolate, to make a fetish of, to ossify, to tear out of its living contexts every object, every relationship, every program, every word, every concept, etc., in short: to give to all things and all conceptions an independent existence which they should not have. At times one remembers Marx's brilliant words: "The tradition of all past generations weighs like an Alp upon the minds of the living." But not only the past presses them down but they create new hindrances with every institution, even with every thought, which makes them at every turn the slaves of their own works and which paralyze their effort incessantly.

Let us not speak of drivel, such as the resolutions and theses of the EEC or of the SWP, which are all miserable imitations of resolutions of a bygone era. Where they contain something which is abstractly correct, they glitter with horrible trivialities. (True, the "professional" must deal with endlessly repeated truths, which could not interest anyone.) However, one merely needs to look at the resolutions which are now before the WP convention, in order to recognize: here too one works according to a cliché, which did not show results even 30 years ago, and which must remain without effect particularly now.

In view of these universal and overwhelming tendencies toward fetishism it is necessary to make an extraordinary effort to re-evaluate everything that hitherto seemed either right or wrong. We ignore any other assets. We begin the task of overcoming the crisis with nothing but the findings which the inventory has or will make evident.

6 - The organization in the Mirror of its Task

A revolutionary organization should not only prepare and lead the revolution and conquer the power but it must also know that the conquest of power is only the first step. To stay in power, to consolidate the new system, to actually guide society in all spheres, to control the reconstruction, and finally to lead society into socialism is a hundred times more difficult. (International problems of extreme intricacy will be encountered at every step.) It should be axiomatic that careless treatment of these points will result in a catastrophe like the Hungarian revolution under the leadership of the petty-bourgeois dilettant, Bela Kun after the first world war. The power was gained easily, yet very soon the masses turned their backs on those leaders who had nothing to show but their own narrow-mindedness. The real task is not only to plan and prepare the conquest of power but to take into consideration to the fullest extent the following job of reconstruction. The point is to make the working class able to take over and to guide society as a whole.

Nobody is born with this ability which is a difficult craft--an art which has to be learned with much patience and diligence. Furthermore it has to be practiced constantly, otherwise arises the danger of lagging behind as far as technique is concerned and getting out of step with developments in general. Based on long experience we know that the faith in the self-mobilization of the masses is a recipe for waste of energy, useless sacrifice, disappointment and defeat. Let J.R. Johnson with his card index of misunderstood Trotsky-Lenin-Marx-and-Engels quotations go to hell. We refuse alleviations in face of the real difficulties, and we have "faith" only in our real tangible accomplishments.

Very well, 300 members of the WP in America are confronted with the problem of bringing the decisive section of a nation of 140 million people under their influence. At the same time they have to reform an International, or better, to make an International possible at all. Let us recognize: the "rashness" of this task is the main source of the belief in miracles which is the core of the petty-bourgeois utopianism that has ruined the Fourth. Just as he came to socialism as a matter of conviction and to the "leadership" of the organization he visualizes the conquest of power. Yet in his subconscious mind sleeps the foreboding that his picture is a self-deception. A terrible fear of those gigantic difficulties, and the unadmitted feeling of his incompetency to cope with them takes possession of him. The result is a pitiful quackery which stimulates firmness: "We are on the right road"--"we will forge ahead"--"with the help of the masses we will be victorious", if we only keep the "principles" of our sect (which has been baptized "revolutionary" party) unadulterated and if we insist upon the immaculate conception of the proletariat."

We have to see through the mechanism of human nature (which is

a capitalistic nature under capitalism and sees everything distorted. The individual is often willing to make the greatest sacrifices and even risk his life to distribute illegal leaflets, but only to find in other respects insurmountable obstacles. At the thought of being made responsible for the whole society imagination and courage soon fail him, because knowledge and a total view are lacking. He will only recognize such means and methods as he understands. Nothing convinces him and he finds a hundred excuses to evade the necessary work. An audacious proposal he will reject saying: "That does not work; we have other things to do; we do not have the strength." If a persistent effort is required he doubts immediately how this possibly could lead to success. In the meantime stagnation sets in. But because this stagnation must be "justified" it changes into demoralization. Then a few elements begin to defend the "immaculate conception" with the most miserable and dirty means against their own organization, the International and the working class.

Our 300 members see through all this, they reject all illusions about themselves and others and say: "All of us, the workers included, came into this world as petty-bourgeois, ideologically speaking. It is difficult to get rid of these capitalistic traits. Besides, only a few of us are workers. This in itself is neither an advantage nor a shortcoming. To be a worker does not necessarily mean that one has an edge on the petty-bourgeois". To know the above mentioned facts is important because we have to eliminate among many other things the unbearable fetishism of the word "proletarian". Unfortunately not only Johnson indulges in the "proletarianization" of the party. Hitherto the proletarianization of the party meant nothing more than the transformation of all available members into "factory-workers". Although these transformations turned out to be failures the experiment will be repeated. The "worker" possesses a magic force in the eyes of the Fourth, which he derives from his "historic" mission and which is guaranteed by the sentence: "The emancipation of the toilers can only be the work of the toilers themselves". This sentence, misused by many demagogues, has only one rational meaning, namely, the liberation of the proletariat can not be engineered" from the top, it can only be accomplished by philanthropists or by terrorists, it can only be achieved by the masses making their own revolution and their own isurrection.

If one goes one iota beyond this one stands already among those petty-bourgeois who vulgarize Marxism (they attach themselves to the shirt-tails of the labor movement and make themselves ridiculous and superflous in most cases through the fact that they preach self-mobilization of the masses). True enough, the masses have to fight their own revolution. Nevertheless, that has nothing to do with the problem of leadership and the party which has as its task, to understand everything, to know everything, to master everything, and to do everything necessary to make the revolution victorious and the victory durable. In the mirror of these tasks which are truly universal, the organization will comprehend in the first place that so far it understands, knows, masters and does very little. To be exact: Hitherto the organization limited itself to the most minute, unimportant, fruitless and opportunistic part of its work. Thereby it locked itself out from real politics, even on issues where theoretically a correct position had been taken. (The national question for example). One may define the present work of the organization as unionism, "pure" labor politics, or factory-cult. Any term except the designation Marxist politics.

In reality the character of the work done so far consists simply in concentrating all forces in one field (trade-union work) where success is possible only after other more important conditions have been fulfilled. That the trade-union work has been unsuccessful the party knows from practical experience. Now it must learn to evaluate this experience theoretically and become deeply convinced that as long as trade-union work remains our dominant field of activity, we shall be lost.

7 - The Roots and Deeper Causes of the Crisis
(Presented as thesis and basis for scientific treatment)

Since the victory of revisionism all revolutionary parties and organizations oriented the bulk of their activity toward the "pure" labor-movement. (Different forms of the pure labor-movement are: the cult of spontaneity, economism, trade-union politics, "direct action", organizing of "masses" in the party, putsch-tactics, "workers"-culture, and the various combinations of the above mentioned forms.)

The concept of the pure workers movement is the antithesis of all the principles on which the old German Social Democratic party and the Bolshevik party were built and on which they based their activity. Complete or even predominating concentration on the specific workers interests means to put the accent on only one and at that not even the important part of the question.⁵ Through the isolation of this particular aspect and the automatically following fetishism even the work in this direction becomes necessarily false.⁶ It is a rule without exception that this leads to a wretched narrowness which consequently ruins the political development of the party. The intellectual horizon is lowered to the factory level and the shallowness of the factory level soon becomes the standard for the approach to other problems. This frame of mind renders the party completely incapable of fulfilling its many-sided tasks, the theoretical consciousness becomes distorted and suffocated. Bourgeois influence finds an open door resulting in total degeneration.

This has been the fate even of the best revolutionary groups (The German Left for example). Because not a single one could find a way out into real politics, the Bolshevik party remained isolated and due to the absence of international help, it, too, was condemned to degeneration. This is the cause of the victory of Stalinism and the general crisis of socialism and the labor movement.

The Fourth on its part did not recognize the main evil either. The International trusted in the upsurge of mass struggles and did not find a political system. As the only answer to all problems, it resorted to the fetish "trade-union work". The "proletarian"

5. The proof follows in the next paragraphs.

6. It is no accident that just in this field "even" the union specialists of the SWP become more and more opportunist and provoke more and more opposition.

7. We recall: The bourgeois influence was already victorious with the described "concept".

madness ran wild with committees, militias, soviets, revolutions, socialism, all of which are closely connected with workers, trade unions and factories. Politics exists only as theory. The theories are mostly faulty, vulgar, onesided and stunted in growth. Nowhere do they lead to action. On the contrary, they lead to separation from actual life and the masses.

They only saturate the air with the "leadership" pretensions of an impotent, narrowly confined sect.

Here alone lies the root of the evil and the deeper cause of the special crisis of the Fourth. The amazing simplicity of this formula does not alter the fact that it has an extremely manifold content and the most far reaching consequences. At the same time it is the only formulation which makes a scientific treatment of the crisis possible and prevents us from discarding socialism as a utopia (a possibility which Trotsky already took into consideration).

8. A closer examination of the task

The necessity for a revolutionary leadership is recognized in words, but one has not the least notion how it has to be constituted. In order to convince ourselves of this let us push the insanity to extremes and assume that J.R. Johnson takes power with his party in the spring of 1948. Of course, Johnson will have soviets all over and have at his command any number of different kinds of "workers' committees". In addition the party will be imbued with the kind of wisdom which Johnson takes for "Marxism". We assume further that even the mass of workers have understood Johnson "fully and completely". Then what?

On the basis of the "conception" of the party which especially Johnson and the official Fourth hold, we would then experience a catastrophe of unimaginable extent.

We would be faced by this problem: Army and industry, national and international politics, agriculture and trade, imports and exports, educational system and propaganda, scientific research and technical apparatus, statistics and medicine, administration, housing and a hundred other branches would not only have to be re-organized, but also controlled and led. We would find ourselves in a concrete situation facing Stalinism as well as the church, the reformists, the other parties, the international diplomacy and the armed counter-revolution. Finance, regulation of currency, legislation, postal service, radio, the motion pictures, psychology, philosophy, pedagogy, literature, art, family life, sports, recreation, penology and a thousand other questions would create troubles which Johnson's book-learning does not dream of. Faced with all these difficulties which (let us repeat emphatically) cannot be enumerated and are of gigantic dimensions Johnson would realize that he has not understood "Das Kapital" if for no other reason than that he doesn't understand anything about bourgeois society. Where enormous knowledge and utmost many-sidedness are

required he would operate with a dead schemata. He would be at the mercy of the bourgeois specialists in every detail, for better or for worse.

Does anyone imagine that one could do without this army of specialists or force them to cooperate through the "dictatorship" because there are sufficient numbers of technically trained workers to keep production running? But just to maintain production and distribution, economists, architects, technicians, engineers, physicists, chemists, experts in forestry, mining, transportation, agriculture, etc., are needed without end. All these people would not let themselves be commandeered by a party which is not in a position to check up on them. Under such circumstances even large stratas of workers would assume definite traits of a "ruling" class in the bad sense and fall prey to this ever-present danger, the easier the more ignorant the party, and thus bring the workers to power as pure products of the capitalist environment. The workers then would have practically no more to offer than their "proletarian" self-conceit or the arrogance of their "historical" mission. They would commit stupidity after stupidity. They would be forced to rule by naked power, arouse all the world against themselves and lengthen the chain of difficulties from this unforeseen point to the final decline of the revolution.

In civilized countries the conquest and the maintaining of power are much more difficult than in backward ones (for example, in barbaric Russia). The more developed a country the more knowledge is required, and the more difficult is it to convince the specialists, to win them over and to discipline them. If Johnson, trusting in the development of the class struggle, would, after taking power, assemble them and submit his "plans" they would remark to each other after the first address: "Why, this is a prattler! He thinks he can solve difficult questions with agitational speeches!"

Of course, every great revolution makes a great number of scholars, specialists, intellectuals of all kinds willing to join and to be at its disposal. Only it has to be a great revolution and not a Johnsoniade upon which one will look with a superior smile or with panic as upon a folly, a childishness, a queer idea or an insane adventure. In the absence of a party which has already gained great political and moral authority the achievement of socialist will be lost every time.

The "bad part" of the whole problem, however, is that workers

8. Johnson's latest "programmatic" document shows up his schemata in pitiable nakedness. A batch of "slogans": For and against, against and for - that, to make the misery complete, is called the "Program of the Minority". Indeed, one must decide: Against this "wonderful" contagion, against this big void of inflated phrases!

peasants, petty-bourgeois, intellectuals, our best allies, etc., even with the best intentions are incapable of helping themselves and are dependent upon the experts of the party. As far as this is concerned the decisive strata must have gained in advance and by practical experience the conviction that they can place unconditional confidence in the ability of the party, in its love for truth and its devotion. Neither workers nor scientists or intellectuals are Marxists. Rather they all are products of the division of labor and consequently fetishists by "Trade". Particularly the general interrelationship in the Marxist sense they do not comprehend by themselves.

But what else is Marxism than the doctrine of the general and particular interrelationships? It relates the separate sciences with each other, places them into a total system, prevents their ossification (instead of ossifying itself!), corrects their one-sidedness, prevents metaphysical or mechanical aberrations, etc. Thus, for example, education and production, production and nutrition, nutrition and medicine, medicine and the raising of new generations (prophylaxis, hygiene, etc.) are placed in direct connection with each other. Without constant summation, digestion, development, application and interrelation of the total endeavor in every field, the sciences remain despite most extensive planning and systematization in single branches like capitalist production: anarchic in toto. Therefore, if the party lacks the ability to make this summation vividly and to expand it constantly, then even the most devoted intellectuals will lack that "disciplining" intellectual-political authority without which they will lead society anywhere except to socialism.⁹ Here cause as well as effect are "bad" since the party ceases to "lead" (which shows that it never did!). And it doesn't help a bit to teach and preach "Marxism". On the contrary: Marxism has to be practical, it has to prove itself as an all-embracing organizing power and has to become a reality with every step daily and hourly.

On the other hand there are thousands upon thousands of capable who realize deeply the insanity of capitalist society and desperately look for that force which could show them an alternative and which could assign them a meaningful place. The frightful intellectual narrowness, the "proletarian" fetishism, the terrible monotony of the strike reports, the horrible provincialism of our papers, the ridiculous quackery, the devastating and compromising treadmill of subscription-campaigns ("Socialist competition"!) - all that and more drives them forcefully into weariness, passivity, contempt, isolation, enmity, and an unwillingness to listen to us. The Fourth itself is responsible when talented people (also workers!) desert our ranks and rightfully don't want to be lectured by dilettants. It cannot be said too clearly:

9. Evolution never stops and has left only colossal gaps for Marxism in the last 20 years. Let Johnson cry, but it is clear retrogression none the less. Did not Engels say that materialism changes its outlook with each great discovery in the natural sciences? Where has the Fourth even the slightest hint of an idea of that?

Marxism would be completely false if it did not take into consideration that capitalism causes a great number of workers, petty-bourgeois and intellectuals to become upright idealists who will fight for a great and correctly led cause. When they view the Fourth they feel:

"We have no place in this movement. Its narrowness squashes all life; destroys all development and prevents us to give our best. In the long run not words but only deeds can convince us. Yet we hear only stupid words which make it clear to us: We are not needed and no one knows what to do with us. Remain alone then and convince yourselves where you will be led with your silly business."

Once again: Our fellow beings are by no means idiots without exception. Don't be surprised when our trivial game does not leave the least impression on them. The "Leninists" have completely forgotten (or never heard or never understood) that it requires the setting up of an all-embracing and bold plan to give workers and intellectuals the necessary impulse and to open a real perspective - a plan which by its grandeur and seriousness impresses all and also forces respect from the opponents. But there cannot be the least doubt: Already the mere posing of the problem as we attempt it here will, in spite of literary deficiencies, be likely to induce a change. This alone will earn us more sympathies and prestige than all the wonderful prophesies, even if (we commit a conscious blasphemy!) they appear in the form of misplaced quotations from Trotsky.¹⁰

10. How stupidities are produced in the name of Trotsky is shown by our/joker Johnson who maintains with "revolutionary seriousness" that the stalinist parties outside of Russia are "working class parties". At the same time this Johnson calls Russia a capitalist and fascist state. Johnson's last formulation is this: "For the Marxian analysis that Russia is a capitalist state, the most advanced outpost of the world-wide movement toward statification." The attentive observer will therefore exclaim: "God! the Stalinist parties which follow Russian policies exclusively (and which obey a capitalist-fascist state like dogs!) are also parties of the working class! Is this man mad or is he mocking us with his jabber?" - Indeed: Johnson who takes the mass accumulation of quotations (consisting of unsuccessful prophesies and empty propaganda phrases) for "theoretical" contributions should for once choose meaningful sentences in the works of Trotsky and not always the dead wood. In "What-Next?", for example, Trotsky states about parties which serve capitalist interests: "The Social Democracy is a completely bourgeois party in spite of its constituency of workers", etc. But Johnson is hardheaded and even declares: "Against Stalinism" (may we ask whether the "Stalinists" parties represent the fascist Stalinism or the "working class"?) "chiefly because, more than any (!) other party today, it frustrates and betrays the desires of the masses for social revolution" (without which Johnson simply will not show up!). To complete this farce our hero of the permanent revolution stands for nothing more and nothing less than "for the self-mobilization of the masses", because that is "the only (!) safeguard against the Stalinist and reformist misleaders". In other words: The working class must

In the mirror of its enormous task, whose immensity has always caused the proletarian revolution to recoil, the organization now learns to comprehend what it really takes to reach the goal. At stake is the extinction of a type of insanity (dropping with it a whole series of utopias and fetishisms) which believes that a victorious revolution could be achieved without a complete preparation or with empty hands.

9 - The Transition to Political Work

All in all the inventory has now been completed. The causes of the crisis have been recognized and cease to be tyrannizing foreign powers, because perceived laws lose their demonic force. With this the necessary pre-conditions have been achieved which we need in order to render the practical solution of the problem feasible for our 300 members.

The outlines of a political plan of action which differs fundamentally from the usual conceptions and practices already has come into relief upon the background of our previous considerations. We only need to know of this plan that it must be "universal", that it must give us influence upon all suppressed classes and sections of society, that it must be oriented toward the organization of society as a whole and that it should win esteem even from objectors and enemies.

Without describing the plan more in detail we shall now take up its practical realization (which, as we know, must be the realization of Marxism) and we weave into the presentation all which is necessary for the explanation and the proof. The whole task is to be solved in real life by the course of the development itself, in which we participate as conscious leaders and supporters. We begin on any old day with the forces at hand. Being politically interested people we look into the newspapers in order to inform ourselves about current events.

10 - First Example

Today's newspapers report that William Green, president of mobilize against the working class parties and it must this unconditionally "itself". Just imagine: A "leader" and a "revolutionist" who raises his mighty voice for the self-mobilization of the masses! This "demand" is of a singular "marxist" progressiveness and it will undoubtedly induce the American proletariat to make Johnson its Sancho Pancho. Particularly since Johnson, in his unshakable modesty, opposes "vacillations" and "confusion"! Well it is appropriate to answer in Johnson's own words: "What a mess!"

the American Federation of Labor, sent a letter to the German Social-Democrat Freidrich Stampfer. In it he transmits, without any qualifications or remarks about the "guilt" of the Germans, to all "friends and fellow workers in Germany hearty greetings for the First of May". He then expresses his hope for "a reconstruction of free, democratic unions", for "civil rights in full measure", and concludes: "Be asured that the American Federation of Labor will advance and support with all its power all endeavors in this direction".

This unassuming event is of great importance and permits us to go directly beyond the two bargaining bureaucrats (Green and Stampfer, whose empty phrases leave us completely cold). William Green speaks in the name of the AFL and puts the finger objectively on a sore spot--that is the only thing which interests us and which is useful for our work. For we are supposed to be the "conscious" leadership, i.e., we have to think and explain the meaning of events truthfully to everyone. We therefore state: The First of May was once primarily a day of international solidarity of the international working class and its friends. It would be ridiculous and unworthy to despair but we (who have to tell the truth under all circumstances in order to arrive at correct politics) have to ask ourselves: Is this First of May a day of joy or sorrow for the international proletariat?

Sham and disgrace! Greatest humiliation! William Green, the leader of a conservative trade union, will probably be the only one who conceived the idea of demonstrating with this declaration politically against the so-called "World Federation of Trade Unions", which excluded the German workers from membership and which is a pest-hole politically as well as ideologically. The World Federation of Trade Unions is a quisling enterprise organized by Stalin and his gang. However, the "progressive" American union (CIO) on its part (led by Mr. Sidney Hillman and his "communist" scum) takes officially the baiting, chauvinist point of view of the WFTU. These are the facts.

We, on the other hand, the revolutionary organization, don't we conduct "correct" trade union politica and are we not (if we are to believe our own words) here for the purpose of developing the political consciousness of the workers? Very well then: did our members in the CIO think of properly fighting the thoroughly reactionary political line of their union? Did they submit carefully planned resolutions explaining to the workers why such infamy must be destroyed in the workers' own interests? Will "we" issue an appropriate declaration, collect signatures, publish resolutions of our factions or at least "deal" with this burning issue in our May article in Labor Action?

Here the misery starts anew: The best revolutionary organization (seriously speaking) in America fails in its duties and remains dumb when the "most advanced" and largest American union, when millions of organized workers defame and oppress the German and Japanese workers like voluntary jailers. It is high time to make clear to the workers that they and American democracy have already suffered colossal losses since they have subjugated still more colonial peoples, Japan, Germany and indeed the whole world, either directly or in helping Russian imperialism in this

subjugation. The lowest point of humiliation, however, is reached when the workers permit the transformation of their organizations into imperialist tools of oppression.

"We" have no reason to be joyful on a first of May that reminds us only of our disgrace. It would be our duty to brand this sham, to translate our protests, resolutions, declarations and articles into the principal languages and to spread them with the aid of our allies in all countries. That would mean to practise internationalism and would show that the world working class can count upon the solidarity of the party in the richest and most powerful country on earth.

At the same time it is necessary to illuminate the enormous retrogression which consists of the impossibility to hold May meetings for international rights and international fraternization in Russia, Japan and the Baltic States, in the Balkans, in Germany, etc. The depth of the decline and the enormity of the disgrace would have to be portrayed in flaming colors. It is necessary to see the dissemination of the truth about the disgraced and shame as a real need of the movement and to be convinced like Marx that one thing alone can help: "To make the shame still more oppressive by adding the consciousness of shame".

Therefore the following must be emphasized: The workers in Moscow, Berlin, Warsaw, Tokyo, Bucharest, etc., do not celebrate the First of May today; they are abused through chauvinist parades of the governments and are ordered by their hangmen (first again the mass-murderer Stalin and his sordid gang of bribed filth) to perform spectacles of deception, being no better off than slaves and worse than under Hitler (who did not hypocritically and cynically call his slave parades "democratic"!) On the basis of this fact serious work must be initiated for unconditional expulsion of Russia and all its quisling representatives from the WFTU. The reason: The Russian delegates and their international following do not speak for "trade unions" (which are non-existent and constitute even more vicious organizations than Hitler's Labor Front). They represent solely and exclusively the governments of the Russian slave-keepers. From all countries dominated by Russia, only those delegations should be admitted who are willing to take up the struggle (and just the illegal struggle) against Stalin and his quislings for death or life. Everything else is a fraud and support of the fraud.

In short: Let us have none of the customary holiday articles for the First of May, when more than half of the working class of the world wearily moves about in heavier chains than in the past century and a misery never before experienced calls to us. Serious examination, complete unmasking, and the oath to discharge our duties better—these are the things that are required and that give more courage than fanfares of "certain victory". Just the majority of the peoples will not be touched by shouts of joy: On the basis of long experience they who have been humiliated the most (they do not even find themselves mentioned) cannot believe in them. Coolly they look on and they can prove by their own spent bodies that strikes, demonstrations, committees and bloody clashes in themselves are not yet class struggles. And

even if J.R. Johnson stands on his head: all this becomes a class struggle only under special conditions and premises, i.e., meeting political criteria. We don't know this and do not answer the crying needs of the masses with political help but with phrasemongering about "capitalism", "imperialism", and "socialism". Therefore we are once more not taken seriously.

11- Comments

The bitter taste which the truth leaves on our tongues should not hinder us from swallowing it completely. Thought, determined resistance to the routine of the organization, a critical attitude towards ourselves, all these are the abilities and virtues that must be developed. But they can only be developed within a living system. Dead "Marxist" principles produce nothing, vigorous thinking achieves everything. Do we run the danger perhaps of being "unpopular" with a declaration on the First of May that really fits world conditions? Then we would have to acquire, first of all, the courage to be unpopular, even if we had been popular and for a time would have to count on a "reverse", which later on would bring double and triple interest. But we don't deal at all with a "danger", we deal solely with thoughtlessness and philistine prejudices. We take into account certain retarded sections while neglecting the overwhelming majority which is concerned, and amongst whom our views would immediately gain the very greatest popularity. Having yielded to bourgeois prejudices and following the path of least resistance we do not have to wait for the reaction. This reaction consists of the fact that the vanguard itself has been systematically educated in poverty of thought. Its consciousness is not developed; on the contrary, it is corrupted and pushed to an ever lower level. The further and disastrous reaction: the vanguard disappears and becomes completely incapable of carrying out correct policies, as our example has demonstrated. And indeed, a revolutionary organization which does not every instant and in every field carry on correct propaganda and agitation is offal in history.

One should avoid by all means what the wholly superfluous and false resolution of the WB about the "cadre" does: to consider "propaganda" something like dissemination of and dissertation on basic theorems and insights. Theory proper is only a very limited part of propaganda. Real propaganda (not agitation, which is primarily verbal) consists in Marxist illumination of all events and details without exception and is always directed towards political action whether the organization consists of 5 or 5,000 members. (More about this later on).

For work in the indicated manner we will find without doubt more support and sympathy with all sincere workers, (and we would not live under capitalism if there weren't also among the workers many shabby ragamuffins) petty bourgeois, and intellectuals (who, contrary to prevalent prejudices, are a stratum especially valuable and indispensable for socialism). More sympathy than heretofore we have found for money and (even worse) energies wasted on subscription campaigns, Militant and Labor Action, etc. With nothing more than an earnest, thought out appeal, illuminating the real state of affairs and the real needs, we could collect all over

in all strata tens of thousands of signatures. We could submit petitions and initiate actions putting pressure on trade union bureaucrats and so cut off support for the Stalinist gangs. Answer the question: Would a comprehensive, profound, analytical article on the real situation about our subject give workers (for we watch always with both eyes only the reaction of the workers!) political knowledge or not?

The answer is not difficult to give: Only by this means can political knowledge and insight for political organization be transmitted. But the workers cannot gain knowledge from our May articles with their assurance that "the mighty American working class must have a mighty political organization."

Again the working class suffers under "our" methods mainly, because "our" methods destroy the avant-garde which should help the working class.

True enough, May 1st articles are written every year. They are like a toy, which after a little spring-cleaning gets kicked around for a day and winds up in a corner to gather dust until next year. Persistent thinking, however, would above all provide the party membership (whose political and theoretical level has dropped dangerously low) with the indispensable knowledge. It would enlighten them about relationships, conditions and social concatenations, the importance of which they do not understand at all. At the same time the party members would have found a political orientation and a document which would have provided durable (necessary!) insight and directives for fruitful work.

Finally: Why have we gone so much into details on this issue? For us this example was especially interesting and instructive, because it lies in the "preferred field" of the Fourth, i. e., it lies completely within the boundaries of the so important and so "expertly" toiled field of trade-union politics. We wanted to show that due to our backwardness and one-sidedness, our performance, even in the most limited of all arenas, must necessarily turn out to be false and unMarxian. Nowhere becomes the falsity of our work more apparent than when observing the helplessness with which we are facing trade union problems. In other words: We are led and prisoners; the hostile or backward surrounding world has the leadership and is victorious. But this is only the modest beginning, for there is no end to the most different relations, consequences, connections and generalizations, which only in their totality amount to political knowledge. in the Marxian sense of the word. The great evil is reflected in the smallest detail, as on the whole great issues are interwoven with small ones and little ones interlaced with the big. That we have to understand if we ever want to get ahead.

12. Second Example

The papers continue to bring news about the catastrophe in Asia and Europe. They report about the hunger, misery and the dying of huge masses of people, desperately searching for food.

In face of this dreadful misery we have written a few shallow and weak articles. (We took so-called "cognizance" and denounced the "mean" imperialists.) In the meantime we were sitting in the trade unions and did not move a finger to help. That fact is a crushing indictment and unmasks us once more as a bunch of dilettantes and phrase mixers. But what should be done is obvious to every progressive worker (not to mention the "Marxists"). We start, therefore, with things everybody should understand, even if he would stick to the trade union cult like flies to fly-paper. This, dear friends, will show us again how complicated "theoretical" nonsense results in nothingness, whereas "common sense" leads to internationalism and to influence over the masses in all lands.

Every trade unionist and factory worker, every office girl with only a spark of interest for people and developments has surely somewhere met a person who suffers and is angry because he is not permitted to help individually his wife, children, sweetheart, relatives, friends or acquaintances in Poland, Yugoslavia, Japan or Germany. He would be willing to impose upon himself a rationing system voluntarily. ("Rationing" as a governmental measure would now be a swindle which has to be opposed with propaganda for full production. Yet an immeasurably hypocritical, brutal and fraudulent government prohibits him from practicing and exercising this most primitive right and deprives him of the satisfaction of his most elementary feelings. Whether he is guided by Christian or democratic principles: the "Christian" and the "democratic" government prevents him practicing "Christian mercy and love of fellow-men"; in full view of the world it violates cynically all human rights, all canons of international law in spite of the four freedoms, the Atlantic Charter, and numerous other sacred assurances and promises. Furthermore, this government has the nerve to protest against the suppression of religious freedom (in other countries!). There are millions who suffer and inwardly rebel against the deprivation of civil rights coercion and callous injury of their feelings, but nowhere do they find an effective advocate, a defender or supporter. To those millions in America and other states you have to add millions in Europe which suffer directly under this deprivation of rights. On both sides of the ocean the concerned are underdogs of all kind, workers, yes, even trade unionists with parents, women and children.

Really, how much imagination is necessary to notice that a mass movement of the highest political potency lies in the street and begs for our guidance and leadership?

People revolt quickly when their personal wishes, instincts and feelings are disappointed and injured. They show gratitude and loyalty to those who help them and who revenge their injured human dignity. It would be easy for the organization to base itself on nothing else than vested and sacred religious, democratic and international rights and to create a movement which is irresistible and beyond reproach, and which can be led to the most far reaching political consequences.

This task, properly handles, that is, with a serious, utterly honest intention of rendering real help, enables our small organization to get everything we need. Theoretical and political education of our own members and surroundings, a broad sympathetic sphere of influence, attraction of decent and thinking elements, influencing of masses, activization of the trade union work, united front and victory over the SWP, unmasking the Stalinists and the government: all this and more is compressed in such a "simple" issue. Let us touch briefly the main points of the requirements and possibilities.

a) We write a document in which we illuminate the whole question from the human, religious, democratic and legal angle, taking into consideration international law also. The necessary political documentation has been supplied by the bourgeoisie itself: We proceed now to utilize in praxis the political education which the bourgeoisie provides for the proletariat, a factor which Marx correctly and repeatedly stressed as important. (By the way: the political education of the masses through the bourgeoisie is a latent factor and yields nothing unless we do actively interfere. This is only another example of how little we understand the most valuable ideas of Marx.)

b) We point out that the government is absolutely unable to answer our arguments and must resort to lies, demagoguery and foul technical excuses to cover up its criminal attitude. Especially those technical excuses we refute completely by proving the adequacy of the transportation system. We demonstrate that the American transport industry would have a profitable business on its hands if the government would not so maliciously insist on treating democracy like a scrap of paper and behave meaner than Hitler in his days.

c) With this document our organization approaches different personalities as well as various organizations and negotiates about a common action. (The document must abstain from revolutionary phraseology and party advertisements, though it should be sharp in the presentation of the facts. It must advocate and work for the cause itself.)

We cannot judge the possibilities of cooperation with other organizations in America, though we believe that besides certain circles ("Politics", maybe "Partisan Review") many organizations can be interested (mainly the Workmen's Benefit Fund, further the great number of German, Polish, Yugoslavian clubs, etc.) Naturally, we do not forget the SWP with which, through the success of our line, we want to achieve unity even against the will of their leaders! If individuals or organizations (the

II. From the very beginning we were against the empty "unity policy" of the SWP-minority and predicted that the unpolitical approach of Logan, Morrison, etc., will be condemned to failure.

good, old SWP for example) refuse, under whatever pretext, to participate, then we collect carefully their answers and use them as a political weapon with which we can expose them as "masters of the big lip", phrasemongers, cowards and cheats. Excluded from participation are only Fascists and Stalinists. Those we have to discredit before the public and we must throw a "cordon sanitaire" around them. The Stalinists in particular are an anti-democratic, international agency which aims to subjugate the world to the control and mistreatment of the GPU.

d) No matter how big or small the success of our trial with this "united front" may be: we exhaust and explore our possibilities and go into action (if necessary, although this is improbable, even alone). In any case we publish our document as a mass leaflet or pamphlet and distribute it everywhere, especially, of course, in districts where Germans, Poles, etc. are concentrated. The leaflet must be intelligently formulated and boost the moral courage. It therefore must contain the following reference:

"Free citizens of a free country: You have nothing to fear, if you stand for your human and democratic rights! Every citizen as well as every "foreign born" is obligated to defend the legally guaranteed rights and liberties. He is obligated to resist the violation of these rights by the government, otherwise the fascist devastation of the world will make further and irreparable gains. One of the most sacred human rights is at stake: the freedom of the individual to help. What harm can we do if we insist upon this right? We only raise the repute of democracy in the world and we encourage trade and commerce generally!" (By the way: Judgment of the concrete situation and political imagination is required to accept the proposition: Do not sign the document with the "Workers Party", but function as ordinary citizens who group together for this special purpose. 150 citizens in a town can do more than a small organization. This discovery all members will soon make. The very idea of an action outside the organization will give them that quite "peculiar" feeling of standing suddenly on a broad basis. The experience which, thus, can be gained is invaluable, and falsely understood party-egotism should not spoil this chance.)

e) In conjunction with our document we should call mass meetings in several suitable districts. We send our best and most agile speakers to those meetings and they talk about nothing else but our issue and questions related to it.

Of course, these meetings end with resolutions and the assigning of further work with the widest possible participation of all assembled people who may be given petitions and may collect signatures, etc. (It goes without saying that we may collect money for the accomplishment of our work and that we may, for example, sell our pamphlets in greater quantities and distribute them for further sale to participants of the meeting. The contacts made we cultivate carefully.)

f) By carrying out our whole action consistently and earnestly, and by bombarding the government together with Stalin from all sides, we simultaneously solve the specific problems of the party. We learn to react to mass needs and to treat and apply the related problems, tactics, methods, etc., expertly. In this way we shall also learn to understand human beings, facts and theories correctly. We then will gradually see what real leadership in practice means. From books alone the concrete content of theories cannot be learned - the living experience must absolutely be added.

g) Wherever real needs exist¹² (whether they are great or small, theoretical or political) one finds that associated with their satisfaction there also exists an environment in which successful propaganda is possible. Decent elements seeking an orientation will join us and support us. They will be inclined to read with growing interest, a LABOR ACTION improved as to content, giving solid knowledge and enlightenment, and freed from monotony, stale phrases and boring declamations about the "most narrow" affairs of the workers (third rate strikes). Such a paper they will gladly pay for and distribute it widely.

h) Whether or not we shall be successful with our "United Front", the leadership will be ours and the SWP as well as all other opponents will emerge from the campaign weakened and compromised. In the same manner we shall eliminate and expose those clever American Senators who recently declared themselves "unanimously" for the lifting of the parcel blockade to occupied countries. These gentlemen know more about politics and the masses than we. They know very well that a poor position on this question will cost them their influence and mandate in the coming elections. Thus they proceed to a verbal recognition of a mass need when our deed could take over their influence on the betrayed masses in section after section. The masses after all are always those same oppressed workers and trade unionists who are to be "captured" by sterile trade union work. These workers can very easily be won for a party on a political basis. With factory affairs (which get on their nerves together with the monotony of their work) one can only win them with very great difficulty or not at all (if one is poor and limited as the Fourth).

J.R. Johnson and the Fourth must realize once and for all: the trade union field is the most barren of all fields of activity. This is already established (a book could be written about it) because the union struggle is conducted by the workers and their union bosses completely without our help. (This fact is unchanged even if there are occasional successful maneuvers in the election of a union bureaucrat. In order to advance trade union politics a general political pressure from the outside is necessary which keeps the bureaucrats in check and forces them

¹². Already at this point let us note in regard to the question of the press: A party is worth nothing if it does not know how to awaken and develop actual but as yet unconscious needs.

either to abdicate or to advance. Otherwise it is easy for the capitalist to buy off and feed the workers with penny-concessions. These concessions become, exactly as the trade unions themselves, increasingly problematical under the conditions of declining capitalism. The constantly repeated struggle for wages is a blind alley and a tread-mill which blocks the workers. At the end the masses become completely confused, demoralized and tired by it (one should study the example of Germany).

In politics, however, we also learn how we have to work and to talk in the coming factory committees and soviets. Johnson is very much mistaken if he believes that in the soviets we have to shout "for" revolution and socialism! Actually the slogan "All power to the soviets" will mean bread, work, freedom and peace. The soviets will support the revolution of that party which will realize these demands. But if the party starts its "politics" only when the soviets are already established, then it will miss the train of the revolution completely and will make a downright fool of itself (like our French majority with its attitude toward the resistance movement). "Without politics there will never be a revolutionary party, because the abandonment of politics is the abandonment of the construction of the party itself.

15. Notes

The above mentioned fact that Hitler was surpassed by (particularly) Stalin and the American government is a chapter which has been neglected in our activity in an outrageous manner. There are a number of newspapers and periodicals which by far outstrips us in the exposure of allied crimes and base-mindedness.

In order to enlighten others politically it is absolutely necessary to become acquainted with the "strong as well as the weak parts" of all classes and strata (including those of our enemies) and to learn from them. It is therefore of no use to look down scornfully upon a man like Dwight Macdonald who in certain respects has greater merits than the whole Fourth. (Here we expect Johnson to jump up from his chair again!) Our behaviour toward the world around us is false through and through and often recalls the attitude of the Stalinists. But the situation is as follows: If a periodical like "Politics" is ideologically and politically our opponent, it nevertheless brings many correct things and is in some respects a good example. Is it not deeply humiliating that only Dwight Macdonald has published a long pamphlet on the topic "Shall Europe Starve"? and even had to arrange for a special edition? True, the pamphlet has weaknesses (why don't we do better?) but it contains incontrovertible and ingenuously selected material, often superbly worked out.

In other fields too, "Politics" often does good work and it manages to hit Stalinism and the government much better than our press. Macdonald, for example, prints striking comparisons between Hitler and Stalin; he picks out certain events, statements

and quotations which illuminate the situation at one blow. He helps much to create a counter-weight to the gruesome bettalization of public opinion by the Stalinist and bourgeois press. From the New York World Telegram (to give you the gist!) he quotes a captain who said: "That's the way it is. Americans look on the German women as loot, just like cameras and Lugers." True again: "Politics" is usually satisfied with denouncing such utterances under an ironic headline, where we do not even do that. But next to the constant denouncing of these barbarities (which are in no way different from those of fascism) we should start to make politics and to treat with a whole series of problems.

Here the trials at Nuremberg should be mentioned which are in flagrant contradiction to International Law. The German criminals can only be sentenced by a "German Peoples Court" without any interference by foreign governments. They must have every possibility to submit documents, to elucidate the Russo-German negotiations and agreements, and to unmask as equally contemptible the intrigues of Stalin, Churchill, etc. This will save the heads of Goering and Co. much less than now (Mr. Stalin admits them into the "Communist" parties!), but it will show the masses how the Generalissimo wanted to share world domination with Hitler, and how only one gang has played against the other. If International Law shall be completely disregarded, then Stalin and his henchmen should appear among the main defendants, because they, together with Hitler, attacked, depredated, divided, and annexed Poland, Finland and the Baltic states. Not a single word of the Stalinist and "democratic" swindlers about the enslavement, eradication, plundering, and mistreatment of peoples and minorities should be accepted without the reprimand: "Into the defendant's dock with the shameless accusers: they are the greater criminals!"

The crimes which Stalin committed just like Hitler in the name of a "national goal" and "self defense" surpass many times the crimes of all the fascists on earth. The sending of millions of people (particularly from Germany) into Russian, French, English or Belgian forced labor is a complete disregard of all the provisions of International Law. They incriminate the Allies doubly because they were carried out at the end of hostilities which had been conducted in the name of justice and freedom. No Hitler has ever lied as baldly as those leaflets and radio speeches which the Holy Joseph from Georgia and the Allies unloosened upon the German people during the war. Solemnly they promised freedom, human and equal rights. They only proved that they could be more cynical and more cruel than Hitler.

Particularly in regard to Russia there is not the slightest control over the fate, the treatment, the nourishment and the shelter of those miserable slaves who are completely without any rights. The situation of the slave laborers as well as the prisoners of war will have to be investigated from all sides. What is done with them cannot be described. Justice has been replaced by brute power, humanity by senseless brutality, but they present "indignation" about Hitler. Human beings have become mere objects of dirty bargains - this seems to satisfy the "democratic"

mania for morality.

One should demand an unrestricted investigation of what has happened to the five to six hundred thousand Jews whom Stalin drove to Siberia after his attack on Poland. One should demand an investigation about the situation of the Jews in all countries which lie behind the "iron curtain"; one should also demand control and closing of the re-opened concentration camps (among them Auschwitz). Surely, the Stalinist mob will answer our demand with a tremendous clamor. But the sea of blood and baseness is there and we will make the discovery that Hitler, as compared to Stalin, was merely a green beginner. Millions live on the one side as slaves and prisoners. Other millions on the other side live in anxious worry over them and are not permitted to correspond with them or to help them even in "peace-time". On the whole: A tremendous field of work which has been ignored by us in an irresponsible manner.

Furthermore: The extradition of all persons who do not want to return voluntarily to the "democratic" Russian paradise also contradicts flatly all international agreements about the right of asylum, the security of person, etc. In this field as everywhere Russia demonstrates utter impertinence. She even demands the extradition of such persons who are not Russian citizens or who are natives of those countries which she has annexed or provided with Quisling governments. Truly, one begins to feel respect for Hitler who never tried things like that in civil life with other nations.

Aside from that there is the Spanish question in which the Fourth in Europe goes hand in hand with the Stalinists and demands boycott of Franco-Spain. This unhappy Fourth dupes the masses and commissions once more Stalin with the task of liberating the Spanish people from the fascist yoke (a "liberation" which the people could unfortunately stand less than the Franco regime!) So political impotence creates dirty petty-bourgeois opportunism. Risking the danger of being cited before the "Marxist" court of inquisition by Johnson (who believes in Stalinist "workers parties"): But what a harmless child is Franco compared to the butcher of nations in the Kremlin! Besides, without Stalin's help Franco would never have come to power, but now, for imperialist reasons, he shall be brought to "justice". Instead of exposing Stalin's imperialist maneuver and to warn loudly that he will be the bigger executioner - "our" advocates of "proletarian" self-liberation cover up Stalin's swindle: "France is a threat to world peace!" Already the mere word "threat" to world peace should drive intelligent people to grab for the thickest whip and to tox with it the ears of master Stalin and his filthy comrades. For if anything threatens the imperialist "peace" than it is those European-Asiatic expeditions and civil wars conducted by the new tsar.

Actually there is hardly a question left in which the Fourth with its boundless opportunism, its fantastic ignorance and stu-

pidity, has not made itself the fancy-man and co-criminal of the imperialists. People who have not yet lost all confidence in themselves and the masses would offer only severest resistance and struggle under the slogan: "Tsar of all blackguards and most bloody of all robbers: Hands off Spain and the whole world!" Our heroic Fourth, however, yelps zealously like a little dog when the great Generalissimo roars. How does Lenin put it? "Revolutionists in words, traitors in practice."

14. Third and Fourth Example

On the questions of soldier demonstrations, veterans, colonial policies, the new national problems in Europe, etc., we have to forgo closer examination in this connection. It will be apparent from the foregoing what a wealth of possibilities, influence, consequences, complications and results are to be expected as soon as we start to demonstrate in practice our theoretical claim to "leadership". But we also see the amount of knowledge, scientific data, considerations, reflections, thought and critical capacity we must offer to the movement as a whole to guarantee with the the realization of our claim to leadership at the same time the construction of a truly revolutionary party. The party would otherwise suffocate inevitably in opportunism and radical phraseology before it had learned how to walk. To make this still clearer we want to touch briefly upon the housing situation and the Negro question.

The housing shortage is terrible; returning servicemen don't know where to go with their families. In spite of that there are many empty houses, while Senate and Congress assume a scandalous attitude. At the same time the government has decided to throw away half a billion dollars (officially" admitted cost) for pure destruction with atomic bomb experiments in the Pacific. In America as well as in the whole world there exists an extraordinarily broad animosity to the experiment which will destroy Bikini and kill all life in a big arc around it, and may have unpredictable consequences.¹³ Again it would have been our ele-

13. Two affecting details. According to an AP-dispatch, King Juda and his natives, who were shipped from Bilini to Rongerik, are home-sick. They won't be able to return to their cherished island, for all trees and animal life will dwindle to nothing before the atomic bomb. King Juda summarizes his opinion about his new forced residence in these simple words: "Bikini was better. It was bur home." And that is "peace-word"! On the other hand a member of a veteran's delegation in America implored the Senate to give up the experiment with the atomic bomb in the Pacific. "Terrible things" happened in his dreams and he had received a warning that the end of the world would come. There are, unfortunately, "Marxists" who are so frivolous as to shrug their shoulders and to smile over such "superstition". But please, "enlightened" gentlemen: understand the needs of the tormented people! Thus the people sense this insanity- thus it perceives the catastrophe of imperialism.

mentary duty to counterpose the insanity of wanton destruction and unnecessary misery and to incite constantly with all means available the prevailing dissatisfaction. The organization could again use the opportunity to dictate a whole "program of actions" (Lenin) for all concerned and appear as the organizing force against capitalist waste. Overnight LABOR ACTION could be changed into a much desired organ if it would understand on this occasion now to write articles so to speak "brimming" with expert knowledge, investigating the economic, political, human and statistical angles and drawing the practical conclusions. (Again and again: Positively to hell with "radical" rigmarole! Every word of "proletarian" revolution and "final" solutions should be suppressed. The task should rather be tackled in the manner of a skillful and sympathetic physician who cannot cure the patient at one stroke but supplies the right medicine, nourishment and treatment which initiate the cure.)

Among the homeless there are naturally also Negro-veterans. This brings us to the housing misery of the Negroes proper, for they have to pay much higher rents for dilapidated and unhealthy flats in vile and filthy sections than the whites for good ones. Our organization would certainly with the help of our specialists on the Negro question, be able to conduct a thorough investigation, form suitable committees of Negroes and connect the housing campaign of the veterans with the special problems of Negro housing. If the whole question is treated seriously and correctly, the whites will support the Negroes and the Negroes will support the whites. As far as we know, numerous blocks in the Negro sections are owned by big companies who can easily be fought. The whole campaign would have to be organized in such a way that under certain circumstances a general rent strike can be called. For one time we would then have an immediate occasion to form defense committees against dispossessions, for the protection and blockading of streets, etc.

We insist without mercy: Why are there two resolutions on the Negro question at all if one folds his hands over the belly and wants to wait for the never occurring miracle of revolution? There are the Negroes and the veterans with all their needs and their manifold wants. It is enough to kill the devil: So help them and give them the necessary means and methods to work with! Then they will understand that the victory of socialism is the sake of a party in which the masses can place their undivided confidence.

In this connection we plead for elimination of the discriminating "Negro column" in our press. If Johnson should claim that the Negroes "want" such a "separate column" he should be answered that he always falls only for the most backward prejudices. As much as we are for and have to further independent political and other demands of the Negro population; just because of its independent claims we cannot segregate it in practice and in our press with an artificial "column". Will we make the public as well as the Negroes themselves "accustomed" to

such a degrading segregation which is so close to the heart of the bourgeoisie? We must, in the contrary, strengthen the self-confidence of the Negroes, not approach them in a cringing attitude, and treat them always as complete equals. A revolutionary organization has to know how to fight against common prejudices. To be always the victim of thoughtless prejudice, that, alas, is the speciality of Johnson and the Fourth.

15. The Function of the Plan

The activating lever of Lenin's plan is the realization that workers democracy (in its political aims) and bourgeois democracy are not distinguished from each other in principle, but only in degree. Proletarian dictatorship, therefore, by no means signifies destruction of democracy, but its enlargement and completion to an extent which is unbearable at all for the bourgeoisie and which consequently brings its rule to an end. If we do not hold consistently to this point of view and make it the guiding line of our whole activity, then any socialist content of our politics withers away and the proletarian dictatorship can only be achieved as Stalinism which our imagination has a little "improved".

The second decisive point is the definition of the content of the notion "vanguard". This term loses its fetish-character only if we first become leaders not in words but in concrete achievements in all branches of the social, political and intellectual life without exception. From this flows, secondly, that we have to penetrate politically as well as propagandistically and organizationally into all layers of society and to win leaders from these layers. Without fulfillment of these conditions we just cannot be "leading", i.e., we cannot gain leadership nor train leaders. In other words: It depends on the conscious plan and the conscious direction of our activity whether we will find and "produce" those "ten talented, tested, professionally finished and long trained leaders" without which, according to Lenin, "a tenacious struggle of any class in modern society cannot be conducted". The basic mistake also of Trotsky consists "simply" in not having consciously fixed and not consciously followed the indicated direction. But therewith he made the construction of the Fourth impossible, for in this respect all depends literally (like in a complicated machine on a tiny detail) on a hair and the small word conscious decides whether or not the experiment can succeed. There is by no means a lack in Trotsky's works of outstanding political examples and excellent exposes about the party. On the contrary, we should say: the philistines in the Fourth have not at all grasped what invaluable weapons and treasures Trotsky has placed into their hands. (Incidentally: An outstanding political example in our sense was the German "Church-struggle" in which Trotsky intervened with a letter placing himself completely on our side. Trotsky's letter shows in a very clear manner what is important. A lucky accident placed the letter just now again in our hands and we will

publish it soon for the benefit of Johnson and the official Fourth with an appropriate commentary.) And yet all this does not alter the fact that Trotsky, too, missed the decisive point.

16. The Plan and Its Dialectics

The building of the party has a dialectical "secret", the formula of which reads: Everything (therefore also the party) is being while it is becoming; it is becoming while it is being.

This seems to be a pure "word play", but let us try with the aid of it to make the nature of our-plan (as the dialectical "soul" of party construction) still more intelligible.

In the usual run of life anybody realizes that you cannot become a good mathematician if you pursue exclusively, for example, the trade of shoemaking. Furthermore it is easily seen why a certain system has to be followed in acquiring difficult skills or arts without which the height of a full-fledged artisan cannot be reached. And equally easy is it to understand why one has to act from the first moment on like a painter (with canvas, brush, pencil, paper, color, anatomical studies, etc., etc.) if one intends to become a good painter.

In the realm of the party such ordinary wisdom undergoes all of a sudden change. Here one acts as if a few theses about esthetics or transported talks about music could produce good sculptors and musicians. Here one says with straight face: Let us go into the trade unions and hammer heavy stones (besides we then talk a little about politics and theory) - that will make us excellent surgeons. But, Goo Heavens: Whoever wants to reap a single grain of wheat has to sow wheat and not potatoes (and whoever does that to a great extent can again only be "successful" if he is a skilled and experienced farmer)! Applied to the building of the party this all means: You want to lead the whole of society and to revolutionize it politically? Well, then you have to train yourselves and the whole of society from the first moment on according to a system that corresponds to your aims! Instead you choose from the many-colored palette of the painter only a single and little attractive color (the desolate gray of the trade unions) and you think you can execute in this way brilliant colossal paintings. You think that the transformation of your members (as far as they originate from the petty-bourgeoisie) into "factory workers" and the mechanical adding of "workers" won at a very low level will provide you with a "sufficiently big" party one day. You are mistaken! Even if "highly successful" you will only collect a pile of unskilled people who will do nothing but bungle outside of their narrow sphere and only bring you ruin. If you fail to place the "universal" plan consciously at the beginning and to conduct immediately all work according to it, you will take the wrong direction right from the beginning and lead the movement inevitably into wrong tracks. Development and construction of the party is then the same joke as with somebody

who wants to learn ice-skating and takes for this purpose a seat in a street-car.

That's why we say that real propaganda of the party consists in Marxist analysis of all events and details without exception. And propaganda has to be calculated towards political action, whether the organization has 5 or 500,000 members. For this reason we answer the question arising here whether "really" five men all told can be a "party", in the solely adequate "manner of dialectics": Five men, all told, who set themselves into motion in our sense and take over leadership even only propagandistically are decidedly a party and decidedly capable of actions. Their whole endeavor is directed upon extending immediately their political influence and attracting new elements from their environment with whom the work can immediately be extended. Thus they are decidedly a party while they are becoming one, i.e., absolutely act as a party according to a fixed and obstinately observed political plan. And thus they become finally a "sufficiently" strong and "sufficiently" influential party by being one and realizing their plan, identical in method and aim.

These considerations should go to demonstrate the hopelessness and harmfulness of the attempt of the "cadre-resolution" to prescribe for the party a development in "stages". Nevermind the assurances that there exists no rigidly isolating "stone wall" between the intended "stages of development". In reality such schemata prevent us from permanently expanding our political activity which alone can guarantee the growth of the revolutionary party. It is no accident that at the end of all nice resolutions one returns in practice to the single exhortation: Go into the factories, "proletarianize" yourselves, engage in trade union work'.

The opposite result to that shown by the example of our "five" men is achieved by this, good intentions notwithstanding. 3000 members of the organization, thrusting themselves together with their staff of alleged "professionals" upon trade union work, and who in their theoretical organ center again basically around trade union viewpoints (but even the very best of theories would not help by itself!), are decidedly no party, but merely a trade union fraction. In the last instance they are no less bourgeois and just as unfit for the leadership of the revolution as the "progressive" trade union leader Reuther. The case of Reuther shows very well how the trade unions are always compelled, quite completely independent of our help, to make a certain kind of "politics". One must only beware of seeing something like "anti-capitalism" or even "socialism" in the "far reaching" demands of Reuther. Talk like this is actually going on already (proof of the "high" theoretical level!) just as the comments of our press generally betray a singular "pride" in being an amplified echo of "progress" with the aid of the trade unions.

Has it not always been said, and has it not been "proven"

by the development of the UAW in the U.S.A. how the trade union struggle develops the "consciousness" of the workers? Said we not always that the "decisive" force for the revolution should be sought in the factories? Yes, this has always been said, and the development in America is a "proof" we were in need of to shed the proper light upon the intelligence of the Fourth. The German workers marched in this very same way, i.e. with all sorts of "plans" and "socialization programs", borne by the trade union members, straight into the catastrophe. The calculations of the "revolutionary" leaders (mainly from 1918-23; no need to discuss the rest!) had a "slight" flaw. Since the revolutionary leadership had no plan of its own and understood still less to follow it consistently, the masses fought their bloody struggles in vain and were caught in a situation from which there was no way out. In the absence of the activity of the party their consciousness, which can be developed into a socialist consciousness solely through this activity, proved to be "mature" for nothing more than the deception and provincialism (be it under opportunist or "revolutionary" cover) of the various leaderships. And we, too, do not understand how to counterpose our own plan to those of the trade unions and to extend the bourgeois (trade union) consciousness of the workers through all-sided political activity to socialist consciousness. For this reason let it be repeated: The Fourth is condemned to definitive bankruptcy if it continues to be unwilling to undergo a radical change, and if it continues to avoid the scientific treatment of the basic evils. Especially the WP has not the slightest chance to avoid its complete decomposition if it continues to come forward as the competitor of the SWP in trade union work.

17. The Question of the Press

The acceptance of the line submitted here means, of course, a complete transposition in the work of the press. It would be necessary to devote to this question an extensive essay, but time is short. Hence we are compelled to restrict ourselves to a few remarks.

In order to be able to educate politically one's own party and the workers one must, first of all, publish a political paper and not a trade-union paper. The current press of the Fourth confuses principally the tasks of a political party-paper with the tasks of so-called "popular" literature. (About this question and the errors, prejudices and stupidities related to it, one would have to write a special chapter too.) Instead of giving the party members and workers profound elucidation and a "guide to action", they are "educated" to superficiality, thoughtlessness and laxity. Consequently, the articles are kept as short as possible, and they remain in content, just because of the much pursued "popularity", quite abstract and poverty-stricken. One never fails, of course to "explain" about all things we stand for, but there is no connection with our politics. The intellectual poverty of our press is directly interconnected with the methods of recruitment and with the approach

to the "building of the party". One states frankly that the worker is "very backward". Conclusion: Since we need workers, and since the workers are neither willing to read long articles nor are in a position to "understand" our great wisdom, we must behave as backwardly and primitively as possible. Inwardly one is comforted by the assurance that once we have become sufficiently strong (one becomes "strong" if one drinks red-colored water!) we will raise the level and will really start developing the party. But since even after six years of the most zealous primitivity the expected "strength" failed to materialize (and could not materialize), the whole process-results in the same vicious circle as in all other fields. It is not a staff of trained and learned journalists who help the workers to overcome the limitations of their bourgeois education and who try to make out of the most talented workers "specialists" as good or even better than the bourgeois specialists. On the contrary, it is the imaginary backward worker who forces upon the journalists and the talented workers his primitivity and who accuses them to it to the point of self-mutilation.

Let us speak of the experience of the WP alone which has made a very expensive attempt in this respect, i.e., has given away its paper in large amounts for the purpose of "expanding". LABOR ACTION, contrary to the vire of its editors is a very bad paper. It is mainly satisfied with crying and restless headlines (big types seem to be especially "nourishing"!) and the miserable "newspaper technique" of the Yellow press. The smallest article is broken up in the fashion of the "Mirror" and is set in three different types. On the one hand one obtains thereby space for one more big headline, on the other one underlines proudly what is supposed to be "easy to understand" anyhow. And then these eternal "cartoons" in which the perpetual fat man either holds the workers on a chain or a tough-muscled worker kicks the perpetual fat main in the behind, hits him in the mizzle, or exhibits in similar "revolutionary" humor. But the subscription campaigns have given irrefutable evidence that the "backward" as well as the advanced workers do not find LABOR ACTION with all its primitivities especially attractive. They do not even want it for nothing, because 25 cents for a "subscription" for 6 months are in reality an alm which is given the "obnoxious" solicitor in order to get rid of him.

Why, indeed, has one such a low opinion of the workers and why is their "backwardness" always carefully cultivated, if, after all, they are supposed to exercise one good day the "dictatorship"? A serious paper, rich in content, well-designed (not quackish!) giving real answers to political as well as theoretical questions, reflecting the richness of life and the diverse temperaments of the writers (variety is an indisputable human need!) - such a paper after a short time forces itself upon the reading public and will be carried by it into all classes and layers of the population. It will be bought and attention will be paid to it. And not to forget: It will put an end to the scandal of the subscription campaigns through which the members are kept artificially active with additional

lies to the world about "big successes". Serious workers are repelled by the fawning attitude towards "backwardness"; they feel rightly that they are treated as minors. On the basis we stood until now we have but organized the backwardness itself, while a political paper causes the oppressed to turn to it with all their complaints, desires, cares, i.e., to become regular contributors. We must recognize the extraordinarily important role which the paper has to play in the organization of the workers, and why it must help us to find the "talented people" in all layers without whom we simply cannot make a lasting revolution.

18. The Organizational Question

The treatment of the organizational question is no less incorrect than that of the press. In regard to the former the "proletarian" craze expresses itself by the already mentioned "drafting" of all available members for the factories. The one-sidedness is thereby happily "organized", the political dullness has finally found a "system". Everything has a logic of its own - here Lenin stands completely on his head.

One needs forces of all kinds and everywhere. But one says - No! - we need factory workers in the trade unions! One should, as much as possible, pull talented workers out of the factories and give them "professional" training for the revolution through political work (including illegal work). But one does not understand how to engage in politics, one has a terrible fear of illegal work (this was outright betrayal during the war). And to top it: one even sends the talented people from other layers into the shops. Further: One should "explore" and carefully develop the abilities of individual members. But on the contrary, one brings them down to a common denominator; one levels them and is proud if "a few" have learned (in six years of useless trade union work!) how "to approach and to talk to workers". One's connections with other classes should be extended and cultivated. But no: One cuts oneself artificially (by force!) off from the environment. One needs, of course, intellectuals, and the contradistinction existing between them and the workers should be dissolved by making, as far as possible, "professional revolutionists" out of both of both of them (so the intellectual and professional distinction between them will disappear). But on the contrary: Even the intellectuals become trade union specialists and the entire organization is kept on the "workers' level". In this way the distinction between workers and intellectuals is not overcome; the question of the intellectuals as well as the problem of training workers for real leadership is not positively solved, but simply liked. The "proletarian" horizon, of necessity narrowly limited, becomes the sole "standard". In the end, the category "intellectual" embraces only certain technical abilities (such as writing, speaking, etc.), which are again concentrated upon the treatment of workers' problems. But whether workers or intellectuals: as final result there remain but "leading" individuals whose intellect and character has already been stifled in its embryonic

stage or has degenerated beyond repair. One takes a look at the SWP and one will find in its leadership only types of such kind. Considering the political system of the Fourth, this is unavoidable. Does the WP intend to force upon it a similar fate?

The basic mistakes and errors of the Fourth are stabilized in the organizational question by the false concept of the "mass party". One assumes that it is necessary to have "masses" in the party. Hence one looks enraptured upon the tremendous pool of working people in the trade unions to whose level one necessarily adjusts the party. However, for a Marxist party it is neither possible nor desirable or useful to organize "great masses" in the party, at least not before the revolution. This is the reason why the organizational question, too, takes us back to the political problems. It must be added:

The problem which has to be solved by every revolutionary organization consists by far not in the organization of as many people as possible in order to be "able to act". The reverse is true: The problem consists in finding a political system which permits "expert-like" service to the masses and to make them accessible to the influence of the organization. This is the only condition which can guarantee the latter's organic growth, and to obtain the desired result there are generally only two means available. First, propaganda and agitation; second, action. Hereby it must be kept in mind that correct propoganda and agitation (especially if illegal) are to a great extent also action and are the key to the solution of the organizational tasks.

Influence upon the masses is unthinkable without deepgoing propoganda and agitation. Really tackling and organizing the struggles, pointing to action. He, however, who wants to build a mass party first, tends, and must necessarily tend, to substitute for the influence upon the masses through concrete action the influx of ever fresh masses into the organization. This remains the inner mechanism of the inclination towards trade union politics even if one speaks of a cadre party and separates oneself through metaphysical "stages" from the organic growth through political activity. Whether one wants it or not: One does as one can (alas! one can, only with the millions in the trade unions!), one postpones independent activity, and all ends in numbness, covered with revolutionary phrases.

Thus we have the well-known "noise propoganda", but we never arrive at a serious analysis and support of any movement, we never extend or exploit any existing conflict. Thus, under certain conditions, membership statistics and election results are tremendously inflated (Stalinism), but the revolutionary influence dies out completely after a short period. The entire relationship between the party and the masses is thereby reversed: The "led" are the real leaders and determine the activity; the "leaders" are the led and comment on the movement. Instead of directing all efforts to the political education,

training and forming of the vanguard, one feels compelled to keep the vanguard depressed to the level of pseudo-democratic "adapting to the popular mind". The consequence is that the vanguard never appears as such and becomes incapable of propaganda as well as the intellectual education of society. Everything sinks to the level of bad agitation, and the art of leading the backward layers of the working class is lost before it is acquired. There exist but two possibilities. Either the "concept" of the Fourth, which means complete degeneration. Or the concept of Bolshevism, which means victory. A definitive decision is necessary!

19. Concluding Summary

The idea of all-sidedness - this truly practicing dialectic! - permeates the entire organizational plan of Lenin. It is extremely significant that Lenin conceives the political education of the proletariat to the height of its tasks only on the basis of the most many-sided and encompassing activity. In accordance with this he arranged his practical political work.

Whether it is a matter of re-organizing the nation, of winning allies among the intellectuals, the petty-bourgeoisie, (including the peasants), in the Army or in the administration; or whether it means support of liberals, democrats, students, or somebody else: to Lenin (see the "infantile disorders") all these are questions affecting the life of the organization and the proletariat, the solution of which is determined, first of all, by the character of the propaganda carried on among the proletariat itself. The oldest, most hopeless, "mustiest" spheres are drawn into the field of activity: only then does the worker attain fully-rounded political knowledge!

The goal is again and again: To get to know society in its entirety (in its social, economic, political and intellectual aspects), and to become the real master and organizer of the nation. Only if this goal is reached, hand in glove with the practical struggle, can we speak of a real vanguard and a real leadership of society by the proletariat. To speak in a still more "practical" and timely fashion:

Everywhere, where movements are forming or growing, or progressive demands are being raised; everywhere where official willfulness, injustice, police repression, impairment of human rights, etc., call for protest - the party must explain the political significance of the events and must make every effort not to let the leadership fall into the hands of bourgeois democrats and Stalinist bandits (as in the National Question). The party must come forward in every case as the most resolute defender and fighter for democracy. It must actively engage in the struggles and participate in the work of the most diverse opposition movements, tendencies, layers, etc., and thus win them over to the support of the party. Any other attitude (no matter what empty talk about "proletariat", "class content",

"principles", "socialist revolution", etc., may be used to "motivate") is capitulation before the enemy and constitutes a renunciation of socialism. Only those are to be reproached with "revision" of Marxism and betrayal of the "class standpoint" who forget that the proletariat is not the only oppressed class. It has many common interests (and most immediate) with the vast majority of the population, interests which must be both furthered and clarified.

Marxists base themselves upon the common indignation and they kindle the discontent of the various peoples, classes and layers with all their strength. Their principal attention must therefore be focused upon the education of leaders who are able to serve and to influence politically all existing (and all foreseeable) opposition movements. These leaders can be found only if the problem is posed and formulated consciously that is, if it is attacked according to the plan. Marxists detest and drive away for this reason all those provincials who are dragging down the Fourth with their dead weight, and who call their fidgeting in the morass of opportunism (in the shadow of Stalin!) "Bolshevism."

To repeat: It is the conscious, systematic and from the outset practical task conceived as a political plan in the sense described here, which separates Bolshevism from the so-called "Trotskyism" of the Fourth in the organizational question as well. And we have seen that the organizational question itself is a political question through and through.

Post Scriptum

The AK of the IKD declares itself expressly in full agreement with the article "Political Party or Trade Union Party" by Joe Leonard and Chet Marco (Convention Bulletin #4, April 19, 1946). Comrades Leonard and Marco had already sent their article to us before publication and has asked us to take a position on it. We only could answer them that the political line of the article was "excellent", and that we would stand for it without reservation (for it is a matter of the basic ideas, not of this or that term). We have thereupon written our own contribution, in a certain sense, with a view to complementing the article of Leonard and Marco systematically in its most important points.

As extensively as the problem is treated by the contribution of Comr. Leonard and Marco as well as by our own attempt, one must not believe that the entire problem has thereby been exhausted. On the contrary: The result of the attempt had to be an intensive rather than an extensive one, only a tiny fraction of all the questions that need elucidation could be taken into consideration. As is almost always the case, the shortness of the available period of time makes literary and other defects

unavoidable. One must take them as they are and have confidence in the progress of the discussion which to start was the main concern.

Finally, we must beg the indulgence of the reader in regard to the translation of our contribution into the English language. Some of our IKD comrades have undertaken this work and have on the whole done better than the previous American translators. (We sometimes sighed deeply as we were glancing through our articles in the NI). Nevertheless, here and there will be found a clumsiness of style, even an inaccuracy of expression. As much as we see and regret these and other disadvantages: Lack of time sets a definite limit to all attempts at improvement.

London 7 May 1946

AK of the IKD

APPENDIX

THESES ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

1. The necessity to build, new communist parties and a new International which is facing the proletariat of the world is the direct expression of the deep crisis in which socialism finds itself since the death of Lenin. This crisis is characterized by the defeats of the proletariat in numerous countries, and by the attempts, futile until now, to stem the advance of world-reaction, particularly Fascism. Organizationally this crisis reveals itself in the disintegration of the Third International whose fate was decided by the new revisionism (the theory of socialism in one country).

2. The new revisionism, the disintegration of the Third International and the defeats of the proletariat, find their general explanation in the complete failure of the revolutionary parties outside of Russia. But this failure has a more specific cause which can be found in the insufficient theoretical, political and organizational preparation for the revolution. This means: the crisis of socialism is mainly a crisis of leadership, a crisis of revolutionary consciousness. The Spanish events are the latest and most cogent proof that instinctively the masses will take the right road under objectively favorable conditions, that they can even drag their "leaders" (anarchists, POUM leaders, etc.) along for a certain time but that they are incapable of achieving and securing final victory without truly Marxist leadership.

3. If Russia and Bolshevism are excluded there was not a single party which fought the struggle against revisionism (reformism) consistently to its end and not a single one had solved the basic problems of the revolution. For this reason no party had found a political and organizational system fitting society as a whole. Since this is the root of all evil and since no one recognized clearly the final cause of these continually growing defeats the isolation of the Russian revolution and the ultimate disintegration of the Third International was to a certain degree unavoidable. Scientific socialism stands before the alternative - either accept this theorem or abandon itself as a science.

4. In the controversy between materialism and idealism it is not the aim of the former to negate the will of man and the role of the mind but to explain it. As much as external conditions are in the last analysis the determinants and as little as man can act against them - the socialist revolution still remains a conscious act and the correct consciousness decides. If, therefore, one wishes to hold to the science (mindful of the fact that all objective conditions for the victory of socialism have been present for some time) then a formal definition is necessary which permits the deficiencies of revolutionary consciousness to be traced to their origin.

5. Starting with the formal consideration that the crisis of socialism is a crisis of consciousness the most essential de-

definition of its content consists of the following:

a) Having failed to fight revisionism radically, one necessarily had to take over also those weaknesses which inevitably accompanied revisionism in respect to theoretical, political, organizational and methodological aspects.

b) Consequently, at the end of the first imperialist war the revolutionary parties moved almost completely unprepared into the struggle. They were incapable of correcting their omissions and were necessarily beaten.

c) Nevertheless all the iniquities of revisionism reproduced themselves further within the revolutionary parties through the more or less naive belief that the simple upsurge of the masses and the support of the October revolution would be sufficient to achieve the world revolution.

d) With the establishment of this illusion the ring of isolation about the Russian revolution was closed. As the organic product of this internationally undefeated revisionism there appeared the national Russian "theory of socialism in one country" which is nothing other than the continuation and inversion of revisionism on the basis of the isolated revolution.

e) Thus the first revisionism produced the second and sealed the fall of the Third International.

6. Based on these statements the elements of the crisis can be more concretely determined through the positive example of the Russian revolution. Lenin, recognizing early the malignancy of revisionism and pursuing it into its last hide-out arrived automatically at a revolutionary conception which embraced society as a whole. The development of this conception was tremendously facilitated since all its material elements were given in the form of the imminent bourgeois and agrarian revolution. In the last analysis all decisive sections of society were interested in the overthrow of czarism but neither the bourgeois revolution nor the agrarian reforms could be achieved as long as revisionism determined the direction of events.

7. The system of Lenin's politics which united all forces in a common focus (the overthrow of czarism) was based upon this insight. Lenin saw the political education of the proletariat and its hegemony in the revolution guaranteed only if it acquired the ability to achieve the following:

First, to assimilate all achievements of bourgeois culture (philosophy, economics, literature, science, politics, technology, art, administration and press), to apply them in a Marxist manner and to unite all these capacities within the party.

Second, to help systematically all political movements of any section of society (students, religious sects, peasants, liberals, etc.) to further them and to develop them for the sake of socialism.

Third, to be active in all organizations (trade unions, co-operatives, circles, cultural and military associations).

All this merely clarifies the interdependent forms of an activity which is oriented toward the actual conquest and reorganization of society.

8. Lenin's principal idea seems to be this: capitalism is a gigantic and powerful organism which is well developed, secured and armed to the teeth. Through press, school, church, manifold forms of ideology, through traditions, habits, milieu, methods of corruption, through a constant kindling of the instinct of private property, etc., it wields a tremendous influence even upon the proletariat.

For the destruction and replacement of such a colossal organization a tool is required which is not only equal to it in respect to influence in political, technical, intellectual and all other matters but which is also superior on the ground of the generally applied Marxist method.

9. Applied Marxist method means: This superiority must not be an imploring phrase; it must actually be realized step by step in the field of action and within the party.

It follows that Lenin completely understood the material prerequisites for the execution of the revolution and the reconstruction of society. To these pre-requisites we must also count man himself. Without human beings who are actually capable of assuming control and command of any branch of social activity one cannot speak of a sufficient preparation designed to prevent fatal reverses.

10. It is no accident that the Russian party produced and united within its ranks a number of brilliant specialists who surpassed the specialists of the bourgeoisie. There were all types of specialists who not only took the lead during the revolution but who also were able to attract because of their superiority, resisting sections of the intelligentsia, the engineers, the military, the administration and to subordinate and discipline them in the period of reconstruction which followed.

However, these were not found and educated without effort - their "creation" depended upon a concept, which permitted the penetration of all parts of society, an advance in all fields of activity, a filling of every political and theoretical gap and the anticipation of all elements of the future organization of society.

Only such a conception makes it possible to create a party which is ideologically unified, in which there can be an iron ("almost military") discipline; a party which is anchored in all suppressed classes and strata of society and which can lead them forward. The necessity of the so-called ideological avant-garde rests precisely upon the indispensableness of this conception -

however, its absence explains why the labor movement outside of Russia having produced some great heroic characters has ended with a long chain of wretched individuals such as Pieck, Remmele, Cahin and Thorez.

11. The creation of a party which is ideologically unified, disciplined, internally solid and truly authoritative depends upon the Leninist assumptions in the sense in which they are indicated. They are an absolute necessity since every state of society once it has established itself produces an abundance of needs which are partly manifest and partly ideologically disguised. To satisfy these needs, to uncover their ideological forms and to direct them into channels which further their development is a basic condition for the party itself.

If the frame in which the party works is too small to permit these truly social needs to be satisfied, to be activated and further developed, then they must break through by force. They then burst the cohesion of the party again and again and since the party is no longer able to satisfy these needs they leave behind only the sterile bureaucratic command as the only form of "cohesion".

The communist parties which already very early were forced to suppress, alienate and systematically exclude the best and most active elements of the intelligentsia and the workers tried only unsuccessfully to achieve unity through a method by which it cannot be achieved. They illustrate the law that the abandonment of Lenin's total conception means the destruction of all those forces in politics, theory, organization, etc., which are absolutely necessary for the victory of the revolution and the reconstruction of society.

12. Lenin's main idea is so simple that it is hardly directly expressed and because of its simplicity it has not been "discovered" anywhere. Yet the incomparable strength of Bolshevism derives from it exclusively. It enables Bolshevism to limit the field of activity of other parties and it forces them to accommodate themselves to it. Germany as the classical counterpart to Russia shows the reverse picture. There the revolutionary party accommodated itself to the reformist parties.

13. It has been said that social consciousness does not permit any vacuum. The lack of an all inclusive activity (oriented toward a total reconstruction of society) and a corresponding political and organization system created a vacuum which became more and more noticeable. Germany was the first country in which this vacuum was filled by revisionist methods.

The lasting effect of revisionism in the following period rested precisely on the fact that, like Bolshevism, it had a total conception which embraced all sections of society. During the period of rising capitalism it seemed that the constant increase of wealth, the steadily growing agreement of interests of workers and capitalists, the constantly increasing share of the workers in state power would guarantee a peaceful transition from capital-

ism to socialism. Even the capitalist should not have to suffer any "injustices", they were to be adequately compensated for the cession of their "property".

14. In this manner the need for a perspective for society as a whole was satisfied and a wide field of activity was opened for varied social forces. Science, art, technics, commerce, etc., could flourish; philanthropists, reformers, pacifists, free masons, religious utopians of all denominations could find a refuge and they could participate to their heart's content. This new conception penetrated deeper and deeper and socialism became more and more the concern of philistines, a matter of fashion and good manners.

15. Just as in Russia the rise of all classes was blocked only by czarism, (which presented the most decisive impediment against which the whole society could be mobilized in one form or another) so there remained only one mischief maker in the harmonic picture in Germany. This mischief maker was the German Left. It had to be kept in check and if necessary, everyone from Ebert to Wilhelm II united to make common front against it. As Russian conditions favored an adequate form of the revolutionary conception, (although they did not produce it automatically), so the revisionist concept favored an ethically disguised conservatism. German socialism received its insipid "ethical-humanitarian" coloring only upon the basis of the rising economic development and in opposition to the rebellious demands of the German Left.

16. In the face of this development the German Left was powerless and in spite of its revolutionary intentions, it had to be content with what ever revisionism had left over for it. The Left was incapable of understanding the full significance of Lenin's plan and could not counterpose it to revisionism. The Left was opposed to Leninist methods and principles of organization; it exhausted itself more or less in theories about the mechanical collapse of capitalism, in the belief in the spontaneity of the masses, and in experiments with "pure" labor movements.

17. Belief in spontaneity and the pure labor movement were the basic theoretical positions into which Leninist strategy had pushed revisionism and which deprived it of its chances of success. That is to say: Despite all differences, despite all contrasts and implacability of theoretical and political conceptions the defeat of Russian revisionism and of the German Left was based upon their common social situations. Revolution and reform acted upon a field which could not show any results no matter with what means and intentions one worked upon it. However, the adversity of the German Left toward the Bolshevik conception had a fateful consequence for the world revolution. It prevented the formation of an International founded upon these principles. It thereby deprived Lenin's party of the necessary support and in the end brought about the national bolshevistic depravity of the Comintern.

18. As far as Europe was concerned the principles of Bolshevism were considered justified, at best, because of the pecu-

liar Russian conditions (particularly the rule of czarism, the illegality of the labor movement and even the movement of the bourgeois opposition). Already the outbreak of the imperialist war showed that the application of these principles on an international scale was a basic prerequisite for the proletarian revolution in the whole world. The war, accompanied by stricter censorship, by state of martial law, etc., soon placed the labor movement in Europe under conditions approaching those in Russia in respect to the political situation - and within these no legal mass party could cope.

The courageous attempts of small groups to fit themselves into the new situation failed on the whole because of their inability to grasp the Bolshevik methods in their entirety. With the end of the war these groups quickly went back to the old methods. Because of this the fate of the Third International could not virtually be changed. Socialism moved into a state of acute crisis, from which it has not recovered up to the present time. There is a continuous line leading from the defeats of the first years after the war to the victory of fascism in Germany and the Spanish events.

19. The ultimate goal of the old revisionism was the avoidance of a national revolution; the ultimate goal of the new revisionism (socialism in one country) is the attempt to evade the organization of the world revolution. Both have shown themselves according to Marxian analysis as complete illusions, and in any case they lead to the same result: Who ever wants to avoid the revolution becomes at first its most bitter opponent and later - its victim.

20. The labor bureaucracy always identified its own interests with those of the proletariat. Just as the old revisionism hoped to escape its ultimate fate by making continual concessions to the bourgeoisie and by tying the working class defenselessly to the bourgeois state, so the Russian bureaucracy makes use of the Comintern in order to secure its existence and to lend a greater weight to its treaties, alliances, concessions, etc. It ties the Comintern to reformism, i.e., to its limited national policy and to the bourgeois governments.

21. The process of degeneration of the Second and Third Internationals did not take a straight line, of course, but took place unevenly. But the basic tendency prevailed in both Internationals with inexorable consistency: their politically progressive role ceased the very moment when the revisionist conception gained preponderance. They were no longer capable of protecting the struggle of the proletariat with their integral authority anywhere - their progressiveness was transferred from the political to the economic field, in which they appeared at first (as long as the economic basis existed) as "successful reformers".

22. In the name of such reforms the bureaucracy subjects the working class to the political and economic laws of life (Lebensgesetze) of the bourgeoisie. It makes itself independent

develops its own interests and it defends these interests as a privileged caste against the workers by squandering to the last cent the political capital which carried it to power. Yet always the moment arrives when quantity turns into quality, the moment when economic cretinism must be replaced by politics and when the political laws of the bourgeoisie alone dominate the field. The temporarily progressive role of the bureaucracy in the economic field comes to an end as soon as capitalism enters its state of decline - there no longer remains any room for reforms and even the ope to conserve the gains already achieved vanishes. The bourgeoisie is no longer able to appease the proletariat by concessions, it must break the working class by political violence.

23. In the beginning of this process, the bourgeoisie made use of the Social democratic bureaucracy to achieve its aims. Social democracy served to exhaust the proletariat in hopeless economic struggles and became, if necessary, directly or indirectly, the executioner of the workers (Noske, Pilsudski, etc.). In this manner the national bureaucracy expended its political capital, lost the confidence of the workers, and became increasingly worthless to the bourgeoisie. Deprived of its economic base, Social Democracy, once the most dependable servant of the bourgeoisie, lost the ground under its feet, and simply because of its continued existence, i.e., as the administrator of mass organizations, it became a serious source of danger. A new turn from quantity into quality prepares itself: the political equilibrium is so unstable in times of crisis that the masses who are accustomed to peace, reform, and docility, become active and may immediately be driven to the other extreme. In addition, there are the betrayals committed by Social Democracy in the years 1914 to 1923 and the mistakes of the revolutionary vanguard. Theoretically, these have created the conditions which are necessary to reach an understanding of the situation and to accumulate new political capital within the proletariat. One must accept events as they actually occur; history allows the revolutionary vanguard six years, sometimes longer, for the accomplishment of this task - (in Germany from 1923 to 1929). There was nothing that could have saved the Social Democratic bureaucracy (which wanted to prevent the revolution in its own country) from destruction by the proletarian revolution if it had not been for a third force which gave it new political credit and left the task of its destruction to the bourgeois counter-revolution.

24. This third force was the October revolution which interceded as a retarding factor in the "natural course" of events and which once more blocked the revolutionary alternative with the new revisionism. The existence of Social Democracy during the years of crisis (1929 until today) was not based upon the confidence of the workers but upon the political credit, (or better the days of grace) which the errors and crimes of the Comintern allowed it. In other words, a bureaucracy which came to power on the basis of a successful proletarian revolution transformed itself into a peaceful "reformer" of the world

and, on an internal scale, lent new strength to revisionism which had become impossible nationally (the perspective of the "exemplary" socialist construction while renouncing support of the world revolution.). The former relationship has been completely reversed: Russia, formerly the revolutionary block which reached into the ring of reformist countries, is now the center of "peaceful" reforms. This occurs at a time when the possibilities for reform are exhausted in the rest of the world and when the socialist revolution remains the only way open to the progress of humanity.

25. The consequences are doubly disastrous. Since the Russian bureaucracy assumed its role in a period of declining capitalism it was subjected to the immanent laws of development of revisionism to an even greater extent. Being the sole ruler in the state, it became independent much faster than the Social-Democratic bureaucracy; it subjected the proletariat much faster to bourgeois politics and economy; it defended its interests against those of the workers sooner and more cruelly; much sooner it squandered the usurped political capital; much faster it lost its progressive function in the field of economic reforms (which were, from the start very problematical as long as international capitalism existed); much faster it became the enemy of every political movement within the working class and its ruthless hangman. Since it is a caste without its own roots in the process of production, it debases political methods to the lowest depths of barbarism much faster - for the higher it stands above the level of the bourgeoisie, the lower it falls below it, and in its fall, drags the rest of society with it. Much faster it finally reaches that point where quantity turns into quality; where it has to sacrifice all achievements in the interest of its self-preservation and becomes the exclusive prisoner of bourgeois politics.

26. In order to characterize the situation as it stands at the moment it is necessary to add this: Wherever the forces of Social-Democracy and the veiled crimes of the non-Russian Stalinist bureaucracy are not sufficient to complete the betrayal of the proletariat, there the Soviet bureaucracy comes to their aid in a more and more direct manner. In Spain and France the Communist parties which otherwise are insignificant grow stronger solely as parties of the counter-revolution. Stalinism achieves what Prieto and Leon Blum alone would fail to achieve: it becomes the armed hangman of the proletariat the best of the Soviet bureaucracy, behind which the imperialist bourgeoisie is hiding.

27. Regardless of whether the development in the reactionary direction moves to its ultimate consequences or whether these can be removed by a new victorious revolution, the point of culmination is still the victory of Fascism in Germany, which accelerated the basic tendencies and which made perceptible the causes of the lasting crisis of socialist consciousness. It is no accident that the call to form the 4th International

coincides with the victory of German Fascism, but this was at that time only the formulation of an historical need. In the attempts to form the International, further experiences were required before (after repeated starts) the question could be posed to the most developed revolutionists: How is an International conceivable at all and how must it solve its task?

28. In the consideration of the developments which have occurred in the labor movement one must not overlook the fact that the actual political development has been dependent to an extraordinary extent upon Germany and Russia. The German experience continues to be decisive: the victory over Fascism as well as capitalism in Europe and even in America, etc., depends directly upon the extent to which the German experience is basically understood and evaluated. Thus once again Germany will have to give that basis for the theoretical reconstruction of Marxism on an international scale which it gave at the beginning of the century for its falsification (at that time the revolutionary restoration of Marxism fell to Russia, which today carries through the further development of this falsification).

29. Just because the retrogressive movement closes with the victory of Fascism in Germany, it will first be broken again by Germany (whatever will follow in other countries will be from a theoretical point of view merely concrete additions). In spite of all retrogression, history does not repeat itself under the same conditions and on the same level, but in an inversion; its dialectical circle present progress and retrogression at the same time. Retrogression consists of the destruction of the labor movement and the bankruptcy of the Third International. Progress (even with the possible loss of the economic achievements of the October revolution) consists of the objective destruction of the direct causes which preserve reformism and the equally objective necessity to pose the basic questions of the revolution anew.

30. The victory of Fascism in Germany has given, objectively as well as subjectively, all those political conditions which were the foundations of the Leninist conception and which furthered the revolutionary development in Russia tremendously. Marxism requires that we consider the reverse side of the process in the present situation and that we recognize the new political advantages. These new advantages arising out of the present situation are, in their objective content and their latent potential, but not yet in their subjective manifestation, mainly the following:

a) the possibility of mobilizing all decisive sections of society (workers, petty-bourgeoisie, peasants, students, intellectuals, etc.) against the fascist system, which must appear to them sooner or later as the decisive obstacle;

b) the further possibility of spurring the inevitable

popular movement against Fascism and of using it for the overthrow of capitalism itself.

31. As precarious as the situation of the proletariat may be, there is no cause for desperation. With the conquest of Germany Fascism too has reached its turning point. Its tremendous pressure in a highly developed country forces the proletariat to learn thoroughly and to go back to the Leninist conception. Everything depends on a correct consciousness. The more the natural period has been passed and the natural development has been disrupted, the more birth becomes the task of a skilled doctor who knows how to wield the surgical instruments and to perform a Caesarian operation. Compressed steam may burst a kettle or it may escape through a safety valve without effect, but it also can be transformed into an all moving power.

Applied to the construction of the 4th International, this means that with a correct perception of the situation, the objective possibility is today given for applying the Leninist conception for the first time internationally. This conception consists of a comprehensive plan adequate for society as a whole which is based upon comprehensive literary activity which relates to all fields. Its formula is this: To count on accidents and spontaneous eruptions and to be prepared for them, but to follow the plan obstinately. Everything else follows almost automatically in the course of the practical work. The only condition is that no field of activity is excluded and the radical-polemic character of the literature is preserved.

32. The Second and Third Internationals have disappeared without glory. The Fourth International can only be victorious as the microcosm, which reflects the macrocosm of the future world and which prepares the overcoming of the old world by absorbing its total knowledge and by revolutionizing it completely.

Up to now, for example, no one has been able to give a real perspective for the countries suppressed by fascism. Yet no one can outline any other perspective than that given by Lenin. The possibility of taking up Lenin's plan has become an absolute necessity in the face of the threatening danger of world Fascism and the Third Imperialist War. In this recognized necessity the basic element of future freedom and the greatest advantage in the present situation of the world proletariat can be found.

Two paragraphs dealing with Russia as a "Workers State" are omitted. Though these paragraphs are part of an historic position they no longer apply today and can be excluded as worthless from the present discussion.