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October 1942

# Fourth International

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*Manifesto of the Fourth International:*  
**To the Workers and Peasants  
of India**

**Roosevelt and the Farm Bloc**

*Editorial Comment on the Governmental Crisis*

**The Government Offensive Against  
the Merchant Seamen**

*By Frederick J. Lang*

**The Real Situation in Ceylon**

**The Program of the Bolshevik-Leninists of India**

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*Twenty Cents*

## Manager's Column

This appreciative and welcome letter comes from a subscriber of some years:

"Dear Editor:

"May I take this opportunity to compliment you on the excellent articles on agriculture that have appeared in the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL from time to time. These articles are so timely, so true to fact, and so necessary at this time that I cannot praise them too highly.

"Enclosed is my renewal for our magazine and paper for another year. I hope they get here in time as I cannot be without them."

\* \* \*

The articles on agriculture are also praised in the following letter:

"Dear Sirs:

"I am a student of economics and find a lot of valuable material in the group of articles by C. Charles on American agriculture. I wonder if you would send me a one-half year subscription to FOURTH INTERNATIONAL for \$1, beginning with the May 1942 issue. If so, please let me know, and I shall send you a money order.

"I find your magazine contains some very interesting viewpoints and ideas that I have not found elsewhere."

\* \* \*

In addition to compliments we also receive complaints. Here is one:

"Dear Editor:

"Several months ago the 'Fourth International' published an extremely timely article explaining why Sidney Hook and other former radical philosophers came to support the war. An editorial note promised that the article was only the first of a series. Each month I awaited the continuation of these articles with the keenest expectation, but they have not appeared. I hope the project has not been abandoned. It seems to me that educational articles on basic questions such as these are of first importance in convincing the most advanced workers that the only way out of the war is to organize for socialism.

"Here's hoping the second article in the promised series appears in the next issue."

We have inquired of William

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Editor FELIX MORROW

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Manager's Column *Inside Front Cover*

F. Warde, author of the first article, and learn that he is now working on the second article of the series.

\* \* \*

One of our subscribers dropped into the office the other day to tell us how popular FOURTH INTERNATIONAL is becoming

in his neighborhood. He stepped into the corner grocery with his copy of the F.I. under his arm. The clerk saw the back-page notice advertising "Socialism on Trial," and asked: "Say, would you mind selling me that? I've been following that trial. If you can get another one, I'd sure ap-

preciate that magazine." The subscriber gave us the two dimes the clerk paid him, and bought another copy from us to replace the one he sold.

\* \* \*

GREAT NEWS FROM SEATTLE! Our friends in the Northwest are really active. Not many months back only single FOURTH INTERNATIONAL subscriptions were going out to that territory. Now we've received an order to begin sending a substantial bundle order every month. This means that the ideas of socialism are making headway in a great section of our country, that the revolutionary traditions of the Northwest are again on the march.

We have discussed with O. C. of Minneapolis the sale of FOURTH INTERNATIONAL in the Twin City area. He has told us about two very good methods of selling and distributing the magazine as well as THE MILITANT.

On the sidewalk outside the Minneapolis headquarters the agent has placed a stand, on which he displays the current MILITANT and last week's MILITANT. Due to an oversight the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL has not been on the stand, but beginning with this issue, the magazine will also be on sale in front of the Minneapolis headquarters. As the literature is sold, the supply on the stand is replenished.

Every branch should give consideration to this idea. A stand in front of your headquarters may result in even bigger sales of literature than those enjoyed by Minneapolis.

Another very good suggestion to get FOURTH INTERNATIONAL into the hands of your contacts and thus keep it from piling up in your headquarters:

Each month, as soon as the magazine comes off the press, each comrade is urged to buy three copies for 50c. He then sells these copies to his personal contacts, or in justified circumstances, gives them away. Through this method your contacts become acquainted with the magazine and eventually may take out a subscription.

NOTICE: We have now secured sufficient copies of back issues needed for the second binding of FOURTH INTERNATIONAL for 1940-1941. The volume will be ready for delivery the first of October.

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# FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME III

OCTOBER 1942

NO. 10

## Editorial Comment:

### Roosevelt's Ultimatum to Congress—The Economic Factors Making for Government by Decree—Why the Farm Bloc Resists—Why Roosevelt Cannot Stop Price Rises: The Example of the French Revolution—For Unity of the Workers and Dirt Farmers Against All the Capitalist Programs

The "Europeanization" of America has reached a new stage with President Roosevelt's Labor Day message to Congress. Government by decree—the kind of authoritarian government conducted in Germany by Bruening and Von Schleicher, the immediate predecessors of Hitler; in France by Daladier, the organizer of France's defeat—is on the order of the day, Roosevelt declared, in the following words: "In the event that the Congress should fail to act and act adequately, I shall accept the responsibility, and I will act." Unless Congress, before an October 1 deadline, changes its parity legislation on farm products, Roosevelt would violate the existing law.

Some of the implications of Roosevelt's ultimatum to Congress were well enough summarized in an editorial in the *New York Times*:

"In other words, if Congress fails to do what he asks, and within a few weeks, the President will himself nullify part of an act of Congress on his own responsibility.

"If the President carried out this threat, where would it leave the powers of Congress? If he can carry out this threat on this occasion, on the plea of averting 'a disaster which would interfere with the winning of the war,' what constitutional barrier would prevent his using the same plea for whatever other powers he wished to exercise, for whatever other laws of Congress he wished to suspend? What effect would this have on our constitutionally guaranteed liberties of all kinds? It may be replied that the President would assume only the powers necessary to win the war. But should the President himself be permitted to be the sole judge of which powers these are? Should the President be the sole judge of what Congressional laws 'interfere with the winning of the war'—even if those laws deal solely with internal economic questions? Would not this whole doctrine, as Senator Taft has declared, leave Congress 'a mere shell of a legislative body'? The President has taken a grave position that cannot be allowed to pass unchallenged." (*New York Times*, September 9.)

But after the first shock, the *New York Times* and virtually the entire capitalist press did allow Roosevelt's move to pass unchallenged. Indeed, before the month was out the *New York Times* was buttressing Roosevelt's ultimatum to Congress by enunciating the following conception:

"Each Congressman is elected from a particular State or district. Most of them feel responsible only to the voters of their particular district. They will play a particular local interest against the whole national interest if they think that the voters of their district are greedy or short-sighted enough to approve such action.

"Under our system the only unifying force, the only official who is elected to represent the interests of the whole country, is the President. It is to him that the people traditionally look to enforce the national interest against the competitive pulls of a thousand local interests." (*New York Times*, September 27.)

This utterly false doctrine of the "national" superiority of the President over Congress is being heard more and more as a justification of the establishment of government by presidential decree. The *Times* and other capitalist spokesmen have stifled their constitutional doubts, their knowledge that Roosevelt is moving to destroy traditional "democratic" government. Like Roosevelt they consider that the needs of American capitalism justify Roosevelt's unconstitutional program. "Necessity knows no law" is the maxim they are following. The fact that a few capitalist groups are still objecting should not obscure the much more important fact of the virtual unanimity of the major sections of the capitalist class. Ordinarily none too friendly to Roosevelt, for example, the Scripps-Howard newspapers are now going all the way with him on this question: "Congress is kicking itself out of the place it should occupy in the American democracy," declares an editorial in the September 24 *New York World-Telegram*—a euphemistic way of saying that Roosevelt is kicking Congress out of that place.

The capitalists know that government by decree is in their favor. They have not had to wait long for proofs. Roosevelt has followed up his Labor Day threat with a few examples of presidential decrees. On September 9 he decreed the abolition of all premium pay for week-ends and holidays, thereby abrogating with a stroke of his pen the many provisions in existing union contracts providing for such overtime pay. On September 14 he decreed that the 2,300,000 federal employes could henceforth be transferred from job to job, into factories or other work, as Manpower Commissioner McNutt sees fit; thereby in effect he abrogated all existing civil service legislation. Likewise on September 14 he ordered that workers in the lumber and non-ferrous metals industries in twelve western states may not leave their jobs without permits, on pain of reclassification and drafting into the army; this decree put teeth in a September 7 order by McNutt freezing to their jobs the workers in these industries. These first giant steps of decree government indicate what is coming if Roosevelt has his way.

Why government by decree? Why does the ruling class

of big capitalists, on whose behalf Roosevelt governs, feel it necessary to reduce Congress to the role of a rubber stamp and, if it resists, to push it aside altogether? "Necessity knows no law" is dangerous doctrine. The workers will learn from it! Only the most pressing urgency can have driven Roosevelt to this unprecedented step.

## What Is Behind Roosevelt's Move

Roosevelt was driven to this move by the economic situation. We cannot enter into a discussion with those who would ascribe his ultimatum to Congress to any tendency on his part toward personal dictatorship. Such a discussion would be sterile and useless. One thing is clear: Roosevelt, as chief of the government of the capitalist class, sees the danger of inflation looming. The steps that he demands of Congress and threatens himself to take if Congress does not act are attempts to postpone inflation to as late a date as possible.

It is well at this point to state that not all price rises are due to inflation. The loose usage of the term "inflation" by various capitalist spokesmen, from Walter Lippmann to Dorothy Thompson, is an index of the mental poverty and economic ignorance of these intellectuals. Price rises can have various causes. Inflation is a price rise caused by a debased currency. There has been no inflation of the currency—yet. The dollar is still worth 1/35 of an ounce of gold, as it has been since January 1934. But there is great danger of inflation beginning soon, unless the government takes drastic steps. Such steps were proposed by Roosevelt.

Inflation was a characteristic method of financing all major wars up to World War I. The Revolutionary War was financed by debased currency, as the eloquent phrase, "Not worth a Continental," testifies. The Civil War was financed through greenbacks. In World War I Germany, despite all efforts, suffered inflation. In the immediate post-war period, as a result of the war and of deliberate moves of the governments to wipe out their war debts, most of Europe went through inflation.

At this stage, however, the Roosevelt administration is determined to avoid inflation as long as possible. But vast economic forces, set in motion by war production, are encouraging inflationary tendencies.

War production to date has passed through the following states:

1. Tooling up. This was a period of preparation for mass production for war. Government orders acted as a stimulant to the entire economy. As these orders were placed, idle plants were brought back into production, including producers of consumer goods. This represented the halcyon days of the war effort (in reality, pre-production for war): plenty of work and an increasing supply of consumer goods.

2. The shift over to mass war production. Vital raw materials increasingly were taken over for use in production of war equipment. Durable consumer goods such as cars, refrigerators, radios, were gradually curtailed. In general, however, consumer production was still higher than in 1938.

3. Systematic diversion from consumer goods production to war production. Not only machines and plants are diverted, but also labor (including millions of farm workers) To the curtailment of durable consumer goods is now being added the curtailment of non-durable consumer goods (including food), while of those still produced the war machine consumes ever greater amounts. This is the crucial period. Increasing scarcity of consumer goods drives prices upward.

If the forces of the market are allowed to operate with any great amount of independence, the result will be ever increasing prices for farm and other consumer goods, as the masses strive to secure the limited supply still available. To compensate for the increasing prices, the workers will demand higher wages and will be driven to fight for them. Higher prices and wages, on the cost-plus basis which is the method of financing government contracts, will mean ever greater outlays of money on the part of the government. Already on April 28, 1942, OPA Administrator Henderson reported: "The price rises which have occurred since September, 1939, will increase by 35 billions of dollars the money cost of the war program now authorized. The total cost of the first World War by comparison, was 31 billions." This gigantic figure of extra-governmental costs has been increasing since then. Were this process to continue uninterrupted, as it would under *laissez-faire*, the government's credit—and therefore its currency—could not survive intact. This process would inevitably mean inflation.

## Why Capitalists Fear Inflation

The alternative to inflation as a means of financing the war is wage-fixing and taxation. For the masses, in either case, the end result is much the same. Inflation turns high monetary wages into a fiction. Wage-freezing and sapping of this fixed wage by a system of intense taxation, both direct and indirect, likewise slashes the workers' standard of living.

For the capitalist class, however, it is of great importance which of these two methods are chosen.

Outside of certain sections of the farming capitalists, there is no doubt that the capitalists hate and fear the inflationary process. Their feelings have been articulated by Henderson, in his April 28 statement accompanying his price-fixing order:

"The pattern of disaster which attends the final stage of inflation is well known. In this stage prices are revised upward weekly and then daily. Incomes enter into a crazy race with prices. Money is something to be passed on as quickly as possible. It is no longer a symbol of stability but a mark of social disintegration. Thrift and saving become incompatible with self-preservation. Savings, investments, life insurance policies, all the results of past thrift, become worthless. Legitimate business disappears; speculation and profiteering remain. Organized government itself is undermined.

"The hopelessness and frustration of the early stages of inflation soon turn to anger and despair.

"To think of mobilization of resources for war in such an environment is the merest fancy."

Henderson's last point is particularly important now. Modern war economy requires a large measure of a capitalist type of economic planning by the government, expressed in rationing, priorities, allocations, government orders, price maxima and minima, wage-freezing, manpower shifts, etc. The basis of any planning, of course, is measurement. The function of money is to measure economic values. Inflation destroys the use of money as a stable measure of value, and without such a measure rigorous government control and "planning" becomes an impossibility. Inflation always means economic chaos.

Of course, when the capitalist class does find it necessary to resort to inflation, the monopolists easily contrive to make an extremely lucrative thing out of it. As smaller capitalist concerns die, the large corporations are able to buy them up with the nearly valueless depreciated currency. The wages

of the workers are made a valueless factor and capitalist profits mount to astronomical heights on exports. How the industrial magnates of Germany enriched themselves during the period of extreme inflation is pointed out by Professor J. Laurence Laughlin in "The Madness of Inflation" (1924):

"The industrialists now (1924) possess a vast increase in plant and equipment, for which they paid out paper money which cost them little or nothing. The paper became worthless in the hands of workmen or shopkeepers. . . . Thus a depreciating and uncertain standard was used as a means of redistributing wealth, the poor and middle classes being crushed, while the industrialists emerged with more capital in the form of fixed construction."

Although the large corporations can thus find ways to turn inflation to their benefit, it is, however, a desperate gamble. It brings to a breaking point the contradictions in modern society. Above all, it tends to get out of control. Once entered on the road of inflation, the end result is likely to be a revolutionary crisis such as that in Germany in 1923. To the most sluggish worker and farmer it becomes clear that capitalism cannot run society, a new class must take over production, and the masses turn to the revolutionary party of the proletariat. As Henderson says, "the hopelessness and frustration of the early stages of inflation soon turn to anger. . . ."

It should be clear by now why Roosevelt prefers the policy of taxation and wage-fixing to inflation. Inevitably, we believe, if the war drags on, it will be necessary for the government to finance the war through inflation. To hold this moment off as long as possible is the aim of the President's demands on Congress and will be the subject of his decree laws.

## Why the Farm Bloc Resists

The farm bloc has waxed indignant at Roosevelt's attempt to strip Congress of its powers. But it would be fatal to think for a moment that in this conflict the farm bloc represents a democratic tendency. While the farm bloc is a heterogeneous combination, its main pillar in Congress is the poll-tax gang. The grotesque and vicious Bilbo of Mississippi is typical of its leadership. Politically, much of the farm bloc is starkly reactionary, sponsoring the worst anti-labor bills. One of the main grievances of the farm bloc is that wages were not frozen long ago, so that two million agricultural workers who have left would have had less incentive to turn to the war industries in the cities. Economically, the farm bloc represents the exploiting elements in agriculture: the cotton and peanut planters of the South who grind down the sharecroppers; the factory farms of Oklahoma operated with agricultural workers; also in the bloc are the "middle farmers" of the mid-West, who employ farm labor at least for part of the year.

Price-fixing and extended taxation will cut down their profits whereas rising prices means more income for them. They bitterly resent the fact that their section of the capitalist class is not being permitted to share equally in war profiteering. As the "big four" farm organizations of the bloc wrote on September 25 to the Senators in charge of their bill: "They cannot understand the attitude of those who give their approval to cost-plus for industry . . . but demand cost-minus for farmers."

Their present resistance, moreover, is sharpened by the realization that this may be their last chance. They understand very well that their over-representation in Congress—

a result of the deliberate aim of the bourgeoisie to lead on the backward rural areas as against the city proletariat—has become utterly disproportionate to their real economic and political power. They know that out of this war, thanks to the government contracts which always favor Big Business, the great monopolies are emerging with ever increasing economic and political power, while considerable sections of small business, including agricultural enterprises, are being wiped out. It was a representative of these smaller capitalists who wrote in one of the Truman Committee reports: "A large number of small businesses are already closing their shops. . . . Great care must be taken to assure that we do not destroy the American way of life by adopting the wrong methods of defending them." And in another report: "It is clear that the competitive position of the big corporations in the economy of the nation is being vastly improved by the war, and at a time, moreover, when tens of thousands of small businessmen are being forced to stop production while they watch the value of their plants destroyed. . . ."

The competitive position of the farm bloc, both politically and economically, is thus being destroyed before their very eyes by the war. After the war it is unlikely that it will have the forces in Congress to put up a battle. Monopoly will cut down its strength on one side, while on the other the next wave of labor resurgence is certain to extend union organization and a Labor Party to the sharecroppers and farm laborers. The bitterness of the farm bloc is that of a dying class. Its resistance is blind, too, like that of a class without a possible perspective.

Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of the present activity of the farm bloc is that under its banner it is dragging along a large section of the dirt farmers who till the soil themselves without hired labor. These dirt farmers are the natural allies of the city proletariat. It is a crime to permit Bilbo to corral the dirt farmers for his reactionary ends. Yet that is what the AFL and CIO leadership are doing by their support of Roosevelt's price-fixing program. The united front of the trade union leaders with Roosevelt thus divides the toilers of the nation who should be making a united front against both the deflationary and inflationary programs of the capitalist class. Similarly, despite their resistance to Roosevelt's program, the farm bloc is helping him to keep the toilers divided.

## Roosevelt Cannot Stop Price Rises

Certain trade union leaders are arguing privately—publicly they are supporting the Roosevelt program as one which will preserve labor's standard of living—that, after all, wage-freezing and steep taxation will be better than the alternative of continued price rises. Roosevelt's program is, for them, a lesser evil, since it will keep prices at their present levels.

But will it? Inextricably part of Roosevelt's program is ever greater curtailment of civilian production. It is this diversion of manpower, machinery and goods (including food) from civilians to the war which is the main factor making for price increases. That is, scarcity creates the pressure, opportunity and temptation for raising prices, whether legally or illegally. Given increasing scarcity, the prevention of price rises is dependent on adequate policing.

Can a capitalist government police its own capitalist class sufficiently rigorously to prevent it from seeking to profit by price rises? In issuing the OPA price-fixing order of April 28, 1942, Henderson stated: "The idea that we will have

a whole army of people searching for violations will not be an important part of the picture." Henderson was also quoted as saying that "little time was spent by the experts who devised the order in figuring out means for putting people in the hoosegow." Does Henderson, then, expect that American businessmen will abide by the golden rule? The example of England and all Europe shows that something more is needed. Henderson pretends for the present to ignore this fact because neither he nor anyone in Washington has a serious program for policing prices. Government functionaries are ransacking the libraries, studying the experience of all countries during periods of goods scarcity and inflation, for ways and means of policing prices during the coming period in America.

We recommend to these earnest students the one example in modern history of successful price-fixing under conditions of war: the French Republic during 1792-94. Fighting victorious wars against all reactionary Europe, necessarily draining the country of manpower and goods, nevertheless the French government maintained the "general maximum," as price-fixing was called. However, with the fall of Robespierre on July 27, 1794 and the coming to power of the Thermidorian reaction, price-fixing soon collapsed and inflation set in. Why did price-fixing work under Robespierre and not under the Thermidorians? Listen, followers of Roosevelt, to the explanation given by the great French historian, Albert Mathiez:

"In order to feed the towns and armies, and at the same time to support the assignat (currency), the great Committee of Public Safety under Robespierre, by an ingenious system of requisitioning, had gained control over the whole of French production, which it distributed through the agency of a central commission. By exercising its right of pre-emption and requisition this Central Commission of Supply in effect dictated prices, which it fixed by means of the law of the maximum. . . . In order to carry out the requisitioning and ensure the observance of the maximum, strong measures of control and vigorous means of enforcing the law were necessary. *The economic terror rested upon the political terror.* In spite of all its faults and the vast bureaucracy which it necessitated, it held its own, worked, and to a large extent attained its object."

The "political terror" consisted not only of government coercion but rested on the vast network of revolutionary Jacobin clubs, from the members of which came the civil servants who handled requisitioning and price-fixing, and which gave the whole system a genuinely popular base of support in the population. Any attempt at profiteering was immediately noted by the members of one or another of the Jacobin clubs; a warning from such a member was enough to stop the practice. Thus the government had eyes and ears everywhere; it was the dictatorship of the masses that assured the success of Robespierre's economic policy.

Then, after the fall of Robespierre, the Thermidorians destroyed the network of Jacobin clubs. Mathiez tells us what happened then:

"As a rule the Thermidorians relied upon the support of the property-owning classes, who were interested in the restoration of commercial liberty. They expelled the lower classes from all posts and replaced them by people in comfortable circumstances. They put an end to the Terror or, rather, they turned it against their adversaries. The first result was that the economic laws of the Revolution lost their power. They could only be put in force by compulsion, because they were injurious to all private interests, and there was no longer any compulsion. . . .

"The immense purchases for equipping the army and feed-

ing the towns now ceased to be made at the tariff fixed once and for all by law and applied by the Commission of Commerce and Supply. In future the State had to pay the prices demanded by the owners. When we remember that the war was still going on, that access by sea was closed and stocks exhausted as a result of the war, which was now in its third year, we may estimate the consequences inevitably bound to result from the abolition of the maximum. . . .

"Boissy d'Anglas, one of those moderates who became rabid when their class interests were at stake, was placed at the head of the food-supply service instead of Robert Lindet, who was removed on the plea that he was a terrorist. Boissy d'Anglas was obliged to admit that the provisioning of Paris was imperilled. . . . He obtained the passage of a decree restoring the former penalties for delinquents (prison, fines, requisitions paid for at the current rate for the date when they ought to have been carried out, etc.). *But who was to secure the application of the decree now that all the governing bodies had been purged and the 'terrorists' replaced by fraudulent trades or their accomplices?* . . . It was no use. Boissy could not command obedience as Robert Lindet had done." (*The Thermidorian Reaction*, by Albert Mathiez, pp. 156-165. Our italics.)

The successful policing of prices under Robespierre was, thus, based on the direct participation of the masses through the Jacobin clubs. Bureaucratic policing, under a government of the same class which benefited from profiteering, failed under the Thermidorians and has failed ever since—and will fail today. Mathiez' description of the Thermidorians reads like a picture of the system of dollar-a-year men under Roosevelt.

## The Workers and Dirt Farmers

The workers and the dirt farmers are the two main productive classes in modern capitalist society. Both classes of toilers are exploited and victimized by the same parasitic Sixty Families who, through the banks, own or control a great part of the land as well as the factories, railroads and other means of production, transportation and distribution.

It is a central point in the political strategy of the capitalist class to keep the workers and dirt farmers in a state of violent antagonism to each other, as both Roosevelt and the leaders of the farm bloc are now doing. Equally central to proletarian strategy must be the building of the union of the two classes in common struggle against capitalism. We must have a policy on the question of high prices which will meet the needs of the dirt farmers as well as the wage-workers.

Roosevelt—and in this he has the complete support of the capitalist class—attempts to use the increasing prices as a means of maintaining the division between the workers and the dirt farmers. He tells the masses that the high food prices paid by city workers result from the high prices paid the farmer and that the high prices the farmer is paying for industrial products is due to high wages. In his Labor Day message to Congress, Roosevelt said:

"Our entire effort to hold the cost of living at its present levels is being sapped and undermined by further increases in farm prices and wages, and by an ever-continuing pressure on prices resulting from the rising purchasing power of our people."

Roosevelt thus completely exonerates the basic factor which impoverishes the worker and the dirt farmer: the capitalist class which is utilizing this opportunity to secure the maximum of possible profits.

It is of course true that the workers, since war production began, have been able to secure more wages in an attempt to make up for the lean and hungry years of the depression

from 1929 to 1939. In no sense has this increased income compensated for the lowered living standards of the working class as a whole through the long depression.

As the workers find themselves cut off from buying durable consumer goods, they tend to increase their purchases of food and clothing. This naturally places additional pressure on the prices of these commodities, the raw materials of which are mainly derived from the farm.

How much has the dirt farmer gained from the higher farm prices? Before the dirt farmer, the tenant, sharecropper and mortgage slave receive any benefit from the rise in prices, the major part is first skimmed off by the retailers, wholesalers, processing companies, railroads, landlords, banks and taxes.

According to the Department of Agriculture, about 40 per cent of the consumer's food dollar is paid to the farmer. From this he has to pay rent, interest on mortgages, monopoly prices on farm equipment, part of the expenses of marketing and transportation. The subtraction of all these items leaves the dirt farmers with considerably less than the 40 per cent.

Between the consumer and the farmer stand the railroads and trucking companies, the food processors such as the packing houses, the canning and dairy companies, the wholesalers and retailers. All of these functions are necessary in modern life. However, operated under the control and ownership of the capitalist class, their first and only concern is the extraction of profits from the worker and the victimization of the dirt farmer. We have seen that the dirt farmer gets only a small share of the consumer's food dollar and is not a basic factor in the price rise. Now let us see to what degree wage increases are responsible for price rises. We will use as our example the food processing industries.

Taking these industries as a group, the government census figures show that in the year 1939 the value of the products sold equalled \$10,618,000,000. Of this raw materials, containers such as cans and bottles, fuel and purchased electric power, equalled \$7,062,000,000. Thus the value added by manufacture totalled \$3,556,000,000. Of the value added by manufacture, labor received 26 per cent or \$913,000,000 in wages. For every dollar he received in wages the worker produced nearly three for the capitalist class as profits and to pay for wasteful overhead expenses such as advertising and selling campaigns. The "share" of the capitalist class which is triple that of labor is completely disregarded by Roosevelt as he attacks the workers' wages.

Waste is a necessary part of capitalist economy, above all in the field of distribution. This waste arises from competition with its unnecessary expenditures of natural products and human labor. As an example of the savings to be realized by a simple measure of organization, the Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture for 1940 states that a study of "fluid milk marketing in Milwaukee indicates that savings of more than two cents per quart might be achieved through a unified, non-competitive system of milk distribution." But capitalism cannot organize and plan production and distribution.

From Roosevelt we can expect only a defense of capitalism. His concrete program is summarized in a few words. Cut the standards of the workers and the dirt farmers but do it in such a way as to create least danger of inflation. That program is to be carried out by the "stabilization" of wages, the placing of ceilings on the prices of agricultural goods,

as the first step toward this "stabilization," and then to make the "stabilized" wages a vacant shell through taxation.

Congressional response to the Labor Day message was nearly instantaneous in one field. Within a few days the Senate Finance Committee finished its work on the new tax program which will cut the workers' incomes to the bone.

In opposition to the various programs of the capitalist class, we advance a program in the interest of the workers and dirt farmers. This program is based on the following points:

1. *For the automatically rising scale of wages as prices rise.*

2. *For democratic committees on prices and rationing.* Committees composed of trade unionists, dirt farmers, small retailers and housewives should control prices exclusively in favor of the masses and against the capitalist class. The first task of such committees would be to examine the books of the capitalist firms, to refuse to grant price rises in the interests of the profits of the capitalist class or which flow from the waste of capitalism.

3. *Nationalization of the war industries under workers' control.* All large scale industry has become war industry, as the main market has become the government. War today is the world's chief business. This is a measure of the degeneration of the capitalist system. America's Sixty Families are making huge profits out of the war and constantly plotting to increase their profits. An end to this bloody money! It is necessary to expropriate the war industries and establish national ownership of these enterprises under workers' control. The productive elements in modern society will no longer have to support in luxury a handful of parasites. The way will be cleared for the planned and rational organization of production on the basis of the needs of the masses, not the profits of the few. Such nationalization would guarantee the dirt farmer an immensely higher standard of living and reasonably priced agricultural equipment of all types.

4. *For a Workers' and Farmers' Government.* The producers should rule, not the parasites. Without their own government, all the efforts of the masses to improve their conditions will be frustrated. The example of the Jacobin clubs of revolutionary France shows the way; they were able to protect the interests of the masses only because they also controlled the government. At that time the working class was still too small, modern industry was still too retarded, to perpetuate the rule of the masses. Now, however, the great working class of the cities in unity with the dirt farmers are the overwhelming majority of the population, and industry is rotten-ripe for transfer from private anarchy to nationalization.

The beginning of decree rule shows that the choice for the future has narrowed down; either the authoritarian rule of the capitalist class or the centralized but democratic rule of the workers and farmers. The seeming third alternative of yesterday, the continuation of capitalist "democracy," is being thrown into the discard by the capitalists. Their decree rule will become more and more dictatorial, moving toward outright fascism. Either the open dictatorship of the exploiters or the workers' and farmers' democracy of the producers. These are the only real alternatives amid the death agony of capitalism.

—C. C.

—F. M.

# To the Workers and Peasants of India

## *Manifesto of the Fourth International*

Workers and Peasants of India:

The Fourth International, the World Party of the Socialist Revolution, joins with you in the struggle for the national liberation of India. The sections of the Fourth International throughout the world are rallying to the defense of the Indian struggle against the imperialists who are attempting to drown it in blood.

We have taken upon ourselves the task of rousing the workers and agricultural toilers of all continents to help the masses of India win their freedom. While the Second and Third Internationals—the reformists and the Stalinists—are aiding Churchill by condemning the present struggle of India, the Fourth International comes forward as the firmest supporter of the Indian fighters for freedom. We brand as an agent of imperialism any labor leader who opposes India's struggle for independence.

### India and the Fourth International

The struggle of India, China and the other colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East for national independence, must be supported by every worker. As we stated in our thesis, *War and the Fourth International* (1934): The struggle of the colonies "is doubly progressive: by tearing the backward peoples out of the Asiatic system of production, particularism and foreign bondage, it strikes powerful blows at imperialism." At the Founding Conference of the Fourth International (1938) we stated in our program: "Some of the colonial or semi-colonial countries will undoubtedly attempt to utilize the war in order to cast off the yoke of slavery. Their war will be not imperialist but liberating." This characterization applies fully to India and China today. During the first period of the present war, the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International, in its *Manifesto on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution* (May 1940), declared: "By its very creation of enormous difficulties and dangers for the imperialist metropolitan centers, the war opens up wide possibilities for the oppressed peoples. The rumbling of cannon in Europe heralds the approaching hour of their liberation." In the same *Manifesto*, taking note of Gandhi's statement that he refused to create difficulties for Britain during its severe crisis, we said: "As if the oppressed anywhere or at any time have ever been able to free themselves except by exploiting the difficulties of their oppressors!"

Since then Gandhi and a section of the Indian bourgeoisie have been compelled by events and the pressure of India's masses to declare a civil disobedience campaign. Considering such an eventuality, Leon Trotsky, the founder of the Fourth International, wrote on the eve of the war in his *Open Letter to the Workers of India* (July 1939): "In the event that the Indian bourgeoisie finds itself compelled to take even the tiniest step on the road of struggle against the arbitrary rule of Great Britain, the proletariat will naturally support such a step. But they will support it with *their own* methods: mass meetings, bold slogans, strikes, demonstrations and *more decisive combat actions*, depending on the relationship of forces and circumstances. Precisely to do this must the pro-

letariat have its hands free. Complete independence from the bourgeoisie is indispensable to the proletariat, above all in order to exert influence on the peasantry, the predominant mass of India's population. Only the proletariat is capable of advancing a bold, revolutionary program, of rousing and rallying tens of millions of peasants and leading them in struggle against the native oppressors and British imperialism."

These conceptions of the Fourth International on the nature of India's coming revolution have been proven correct by the test of events. The best of the Indian revolutionists began to realize this during the last few years, and workers' parties and groups of India and Ceylon came together in March 1941 to lay plans to launch an Indian section of the Fourth International. Succeeding in drawing into the new party still other groups, on the basis of a draft program, the *Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India* was formally launched in May 1942—on the very eve of the present struggle. Led by fighters tested in the vile prisons of British imperialism, our Indian section is wholeheartedly supporting and participating in the present struggle. We are confident that the lessons of events will bring them forward as the accepted vanguard of the workers and peasants of India.

### The British Raj Must Be Overthrown

Events have demonstrated irrefutably that British imperialism will never agree to the national independence of India. If Britain grants the "demand" of so-called "friends of India" for renewal of negotiations between the All-India Congress and the British government, it will produce nothing more than did the gigantic fraud of the Cripps Mission. The brutal statement of Churchill in the House of Commons on September 10 should have made it clear to everyone that his policy remains what it was in January 1930 when he said to Parliament: "Sooner or later you will have to crush Gandhi and the Indian Congress and *all they stand for*."

British imperialism will agree to new negotiations only if it feels that its repressions are failing of their purpose of destroying the nationalist and workers' movement of India. Such negotiations and any resulting "compromise" would be designed only to give British imperialism a breathing-space in which to prepare more efficacious measures for crushing the Indian workers and peasants. That was precisely the role of the Cripps negotiations, initiated when Singapore and Malaya had fallen and Britain's armed power in the East was broken; the negotiations gave Churchill time to send new troops and arms to India for the repressions now taking place. The second reason for the Cripps negotiations was to create the illusion that Britain was willing to give India its freedom—an illusion which is still strong enough to delude large sections of the American and British working class which would otherwise be sympathetic to India's fight for freedom. The Congress leaders aided Churchill in spreading this illusion by their participation in the private negotiations with Cripps. New negotiations would give a new lease on life to this dangerous illusion.

It is absurd to plead with Britain not to make in India



the same "mistake" as in Burma and Malaya. The British rulers know what they are doing. British imperialism is fighting this war in order to maintain its empire; to lose control of India permanently would be losing the war. As in Burma and Malaya, Britain's ruling class would *prefer* to surrender India to Japanese invasion, with the hope of re-conquering it, than to lose India forever to the national independence movement. This essential fact must be understood by every worker throughout the world.

British imperialism could not exist, once India was lost to it forever. "If we lose India the Empire must collapse—first economically, then politically," Lord Rothermere wrote in his newspapers on May 16, 1930. During the debate on the 1935 constitution, Churchill made a trans-Atlantic radio address to explain to America "why England cannot afford to give up India," because "two out of every ten Englishmen depend on India." The myth that British imperialism has been relaxing its exploitation of India is disproved by the simplest facts. In 1911, British investments in India constituted 11 per cent of its overseas holdings; by 1937 its Indian holdings had grown to 25 per cent of British overseas investments. Moreover, in addition to the huge profits from these "investments" (booty squeezed out of India and then "invested" there), much of the funds flowing annually to London from India come from direct political control (payments for British troops, Indian government orders for supplies, Viceroy-guaranteed bond payments, civil service salaries and pensions, etc.). Both types of loot would be ended by national independence for, whatever pledges for continuing to pay the British might be made by a bourgeois nationalist government, the overwhelming needs of the impoverished masses of India would soon put a stop to such blackmail payments.

How Britain drains India is indicated by the fact that the "public" debt of India has increased about 10 per cent every year during the past 80 years, while the national income, on the other hand, has grown only at the rate of 1 per cent per year. This pillage of India is the backbone of British imperialism. Without it British capitalism would be doomed. If a relatively slight contraction of Britain's foreign markets after the First World War produced the political crisis which reached its climax in the General Strike of 1926, the loss of India would undoubtedly produce socialist revolution in Britain. Under no conditions will the British ruling class voluntarily agree to relax its stranglehold on India, for no ruling class ever agrees to give up its basis of existence.

## Beware of American "Mediation"

Illusions about American imperialism can be just as dangerous as those about British imperialism. Yet the All-India Congress leaders for many years have looked to Washington for support. They either misunderstood or ignored the fact that American imperialism wished to end British political control of India only in order to replace it by the equally imperialist penetration of dollar-imperialism. The India League in the United States, representing the Congress Party, pays little attention to the genuine sympathy for Indian independence already existing among large sections of the American *working class*, and instead concentrates on "friends of India" in Washington and the bourgeois press.

How much these American bourgeois "friends" are worth was shown when the Cripps negotiations fell through. A veritable conspiracy of silence suppressed the Congress side of the story while the American radio and press adopted the

lies of Cripps. American government support of Churchill against India was openly indicated on July 23, when Secretary of State Hull's speech—obviously directed at India—told the colonial peoples that they must first support the war and thus "by their acts show themselves worthy" of post-war "freedom." American government and press support was undoubtedly one of the major reasons why Churchill was encouraged to refuse the tiniest concession to India.

During the first five weeks of the British White Terror against India which began on August 9, Washington continued its policy of full support to Churchill. The American press and radio during this period echoed every British slander against the Indian struggle. It was only when it became clear that the British were failing to crush Indian resistance that Washington changed its tactics, privately urging Churchill to open new negotiations with the Congress leaders. Washington hoped that new and lengthy negotiations would quiet down India. But Washington remains, fundamentally, the supporter of Churchill in India; any illusion that pressure by Roosevelt on British Indian policy will benefit India's masses can be fatal to Indian independence. It is absolutely false to think that Roosevelt, if Britain agrees to his mediation, will be an impartial judge between the contending forces in India. On the contrary, we can predict in advance that in that case Washington will conduct a mock trial ending in a decision in favor of Britain and its native agents.

The American radio and press continue to report "news" from India in terms mainly favorable to the British. The occasional news-story or editorial which is critical of Churchill's policy remains at the same time hostile to the All-India Congress and the struggling masses, and thus is aimed to support the idea of American mediation. These criticisms of Churchill are also designed to dissociate the United States from responsibility for Churchill's White Terror in India and thus attempts to save the tattered prestige of the "United Nations" in the eyes of the colonial masses of Asia, Africa, and Latin America who are wholeheartedly favoring the Indian struggle. But for every word of criticism of Churchill uttered by the American bourgeoisie, there are a thousand words against India's struggle for independence.

## The Treacherous Role of Stalinism

Unlike Britain and the United States, the Soviet Union is fighting a progressive war; every worker is duty-bound to support the Soviet workers' state against imperialist invasion. While doing so, however, the workers of India must understand that there is a basic distinction between the Soviet Union and Stalin. Do not for one moment trust your fate to the Stalinist bureaucracy! Within the Soviet Union the Kremlin regime has wiped out the Soviet democracy of the days of Lenin and Trotsky and does not permit any voice to the masses; Stalin's conception of the defense of the Soviet Union is bureaucratic, interested in preserving his own reactionary rule, and without a trace of internationalism. Stalin would in no way encourage a revolution in India, for such a revolution would inspire the masses of the Soviet Union to come forward with their own demands against Stalin. The actions of Stalin's hirelings show his hostility to the Indian revolution: the Soviet press says not a word in defense of India's struggle, while the Stalinist press in England, America and elsewhere is condemning your struggle on the ground that it "interferes" with the war efforts of the United Nations.

The Communist parties in England and America are tell-

ing the workers that they should not support your present struggle for independence. The Communist parties, which are merely agents of Stalin's anti-internationalist foreign policy, are saying that everything must be subordinated to the war effort of the "democracies." While they condemn the All-India Congress for its civil disobedience campaign, the Stalinists do not utter a single word of criticism of Jinnah and the other agents of British imperialism who are sabotaging Indian independence! And they propose to "solve" the conflict in India by appeals to Roosevelt to act as mediator. The events in India have once again laid bare the treachery of Stalinism.

Chinese sympathy with the Indian struggle is so widespread that even Chiang Kai-shek must give lip-service to it; but he does so only to divert it into the channel of proposing U. S.-Russian-Chinese mediation. Do not forget that it was with the approval of Churchill that Chiang came to India last spring! Chiang rules as a ruthless dictator in China, and has no sympathy with your democratic aspirations. Fearing the workers and peasants of China, he crushed the Chinese revolution in 1927. It is precisely because he destroyed that revolution and its mass strength that Japan was able to attack China. His friendship with Nehru and other Congress leaders does not mean that Chiang is a friend of the Indian revolution; on the contrary, those who can remain friends with Chiang show thereby that they are not above doing to the Indian revolution what he did to the Chinese revolution.

If Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek were to act as mediators of the Indian situation, they would be certain to hand down a decision acceptable to Churchill and Roosevelt. Thus the masses of India can expect no help from the "democracies," and from the Kremlin and the Chungking government.

## The Struggle Against Japanese Imperialism

As for the "independence" promises of Japanese imperialism, the Fourth International endorses the warning words of our Indian comrades:

"The Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India warns the masses not to trust the fraudulent promises of the Japanese imperialists any more than the deceptive offers of the British imperialists. Just as much as the first task of the Chinese masses is to overthrow Japanese imperialism, the first task of the Indian masses is to overthrow British imperialism. This is the best example we can set the soldiers of the Mikado to turn their arms against their own imperialist masters, the best way we can persuade the thousands of deluded Burmans who are fighting alongside the Japanese army, to join instead with us in the mighty struggle to free India and Burma of all imperialisms. This is the best way we can contribute to the real defeat of Japanese imperialism and the victory of the struggle of the Chinese masses."

## India—Weakest Link in the Imperialist Chain

The revolution of India's workers and peasants against British imperialism will find international allies, if only the struggle is carried on with firm determination. Not in the government buildings in Washington and London, Moscow and Chungking, Tokio and Berlin, *but among the workers*

*and peasants of the world* are the allies of the Indian revolution.

Proletarians of India! It is within your power to assume today the glorious role that the workers of backward Czarist Russia achieved in 1917. Amid the darkness of the third year of the first imperialist world war appeared the red star of the Russian revolution. The Russian workers then appeared terribly isolated in a world of enemies, but to their aid came the oppressed masses of the world. The guiding star of the Russian revolution inspired the uprisings of the masses in Germany, Austria and Hungary and the awakening of the great masses in all Europe, in Africa and Asia. *As Russia was the weakest link in the imperialist chain in 1917, so India is today!* Just as in 1917, the breaking of the weakest link today will inspire a series of revolutions which, in turn, will come to the aid of the Indian revolution against the imperialists.

And this time, if our revolutionary will is firm enough, the revolution everywhere will go on irresistibly to permanent victory over all the imperialists! The very fact of your revolutionary struggle in India today is proof that the new wave of revolutions will be far more extensive and deeper than that which arose out of the First World War. During 1914-1918, Asia suffered the peace of the graveyard; all the imperialist powers with holdings in Asia (Britain, United States, France, Portugal, Japan) were united in preserving "order" in Asia. The Indian bourgeoisie and the All-India Congress, instead of utilizing Britain's difficulties in Europe, supported the war; the "pacifist" Gandhi helped Britain recruit Indian soldiers and raise war loans; hundreds of thousands of Indian soldiers were slaughtered in the Gallipoli and other campaigns as British cannon fodder. Thanks to "peace" in Asia and the servile aid of the Indian bourgeoisie, Britain went through the First World War without serious difficulties in India.

How different is the situation this time—different altogether in favor of the Indian revolution! At the very beginning of this war, the Indian masses forced the Congress Ministries to resign in protest. Now the Indian workers and peasants have compelled the Congress to declare the civil disobedience campaign. Meanwhile, the imperialists are fighting among themselves in Asia, with no end to their war in sight. Now is the time for India to win its independence! Break the weakest link in the imperialist chain and the peoples of the world will follow and join with you!

## The New Spirit of the British Workers

Nor need you fear that the British soldiers constitute an insuperable obstacle to the overthrow of British imperialism. There is a new spirit growing among the British workers and soldiers! The British government tries to conceal this from you, but it is nevertheless a fact—a fact of deadly significance to British imperialism.

In England today the overwhelming majority of the workers are already deeply distrustful of the Churchill government. The British capitalists would not be able to rule at all except with the help of the British Labour Party leaders. After two years of this capitalist-Labour coalition government however, the workers are discontented not only with the capitalist ministers but also with the "Labour" ministers. Despite anti-strike laws and imprisonment, despite frenzied appeals from the Labour leaders, the workers in England are

more and more taking to strike action and thus directly coming into collision with the government. The British defeats in the Far East, which were a consequence above all of the refusal of the colonial masses to fight and die for their oppressors, have opened the eyes of the English workers as never before to the evils of imperialism. The British workers sincerely want an alliance with the masses of India. They are now learning that such an alliance is impossible so long as Churchill or any capitalist government rules Britain. They are beginning to realize that British exploitation of India is finished, whether through Japanese invasion, American displacement of Britain in India, or through a successful Indian revolution. It is infinitely better for the British workers that there be a successful Indian revolution than that India should fall under Japanese or American domination. Moreover, the disintegration of the British empire is posing to the British workers as a life-and-death question the necessity of a workers' government in Britain which would cooperate with a free India and other workers' governments and non-imperialist countries in putting an end to all imperialisms, fascist or "democratic."

This new atmosphere among the British workers is also true of the British soldiers, most of whom come from the working class. The British soldiers everywhere are intensely discussing political questions—something unprecedented in the history of British imperialism. Among the British soldiers in India and Ceylon are large numbers of trade unionists and politically-minded workers; many of these already believe in the socialist future of humanity. Many of them are veterans of bitter strike struggles against the British capitalists. To the extent that the British workers and soldiers are supporting the British war machine, they are doing so in the mistaken belief that the British government is really fighting against fascism. The soldiers you see came to India not to fight you but believing that they were coming to smash Nazism and Japanese totalitarianism. In India their eyes have been opened to things they never knew before. They have seen in what poverty and oppression you are kept by British imperialism and they do not wish to be responsible for your misery.

The murderous British officers are ordering you to be shot down; but the British soldiers do not want to fire at you and, despite the threat of iron military discipline, they will not shoot, if they can find an alternative. You can show them that there is an alternative! Imperialist propaganda has dinned into their ears the myth that you are not fit to rule yourselves, that only the "martial races" among you can fight. You can disprove that propaganda by showing your determination to fight to the death for your freedom. Remember that in Russia in 1917 even the Cossacks refused to fire as soon as they saw that the great masses were determined to overthrow the oppressors! So it will be in India when, by your firmness and by fraternizing with them, you find your way to the ears and hearts of these British workers in uniform.

## Revolutionary Methods versus Congress Methods

We write from afar, and much that is happening in India is hidden from us by the British censorship. Nevertheless it is clear that the workers and peasants of India during the last few weeks have made gigantic efforts to throw off the British yoke, and are ready to make even greater efforts. When we read the whining speeches of the zamindars and capitalists in the Central Legislative Assembly, asking Brit-

ain to be more reasonable, we know that these agents of the British are frightened because the great wave of mass struggle may sweep them away along with the British.

But it is also clear to us that the heroic efforts of the workers and peasants are not being utilized to get the best results. Invaluable energy is wasted, there are needless victims, because there is no general staff and no real plan for the struggle.

The insufficiency of the present methods of struggle in India flows from the false theory of the Congress leaders. They have the aim in this civil disobedience campaign, as in that of 1930-34, to create sufficient "deadlock" so that the British will be compelled to open new negotiations on the basis of the Congress demand for independence. But that means that the Congress is asking the British to *agree* to independence! This theory is absolutely false. No amount of "deadlock" will ever get the British to *agree* to independence. The British imperialists would rather drown all India in blood than concede it freedom.

The "deadlock" theory of the Congress does not express the aspirations of the workers and peasants. It expresses the outlook of those who, in the end, want to make a partnership with the British rather than to see the workers and peasants overthrow the British Raj. It expresses the attitude of the capitalists and zamindars in the Congress leadership and not of the four anna members.

Workers and peasants of India! *Beware of those on whom the British yoke sits gently!* Those who toil like beasts of burden and who hunger—they are the only ones who can be trusted to throw off the foreign yoke. But those who live in great mansions which rival in splendor the palaces of the British capitalists, who pay 1,000 rupees for a seat at Congress meetings—they do not find the British yoke very galling! *Their* quarrel with the British is a dispute between partners concerning the division of the spoils; a Birla, a Rajaj, want the right to exploit the Indian workers and peasants without sharing so generously with the British as they now must.

Even now, as they dispute with the British, these rich Congressmen and their political agents look fearfully behind them at the struggling workers and peasants. They fear above all that the masses will take into their own hands the destiny of India, and that the demand for independence will then mean concretely not only political freedom but also economic freedom. To prevent this, they have imposed upon the masses in the Congress the inadequate method of "deadlock." To make even more certain that the movement for independence will not get out of their hands, they have attempted to impose upon it the non-violence doctrine of Gandhi.

If the masses of India were to limit their struggle within the confines of "deadlock" and non-violence, they could strive for a thousand years and still not win their freedom! Fortunately, even from afar we see that the masses are striving to go beyond the boundaries which the Congress leadership has attempted to impose. Neither the workers' strikes nor the peasant struggles are being waged in the conservative spirit of the Congress leaders.

The workers and peasants of India have achieved a great deal by their spontaneous pressure on the Congress leadership. There would not now be a civil disobedience campaign, if the decision had been left to the Congress Committee. On May 20, 1940, Nehru said: "Launching a civil disobedience campaign at a time when Britain is engaged in a life and

death struggle would be an act derogatory to India's honor." Nehru never changed his mind—the workers and peasants *forced* him to embark on this civil disobedience campaign. Even after the Cripps Mission, Nehru said on April 12, 1942: "We are not going to embarrass Britain's war effort in India." It was not Nehru, therefore, who initiated a struggle which has produced the great strikes in the war industries! As for the rest of the Congress leadership, it was literally driven by the masses into the civil disobedience campaign.

So much the masses have achieved by pressure on the Congress leadership. But that pressure has not been able to change the inadequate methods of struggle advocated by the Congress. Nor would any amount of pressure be able to transform the Congress leadership into real revolutionists. They remain what they have always been. It is not enough for the masses to disregard the methods of the Congress leadership. They must be replaced with revolutionary methods, with a revolutionary *plan*, and with a *revolutionary leadership*.

## National Liberation Through the Agrarian Revolution!

National liberation can be won only through the agrarian revolution. The great driving force of the Indian revolution, as of the Russian revolution, is the agrarian crisis. The great mass of the peasantry is incessantly striving to throw off the three-fold oppression of government taxation, the landlord's rent, and the usury of the moneylender. **THE ABOLITION OF LANDLORDISM AND THE LIQUIDATION OF AGRICULTURAL INDEBTNESS**—these are the only slogans which can rally the peasantry to smash imperialism and its native agents. But the peasantry, although numerically so enormous, is dispersed over the countryside. History testifies to the fact that peasant rebellions cannot succeed, unless they are supported and led by a powerful class in the cities.

That class cannot be the bourgeoisie, with its close social and economic ties with the zamindars. And the Congress is the party of the bourgeoisie. The Congress leadership shows its bourgeois and zamindar character by the fact that it rebuked the peasants when they ceased to pay rent during the civil disobedience campaigns of 1920-22 and 1930-34. This time, too, the Congress Working Committee resolution of July 15 calls for a civil disobedience campaign without making a single proposal to lighten the rent and usury burden of the peasantry—not to speak of abolition of landlordism!

It is clear, then, that only the industrial proletariat can lead the peasantry in the revolution. As Trotsky wrote in 1939 to the workers of India: "The alliance of workers and poor peasants is the only honest, reliable alliance that can assure the final victory of the Indian revolution."

The working class of India is fully capable of assuming the leadership of the Indian revolution. The specific weight of the Indian proletariat far exceeds that of the Indian bourgeoisie, and to its weight must be added its rich experience of political and trade union struggle since 1917. The Indian proletariat enters the revolution with the tremendous advantage of having before it the example of the Russian revolution, which was also led by a proletariat in a predominantly agricultural country.

What form will the alliance of the workers and the

peasants take? The most democratic form possible—a vast network of committees elected directly by the toilers, with new elections whenever the masses desire it.

## For Democratic Committees of Struggle!

In every factory, every work-place, every chawl, the workers must elect their own committees, to act on behalf of the workers in all matters where their lives, livelihood or other interests are endangered. Only if the workers are led by their own committees can they protect themselves, not only against British imperialism, but also against the treachery of the many Congress and trade union officials who are certain to capitulate to the British Raj. Such committees among the workers in the cities will, in turn, inspire the creation of village committees elected by the peasants to lead their struggles. These committees will unite all the toilers regardless of their political views, and in them all political parties can democratically compete for the allegiance of the masses while the work of the committees goes on. The war has brought the soldiers into the midst of the civilian population, and when the workers and especially the peasant committees are established, they will likewise inspire *soldiers' committees* in the Indian army—for the Indian soldiers are peasants in uniform. A network of these workers', peasants' and soldiers' committees is the only sure way to mobilize the great masses for the struggle for national liberation from the yoke of oppression.

As soon as possible, delegates from the various committees in each locality must come together to centralize and coordinate their work. In turn, delegates from the localities must form regional bodies and, finally, there must be an All-India Council of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Delegates. Against such a powerful network, uniting the hundreds of millions of toilers of India, the British Raj will never prevail! It was under the leadership of just such a network that the Russian revolution marched to victory!

## For the Constituent Assembly!

Through these committees India will be welded together as a united nation, including also the people of the Native States. The committees have an irrefutable answer to any claim by the British Raj, Jinnah's so-called Moslem League, the Hindu Mahasabha or anyone else, that the struggle for independence is not supported by the overwhelming majority of India's people. The question can be decided democratically by a **CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY**, elected by universal suffrage of all men and women over 18!

Neither the British nor the native capitalists and zamindars dare to submit the issue to the election of a Constituent Assembly; on the contrary, they will move heaven and earth to prevent its creation. Only the successful revolution of the workers', peasants' and soldiers' committees against the British Raj and its native allies can guarantee the establishment of a Constituent Assembly.

## The Industrialization of India!

The agrarian revolution will open the way to the complete reorganization of agriculture. But a century of imperialist rule has systematically destroyed the native handicraft industries, and has forced so many hundreds of millions into agriculture that the first task is to draw scores of

millions off from the land into industry. Furthermore, the revolution will not be content to till the soil by primitive methods; large-scale farming necessary after the revolution requires modern agricultural implements. Hence the reorganization of agriculture is impossible without INDUSTRIALIZATION of India.

In the Tata steel and iron plants, in the great munitions industry recently established in Bihar, the Indian workers—including peasants of yesterday—have shown how quickly they learn the skills of modern mechanization. Industrialization will wipe out the centuries of poverty. Industrialization will put an end to all the inherited evils of the past, creating not only hitherto undreamed-of standards of living for the Indian masses, but also bringing to all the scientific outlook on life. *Not the loin-cloth and spinning-wheel of Gandhi but the dynamo and tractor are the symbols of India's future!*

### A Workers' and Peasants' Government!

Industrial development is so imperative for India that it must not be permitted to proceed at the snail's pace and with the anarchy and wastefulness of capitalism, including native Indian capitalism. Industrialization must proceed with the speed and on the scale that only a Workers' and Peasants' Government can make possible, as was shown by the Five Year Plans of the Soviet Union.

Moreover, India can look forward, not to the isolation in a capitalist world which was the fate of the Soviet Union for twenty-five years, but to socialist cooperation with the Soviet Union, with a regenerated China, Burma and Indo-China, and with the Socialist United States of Europe which

will undoubtedly come out of the ashes of this war. Glorious indeed is the future of India and of all Asia!

### For the Bolshevik-Leninist Party!

To march firmly toward this future, to carry out their revolutionary tasks, the workers of India require a general staff. They need their own vanguard party, a party which is really their own, independent of control by the Congress or the Stalinists.

There is such a party in India today! It is the Bolshevik-Leninist Party, the Indian section of the Fourth International. It is a party built on the firm foundations of the teachings of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. It is a party which knows how to connect India's great struggle with the struggle of the workers and oppressed peoples of the whole world. It is a party which offers the workers and peasants of India the only program which can lead them to the successful overthrow of British imperialism.

Workers and Peasants of India! Rally around the Bolshevik-Leninist Party! It will lead you to victory over British imperialism and its native agents!

Workers and Peasants of India! Be assured that on all the continents of the world the sections of the Fourth International are defending your struggle, exposing the lies of the imperialists and rallying the workers and peasants to your side.

September 26, 1942

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL  
(World Party of the Socialist Revolution)

## The Real Situation in Ceylon

The following article appeared in the June 10, 1942 issue of the English-language edition of the *Samasamajist*, the organ of the Ceylon section of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India.

The lying propaganda about Ceylon issued by the British and obligingly published by all the "democracies" is typified by an item in the September 13, 1942 issue of the *New York Times*: "Ceylon Eager to Fight" was the headline, and the story pictured "Ceylon" as "anxious to turn its defensive efforts into offensive efforts radiating from the island." The item reported that "Ceylon" had sent 150,000 pounds to the "Send a Plane Fund" in England.

The *Samasamajist* must answer these British Imperialist lies under illegal conditions, since the party and its press have been outlawed by edict of the British Governor-General. The illegal party paper comes out in Ceylon in three languages: Sinhalese, the language of Ceylon; Tamil, the language of the South Indian plantation workers in Ceylon; and English. The latter edition is fortnightly, and the other two are weekly.

The fall of Singapore, Rangoon and Port Blair, the air raids on Colombo and Trincomalee, and the imminent westward drive that Japan is organizing in order to link up directly with her Axis partners, have thrust Ceylon into the international headlines. All the world is keen for information about this island. And British propaganda has hastened to assure the world that all is perfect in this imperialist garden.

If we are to believe their propagandists, this is a prosperous and democratically ruled country with a contented

population among whom disloyalty is rare and fifth columnists unknown. Here, if we are to believe them, no ripple of resistance disturbs the even tenor of British rule, and everybody loves to be oppressed by profane Britishers and even to kiss the iron heel that grinds them down or rather, according to them, there is neither oppression nor iron heel, but only mutual cooperation arising from the people's faith in British benevolence and the people's belief in British justice. In a word, here imperialism has apparently changed its very nature and transformed itself into democracy and justice.

What a charming picture! And how charmingly untrue!

Ceylon is certainly rich in natural resources and grows products that are sold in the markets of the world. It has vast tea and rubber plantations which bring swollen profits and fat dividends to their owners. But who are the owners? Ninety per cent of the tea plantations and sixty per cent of the rubber plantations in Ceylon belong to the foreign imperialists who rule and exploit this island. And they certainly are prosperous.

But what of the masses? What of the army of workers who toil and sweat on these very plantations to produce these profits? They are among the most fiercely exploited workers in the world. Held in semi-slave conditions, they eke out a bare existence. The standard wage of a fully employed adult male on the plantations is about 70 cents (Ceylonese)\* a day. Women of course receive far less.

\*About 20 cents American.—Ed.

What of the Colombo workers, who are supposed to be in somewhat better condition? Their average wage before the present crisis was about one rupee\* a day. And how many got even that? According to official statistics, there were in Colombo over 40,000 registered unemployed in 1939: the actual number was much greater. Since the population of Colombo at the time was about 350,000, this signifies that at least every third adult in Colombo was unemployed!

Turn to the peasantry. What is the condition of these folk, who constitute the major section of the toiling masses in Ceylon? The word "prosperity" in relation to them is sheer blasphemy. The official Government rural surveys have shown that fully sixty per cent of the people in our countryside do not earn enough to get a regular two full meals a day. And fully twenty per cent go through life without even knowing what it is to have a decent full meal.

So much for the vaunted prosperity of Ceylon. What of the democracy alleged to prevail in it? The propagandists delight to point to the State Council as proof of its existence.

Of all the institutions in Ceylon the State Council is easily the biggest fraud. It is a painted screen behind which an autocratic Governor operates. Its Ministers are but puppets while the Governor pulls the strings. For the Governor has the power—and frequently exercises it—to legislate independently and against the will of the State Council. In fact, today, this country is openly ruled by Governor's legislation without even the pretense of consulting the State Council. And none dare protest, as is shown by the failure of even a single Councillor to protest against the utterly inhuman conditions that have been imposed on political *detenus*\*\* More, the Governor has detained with impunity even two State Councillors and threatened publicly even a Minister.

## Development of the Class Struggle

Finding the State Council to be useless as an instrument for bettering their condition, the workers have increasingly resorted to independent and direct action. The last few years have witnessed wave after wave of strikes in Ceylon up in the plantations. The long suffering workers rose at last and, with incredible tenacity in the face of rank brutality, fought time after time during a whole year and more for increased wages and for their right to form unions. The Government and the planters met them with police brutality and fascist thuggery. Workers were shot, maimed, beaten, dismissed in droves, imprisoned in crowds, and victimized by the thousand. But they fought on grimly and won grudging recognition of their unions.

Meantime the war had begun. There followed a sharp upward swing of prices and an increase in unemployment. Conditions became so intolerable, especially in the urban centers, that the workers were driven to use the strike weapon once more. In Colombo and its environs a wave of strikes spread from factory to factory and workplace to workplace. The Government promptly struck back with prosecutions under the Defense Regulations. But the wave rose higher and higher until it culminated in a widening series of strikes at that nerve center of imperialism, the Colombo Harbor, just about the time that the Japanese came into the war.

\*32.5 cents American—*Ed.*

\*\*Political prisoners, arrested and held indefinitely without indictment or trial.

Taking advantage of the war situation, the Government struck fiercely at the workers. It banned strikes and illegalized even efforts at organized protest against working conditions. By sheer legal trickery and administrative bludgeoning, it emasculated the trade union movement in Ceylon.

Today the Government has gone further. It has conscripted labor under the guise of creating military units on the railways and in the Harbor. It has set up scab squads in the guise of the so-called Essential Services Labor Corps. It has illegalized strikes and even resistance to employer oppression as hampering the war effort. It has made trade union work impossible not only by such legislation, etc., but also by promptly arresting trade union organizers and militants. Trade union offices have been raided by the police, their documents seized and their occupants arrested, beaten up and tortured until trade unions had to close down from the sheer impossibility of carrying on with their work. There is no longer any freedom of speech, writing or organization; no hope of successful defense in the courts where terror-stricken magistrates hasten to convict workers on the flimsiest evidence, no possibility of public protest with even the State Council bullied into hushed acquiescence. An utterly fascist regime has come into being with a military dictator at the head. Admiral Layton has become the dictator of Ceylon.

## The Revolutionary Movement

The battered and oppressed working class has met the ever tightening repression with an ever growing revolutionary movement directed against imperialism itself. As far back as 1935 this movement found organizational expression in the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, the only revolutionary party in Ceylon. This party is now a section of the revolutionary Fourth International, the only international organization which upholds the banner of proletarian revolution since the degenerate Comintern turned traitor to the working class.

The L.S.S.P. has led the workers in their political and economic struggles since its formation. In June 1940, four of its principal leaders were detained under the Defense Regulations, thus becoming the first political prisoners in Ceylon. At the same time, the party press was confiscated and many of its members jailed. The Government hoped thus to smash the party. But the party resolutely continued its work both legally and illegally, and with considerable success. Thereupon the Government banned the party and also struck at its ancillary organizations. The party promptly went underground and retaliated with even more militant activity, including the dramatic escape of its four imprisoned leaders in April. It has not been deterred by police raids and police brutality, by prosecution and frame-ups and the imposition of intolerably inhuman conditions on political prisoners drawn from its ranks. There can be no doubt that on the not distant date when the mass upsurge against imperialism comes in Ceylon, the L.S.S.P. will be at the head.

In that task the workers of Ceylon look for help to the British workers in uniform who have come to Ceylon. There are no fifth columnists among the Ceylon workers. They are not pro-Japanese but anti-imperialist. The only pro-Japanese fifth column elements in Ceylon are to be found among the native bourgeoisie, among the Kotalawalas and their ilk who tomorrow will lick the boots of the Japanese imperialists as cheerfully as they today lick the boots of their British imperialist master.

Among the British soldiers here are large numbers of trade unionists and politicals. We ask them: Can you in the conditions in Ceylon believe you are fighting for democracy? Can you believe that claim when our working-class organizations are banned and our trade unions are smashed, when our leaders are imprisoned and our rank and file are prosecuted and persecuted, when we are denied the right of free

speech, publication and organization, and when the very capitalist press is gagged and harnessed to the purposes of imperialist war and imperialist oppression? Can you not see that the British bosses have created in Ceylon only a bastion of fascism? Can you not see that only the workers, through revolutionary action, can convert it into a veritable bastion of freedom?

# The U.S. Government Offensive Against the Merchant Seamen

By FREDERICK J. LANG

The government of the United States long ago elaborated a well defined general program for the marine industry. This program was embodied in the Merchant Marine (Copeland) Act of 1936. It calls for the building of a merchant fleet second to none in the world—and for a “disciplined” personnel to man that fleet.

The National Maritime Commission was established under this Act. It is the granddaddy of all other government agencies dealing with shipping, and casts its shadow over all the activities of the various boards it creates. Such agencies as the War Shipping Administration and the Maritime War Emergency Board are creatures of the Maritime Commission. They were set up to handle specific problems in the industry, and to juggle these problems back and forth when they become too hot.

In working out the general program for maritime, the Roosevelt Administration drew heavily upon the experiences of the American bosses during World War I in this field. It also borrowed many ideas from the British, especially in dealing with the problem of “discipline.” The Maritime Commission stems directly from the old United States Shipping Board, crossed with the British strain to temper it. Everything the Commission has done during the past five years testifies to its heritage.

## Seamen During World War I

During the First World War the government constructed an emergency fleet and manned it through its own hiring halls. By this method, after the war, when a large part of the fleet was tied up, the government was able to smash the seamen's union.

In July 1917 the Shipping Board established the Sea Service Bureau, which operated hiring halls in 21 American ports. While the war-time rush was on, with shipping booming and sailors at a premium, the International Seamen's Union operated in cooperation with the Shipping Board. But this “cooperation” was a one-sided affair. The Shipping Board made various rulings concerning wages, hours and conditions of labor for men employed on Shipping Board vessels. While war lasted the effect of these rulings was that wages were kept up, but they never reached a figure comparable to those of workers in other industries. The basic wage for able seamen was fixed at \$85 per month under the three watch system. Marine firemen received \$90. In some instances the union was able to get a bit more.

Soon after the war the Shipping Board showed the

power of its rulings. Ships were tying up. Thousands of seamen were thrown on the beach. The shipping industry was among the first to suffer the general post-war depression. The Shipping Board began a “solution” of the problem by ruling, in conjunction with private shipowners, that the union should sign a new agreement. The proposed agreement called for a 15 per cent wage cut. It abolished the three watch system, thus increasing the work week from 56 to 84 hours. With the increased work week, the wage cut actually amounted to over 40 per cent. Furthermore, all overtime pay was abolished and subsistence allowances were lowered. But this was not all. The Shipping Board denied seamen the right to have union representatives present when they signed articles for a trip or were paid off after a voyage was completed. And with prospects of the depression deepening, the proposed contract was limited to six months, subject to termination on short notice.

Such an edict left no alternative to the International Seamen's Union; the 1921 strike was called. The Shipping Board was prepared for it. The Sea Service Bureaus shipped 15,029 officers and men to break the strike. “Temporary agencies were reopened on the Great Lakes on May 1 and continued to the middle of June in order to help supply engineers to the coast ports during the national marine strike.” (Fifth Annual Report of the U.S.S.B., ending June 30, 1921.)

The *Seamen's Journal* of May 25, 1921 reports an incident that many seamen who were in that strike remember:

“Admiral Benson, who will surrender the Chairmanship of the Shipping Board on July 1 to James H. Farrell, President of the United States Steel Corporation, has dropped his pretense of sympathy for the union. . . . He declares that he will take away from the operators all ships owned by the Board where the operators make terms with the union that do not provide for the 15 per cent cut in wages which he has ordered.

“As almost every steamship company in the United States is now operating one or more ships to which the Board holds title, this order by Benson is an ultimatum to shipping companies to join the fight to smash the unions or get out of the business.”

The Shipping Board accurately described itself in its Sixth Annual Report. “The division . . . corresponded to the industrial relations department of any of the larger private industries of the country.” This report opined that “due regard should be given to the principles adopted by the conservative employers.” Andrew Furuseth was bitter. For a union policy of collaboration in support of the war, the government paid off by smashing the union. At the 1921 International

Seamen's Union convention, Furuseth charged: "The government, with its power and money, is to create, foster and perpetuate the non-union shop, proscribing the union man." And at another time with equal clarity: "The United States Shipping Board has become the most potent weapon in the hands of predatory interests."

The union-smashing task that the United States Shipping Board began under the trying conditions of war, and succeeded in accomplishing after the war was over, was the same job handed the Maritime Commission 15 years later.

## The Experience of the British Seamen

In 1938, while the Maritime Commission was still in its formative stage, President Roosevelt sent a commission of inquiry to England to study the conditions of seamen there. The British government had successfully regimented all seamen during World War I by means of the Continuous Discharge Book, issued to all seamen by the British Board of Trade. It contained a description of the man, his rating, and space for a continuous record of his sea service. According to U. S. law a seaman is given a discharge at the end of each voyage. Under open shop conditions if he applies for a job he can produce these discharges to prove that he is an experienced man. However, since they are individual discharges and all separate, he can produce only a few of those he actually has. Thus, if he has made a number of short trips or has quit his ship before completion of a voyage, which is always true of a man who is marked in the industry for union activities, these facts are not readily apparent to the company shipping master. But with the Continuous Discharge Book, the entire sea record of a man is there. Anyone looking at the Book can tell at a glance whether it belongs to a "loyal employee" or an "agitator." The Book thus serves as a blacklist.

The Book was agreed to in England by the conservative union representatives. In exchange for this, the trade union officials received joint control of the hiring halls. That is to say, a government board comprised of shipowners, union representatives and government agents operates the hiring halls in England. Seamen are not shipped unless they are satisfactory to both the union and the operator. This arrangement has resulted in the shipowners collecting union dues from 90 per cent of the seamen by means of the check-off system. Roosevelt's committee reported: "There are no shop committees or union representatives on board ship; the union officials stated that, to maintain discipline, they 'would not allow such a thing.'"

In the light of these facts it is not surprising that the president of the Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland could write to Andrew Furuseth during the 1921 strikes: "It seems strange to me that the owners in America are so strong on the 'open shop,' whereas the owners on this side are doing everything they can to make it the 'closed shop.' . . . As a matter of fact, the great majority of the owners have turned the entire shipping of men over to us and many of them have expressed the view that they do not know how they could do without us."

The success of this so-called "closed shop" system, with every British seaman carrying the Continuous Discharge Book as a blacklist in his hip pocket, is noted by Roosevelt's Commission of Inquiry. "That this machinery works well," says the report, "is attested by the fact that in nearly 20 years of its existence there have been no official strikes, and only

two unofficial stoppages, one, an unsuccessful strike among the caterers (who at that time had a separate organization) and the other, a localized rank and file stoppage of seamen growing out of wage reductions which the Seamen's Union had agreed to. In the latter instance, the union supplied men to man the ships." But the report did not say how such a happy state of affairs could be achieved. That was the job for the Maritime Commission.

The fleet that the Maritime Commission was instructed to build was designed for the coming war. It was thus described in the Merchant Marine Act of 1936:

"the creation of an adequate and well balanced merchant fleet . . . to provide shipping services on all routes essential for maintaining the flow of foreign commerce of the United States, the vessels to be so designed as to be readily and quickly convertible into transport and supply vessels in a time of national emergency. In planning the development of such a fleet the Commission is directed to cooperate closely with the Navy Department as to national defense needs and the possible speedy adaptation of the merchant fleet to the national defense requirements."

This job was undertaken by the Maritime Commission with Joseph P. Kennedy, stockholder in Todd Shipyards Corporation, as its first chairman. The Act forbids an owner in the industry to be in any way connected with the National Maritime Commission. Roosevelt simply put the law aside and pushed Kennedy into the chairmanship of the Commission.

## The Aims of the Maritime Commission

Under Kennedy's direction a vast training program was soon under way to supply a "disciplined" personnel for the new ships, long before a single keel was laid. How far this training program had gone was clearly stated in the Report of the Maritime Commission to Congress on "Training Merchant Marine Personnel," published on January 1, 1939. Before its publication the Maritime Commission had established three "training ships" and was already looking around for a fourth. Two were on the east coast. One of them had 15 buildings on Hoffman Island in lower New York harbor "to train approximately 2,500 of the present personnel of the merchant marine at this station annually." The other was in New London, Connecticut and "planned to train annually at this station approximately 200 of the present licensed personnel of the merchant marine." The third training station was on the Pacific, at the U. S. Coast Guard base, Government Island, Oakland, California, "to train annually approximately 650 present unlicensed and 100 present licensed personnel of the merchant marine." So by the end of 1938 machinery was already moving to turn out more than 3,000 unlicensed seamen from government training schools. Union pressure forced the Maritime Commission to formally announce it would restrict the schools to "unemployed licensed and unlicensed men of the merchant service. They must be citizens with at least two years' sea service in the American merchant marine, of which seven months must have been served within two years prior to application for enrolment." But in this same report the Commission was quick to reassure Congress: "Regulations restricting enrolment are subject to change. The number of persons enrolled in said Service . . . shall be determined, fixed and prescribed by the Commission in such manner and form as may appear to be necessary to maintain a trained and efficient merchant marine personnel. . . ." It added: "The Commission believes it most important to have at the disposal of the merchant marine a



thorough system of training . . . licensed and unlicensed personnel and, in addition, *competent young Americans who have had no previous experience.*"

The Maritime Commission had three big guns which were brought into play in its drive for regimentation of seamen. One of them was the training ship. Another was the government hiring hall. Both of these had been used before. The third was the Continuous Discharge Book. This weapon had been used by private operators in America, on the Lakes and the Pacific Coast. But it was new in the government's arsenal. It was thought to be so valuable that it was incorporated in the body of the Merchant Marine Act of 1936, not even left to the discretion of an agency to use at the proper time. When the Act became effective in 1937 the fink book was supposed to be automatically compulsory upon all seamen.

Such was the government's union-smashing program. But to write and enact such a program into law is one thing. It is something else to enforce it. Nobody can say the government didn't try. But it ran into a stone wall—the stubborn resistance of the seamen.

The cornerstone of the government program was the abolition of the union hiring halls, replacing it with government hiring halls like the Sea Service Bureaus of the last war. But, just as the hiring hall was the fundamental issue to the government, so was it to the seamen.

## The Resurgence of the Seamen's Unions

Union hiring halls had been re-established in the period just before the Maritime Commission set out to destroy them. The re-establishment of union hiring halls was above all due to the west coast seamen after the 1934 west coast strike.

By 1935, union hiring halls were operating up and down the Pacific Coast from Seattle to San Pedro. This was the result of direct action by west coast seamen. They refused to ship except through the union hall. If a man came aboard ship from any other source the rest of the crew formed a welcoming committee for him. Every man who quit a ship went to the union hall and registered. He received a card with the date of his registration. When he was ready to go to work again he went to the union hall and saw on the blackboard what jobs were needing his skill and experience. If he saw a job he liked he bid for it. If other members of the union were bidding for the same job, the one with the oldest shipping date to prove that he had been out of work longest was given the job. The next west coast strike, in 1936-37, was especially successful because it forced the shipowners to recognize for the first time in signed agreements with the unions the principle of the union hiring halls. The Steamship Owners Association of the Pacific Coast had to incorporate this provision in its agreements with all the west coast unions: the Sailors Union of the Pacific, the Marine Firemen's Association, and the Marine Cooks & Stewards Association. Since that time every union contract on both coasts has embodied this provision.

This period saw the complete breakdown of the old AFL international, the International Seamen's Union, which began when the reactionary officials of the ISU expelled the Sailors Union of the Pacific on Jan. 12, 1936. From that date on the crafts on the Pacific Coast—sailors, firemen, and cooks—began their separate independent existences. The Sailors Union of the Pacific was finally reinstated in the AFL in 1938 and given a charter to organize all American

seamen. The Marine Firemen to this day are attempting to steer an independent course, not being affiliated to either the AFL or CIO. The Marine Cooks & Stewards are now formally affiliated to the CIO. This development on the Pacific had its counterpart on the Atlantic.

Real organization of east coast seamen began to take form following the 1936-37 national maritime strike. Although the strike on the east coast was called in "sympathy" with the striking west coast seamen and longshoremen, it was really an organizational measure taken by the Stalinists who set up the National Maritime Union (CIO). But on the east coast there were still seamen who remained with the AFL. This body of seamen was brought under the wing of the Sailors Union of the Pacific in 1938 when the west coast sailors got an AFL charter—the Seafarers International of North America, AFL—which today is in the field and competing with the National Maritime Union, CIO, for the sympathy and support and allegiance of all seamen on all coasts.

## The Union Hiring Hall Under Attack

While these divisions among seamen weakened them and often prevented the leadership from seeing the main enemy clearly, they also caused many a headache for the Maritime Commission. The Commission, with a docile union leadership of a single seamen's union, might have by this time put over some sort of scheme which today would operate very like the shipping pool in England. But that wasn't in the cards.

The first government assault on the union hiring hall was a flank attack: the attempt to enforce acceptance of the Continuous Discharge Book. As in England, it would have enabled the owners to weed out the militants from the industry and thus pave the way for smashing the union hiring hall altogether. Thus the government was attempting to do by law for the shipowners what they had failed to do for themselves in the 1936-37 strike.

The government's scheme collapsed when the Pacific Coast seamen simply refused to take the Continuous Discharge Book. Who would enforce the law? The shipowners, just defeated in the three-months strike and with no stomach for another one, were scarcely ready to enforce it. Any attempt by the government itself to do so meant tying up the ships at a time when the employers wanted them running. The government retreated. A compromise was reached whereby the unions agreed to a Government Certificate of Identification. It eliminated the worst feature of the Book—the space for the continuous record of a man's sea service. As amended in 1938, the Merchant Marine Act makes the Continuous Discharge Book optional. No union seaman carries the Continuous Discharge Book today. That does not mean that tomorrow the government will not again attempt to establish it.

The next government assault on the union hiring hall was to open a government hiring hall in New York on April 1, 1938, another one in Baltimore a little later, and to prepare for still others elsewhere. Captain Conway, the government spokesman, announced what the halls were for: "We are not concerned with the union views or affiliation of the men. We accept all applications whether or not they are union men. . . ."

The showdown on this issue did not come on the east coast, where the principal union, the Stalinist-controlled National Maritime Union, refused to make a fight. It was left to the west coast unions, led by the Sailors Union of the Pacific, to halt the government program, when the Maritime

Commission attempted to extend government hiring halls to the Pacific.

In Seattle in March 1939, the Maritime Commission announced that it would operate ships out of that port under the following policy:

"Unlicensed personnel of vessels operated for the account of the U. S. Maritime Commission are employees of the Commission. Masters of all U. S. Maritime Commission vessels have the responsibility and the duty of selecting the crews of such vessels. . . . Crews shall be supplied through the office of the U. S. Shipping Commissioner and subject to final acceptance by the master. No discrimination shall be made because of membership or non-membership in any organization."

The answer of the west coast seamen was to throw picket lines around the ships involved. The whole northwest labor movement stood back of the sailors. The government dared not go through with its scheme. It found a face-saving device to retreat, setting up a group of Seattle businessmen as "private operators" who signed a contract with the union recognizing the union hiring hall. Meanwhile pickets kept a watch in New York at the government hiring hall, 45 Broadway. These pickets were representative seamen from every maritime union, even though the Stalinist leadership of the National Maritime Union did not support the picket line. Soon after the Maritime Commission's Seattle failure, all government hiring halls were closed.

As has been seen, the brunt of these successful struggles was borne by the west coast unions. It must be emphasized, however, that they could never have been successful without the aid of the rank and file of the NMU, in spite of the Stalinist leadership of that union. All seamen, whatever their union, were against government intervention.

In some instances attempts were made to unite all seamen on this issue. The most notable example of this occurred in Mobile, Alabama, on December 14, 1938. A joint committee there of NMU and SIU seamen called a mass meeting to discuss the following questions:

"1. The betterment of conditions of the seamen as a whole.

"2. Unity in combating the opposition of the Maritime Commission, such as Fink Halls, etc.

"3. For greater unity and harmony among all seamen."

Three hundred and fifty seamen from all unions were present. The chairman opened the meeting with these words: "There will be no need for a brother to give his name, book number or organization. We are not gathered here as members of different unions—but as brother seamen for an open discussion of our problems." He reviewed briefly the history of the seamen's struggle against the fink halls, recalling that they were used as far back as 1909 on the Great Lakes. "The same tactics that the Lake Carriers used were inaugurated on the Pacific Coast—there it was called the fink halls, headed by a former Police Captain from Portland, namely Captain Peterson. The Steamship Owners Association, under Peter Peterson, regimented all the maritime workers under this nefarious scheme of the owners. The maritime workers threw this yoke off their necks in 1934 and since 1934 have made wonderful gains for the organized workers. The shipowners have now formulated another scheme through their conniving lobbyists in Washington and have come out with another hell-fire plan, namely the Maritime Commission Fink Hall and the Training Ship Schemes." (Quotations from official minutes.)

These remarks undoubtedly expressed the sentiment of all seamen. They never achieved organizational unity; juris-

dictional conflicts and prejudices among the competing unions remained; but the basic unity of sentiment of the seamen was an important factor in defeating the Maritime Commission.

After its defeats on the hiring hall and Continuous Discharge Book issues, the Maritime Commission's most powerful remaining weapon was the training ship, which at bottom was but one phase of the general drive against the union hiring hall. The training ships were the factories where a substitute for the skill and experience of union men would be turned out on a mass production basis. Thereby the government hoped to get enough seamen independently of the unions.

The union seamen were just as conscious of the anti-labor role of the training ship as they had been on the other issues. In September 1938, when recruiting began for the training ships, the ports were crowded with unemployed seamen. The Maritime Commission wanted some of them on the training ships, to cover up its recruiting of new men outside the industry, but few bona-fide union men would accept the bait. Even after December 1938, when the Stalinist leadership of the National Maritime Union endorsed the training ship program, few seamen joined. With most of the maritime unions opposing the training ships, the government was faced with the fact that those completing the training course would not be able to ship except through the union hall. Moreover, it was unable to get sufficient trainees: the universal hostility of the seamen discouraged many a candidate. Then, in August 1939, came the Stalin-Hitler pact, and the NMU leadership, in line with the pseudo-revolutionary anti-war program of the Communist Party, reversed its endorsement of the training ships. All these factors combined to prevent the training ship program developing at more than a snail's pace.

Nevertheless, if the government had had time enough, the training ship might have solved its problem. Direct action of the seamen could stop government hiring halls and the Continuous Discharge Book, but could not stop the training ships. In time there might have been thousands of such seamen outside the unions.

## The War—And New Anti-Union Tactics

But time was precisely what the government did not have. Long before the training ship program had served its purpose, the war caught up with the Maritime Commission. Since 1936 the Commission had tried to work against time to be ready for just this war. But the unions had upset the timetable.

The formal entry into war necessitated a change in tactics both toward the unions and in the ship construction program. The original plan was to build 500 ships over a ten year period;\* this now had to be stepped up. Ships built before the war were carefully designed and constructed. These were the Maritime Commission's C1, C2 and C3 types, capable of 15 to 22 knots, most of them speedy enough to outrun submarines. On the other hand, the present mass production Liberty Ship is a jerry-built job, made to be sunk. They are

\*Admiral Land, Chairman of the Maritime Commission, said on January 25, 1939: "This long range program of 500 ships was, and is, based on the Navy's needs. . . . The merchant fleet is the lifeline of the Navy. It feeds it, fuels it and repairs it at sea. In addition, it transports troops when necessary." These words make it clear that the 500 ship program was a plan for war. Yet, as of August 29, the number of vessels sunk in the Western Atlantic area since Pearl Harbor is 447, according to an unofficial tabulation by the Associated Press. Some 2,938 seamen lost their lives, 1,700 are missing, and 13,358 have been rescued. This does not take into account vessels sunk in other areas such as the Pacific or Arctic; we can assume that the total number is in excess of 500 ships lost.

thrown together with thin plates, and can make only 11 knots under favorable conditions. Construction of these sea cows is in line with the repeated misconception of such people as Secretary of Navy Knox who for the first six months of this war thought "We can build 'em faster than they can sink 'em." The fact that already in less than ten months of open warfare on the high seas the Nazis have sunk more ships than the Maritime Commission planned to build over a ten year period may necessitate still another change in this field.

The war, creating an extreme shortage of seamen, altered the previous significance of the training ship issue. While this shortage enabled the Commission to put over its training ship program, the shortage has also further aggravated the problems of the Commission. Men come off the training ships into union crews and are generally absorbed as union men. The most the training ships can now do is to provide supplementary personnel, instead of a body of men separate from and opposed to the unions. Thus for this period the training ship has lost much of its significance.

Faced with the bankruptcy of its original plan, both as to the number of ships and the regimentation of seamen, the government tried a new tack. In the first frantic days following Pearl Harbor, a meeting of all seamen's representatives and steamship operators was called in Washington. "National unity" for the war effort was now brought forward to do what the previous anti-union program had failed to achieve.

The conference was not a complete success from the point of view of the Administration. Its real aim was to insure against strike action by coaxing the union leaders to give up the right of direct collective bargaining with the shipowners on questions of bonus rates. What resulted was a new agency, the Maritime War Emergency Board, as a recommendation of the conference.\*

The government got a measure of insurance against strikes. This was given verbally by the majority of union representatives in conference with the shipowners. They signed a Statement of Principles which said: "Without waiving the right to strike, maritime labor gives the government firm assurance that the exercise of this right will be absolutely withheld for the period of the war; on a voluntary basis therefore this is a guarantee on the part of labor that there will be no strikes during the period of the war. Representatives of employers in the maritime industry also guarantee there will be no lockouts for the period of the war."

In its first days the Maritime War Emergency Board ostensibly confined itself to such practical questions of the moment as bonus rates for various war zones. But this was only for the record. The Board was hardly two months old when its chairman, Edward Macauley, opened the campaign for "discipline." He sent a letter to all unions signatory "to the Statement of Principles agreed upon at the Conference held in Washington during December." The fears of the government are hardly concealed by the threats in the letter. We quote it:

"The Commission is in receipt of many statements reporting loose discipline on board U. S. Merchant Marine vessels and improper behavior of American seamen in foreign ports. I am

\*The following men were appointed by President Roosevelt to the Board and were accepted by all parties to the conference:  
Captain Macauley, Chairman, representing the Maritime Commission.

Dr. John R. Steelman, head of the U. S. Conciliation Service.  
Professor Frank Graham, University of North Carolina—representing "the public" doubtless.

often forced to defend my belief that our maritime personnel are capable, self-respecting seagoing men who are performing their duty properly, creditably and bravely. The complaints are frequently reiterated, and there seems to be considerable evidence that some of the masters and other licensed officers on our merchant ships are unable to control members of their crews because of threats, real or implied, and fear of reprisals or pressure, which make their work more difficult and might eventually cost them their jobs.

"Last week I attended a meeting of the highest officers of our Navy at which it was again urged that the entire Merchant Marine be taken over and operated by the Navy under Naval conditions and discipline. I have consistently opposed such action. If we are to retain the manning of our ships by American seamen chosen from union membership through the hiring halls and are to make our ships efficient and of the greatest use to our war effort, steps must be taken to control those elements that have given rise to the complaints above referred to.

"Don't misunderstand me. Having spent a great part of my life at sea and on board ship, I do not expect seagoing men to be angels, but they should be dependable, competent and obedient to orders from proper authorities.

"One or two cases of bad conduct will get more publicity and do more harm to our efforts to prevent the taking over of the Merchant Marine by the Navy than the favorable effect of 100 cases of exemplary behavior which are not conspicuous. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the unions cooperate to the fullest extent in the maintenance of that discipline that is necessary to the proper and efficient handling of ships.

"Ships' delegates should be most carefully chosen and impressed with the importance and responsibility of their positions. By example and advice these delegates should influence and control recalcitrant or non-cooperative individuals who by thoughtless or ill-chosen conduct or attitude may reflect discredit on the maritime labor movement to the detriment of its independence, progress and perpetuation.

"If the Maritime Commission, the Maritime War Emergency Board, and the Maritime Unions are to cooperate successfully in these critical times, as we should, then you must exert every effort to put the organized maritime labor movement in the high position in which I believe it belongs. If we are to preserve the improved working conditions and advantages that maritime unions have gained in the past five years, it is up to you to see that not only some but all of its membership are responsible and disciplined, a credit individually and collectively to that movement and to our own nation.

"The adherence of the Maritime Unions to the Statement of Principles agreed upon at the Conference held in Washington during December, the agreement by the unions not to strike, their faithful observance of this pledge, and their continued and determined courageous sailing of vessels into the danger zones are recognized and appreciated by the Maritime War Emergency Board, by the Maritime Commission and, I believe, in great measure by your fellow countrymen.

"It is important that a reply to this letter should be received at the earliest possible date.

Yours sincerely,

EDWARD MACAULEY, *Chairman MWEB.*"

Chairman Macauley got his reply, quickly. The Seafarers *Log*, official organ of the Seafarers International Union, published it in full for all members of the union to study. Seamen are pretty wise to this old hard-cop-soft-cop game.

The Maritime War Emergency Board is trying to use the Navy and other government agencies as bogey men, in an effort to cajole and conn the seamen along. Thus Colonel Knox of the Navy (Secretary) begins to "study" a plan for the Navy to absorb the merchant marine. But before the

Colonel has completed his "study," another government agency, the War Shipping Administration, which is supposed to be concerned only with big-time deals in shipbuilding and trading, suddenly steps forward with a full-blown plan to smash the union hiring hall.

The plan provides for "Establishment of a Division of Manning in the War Shipping Administration which shall have responsibility for the personnel employed in ships of the American Merchant Marine for the duration of the War. The Division of Manning shall establish a central hiring set-up in all ports of continental United States frequented by the vessels under the control of the War Shipping Administration." And next the training ship program. The Division of Manning would "participate in the various Government programs for recruitment and training of personnel." Also it would "coordinate the various Government agencies administering laws pertaining to discipline on board ship" and "eliminate disloyal elements from the present personnel of the Merchant Marine." Last, but still very important to them, the fink book. The Division of Manning would "direct and coordinate the various Government agencies issuing seamen's Identification papers." The Book is still optional. And doubtless under this set-up the Division of Manning could convince most seamen to pack it.

## The Latest Anti-Union Moves

Before there was time for discussion of the War Shipping Board's proposed plan, the Board itself chartered the entire merchant fleet of the nation. This was designed to make the War Shipping Board *the employer*. The Board was now in a position to issue its famous administrative Order governing personnel. Some interesting points in the War Shipping Board's new regulations were the following:

"1. Selection of Crew. The master shall have the responsibility and the duty of selecting the crew and approving or disapproving any man for employment as a member of the crew.

"2. Complaints or suggestions for the good of the service. Whenever an unlicensed department head or special rating has a suggestion or complaint he may submit it through his immediate superior to the master for adjustment."

The union hiring halls are relegated to a subsidiary role in the Order in the following way:

"3. The War Shipping Administration will establish and maintain pools of seagoing personnel, both licensed and unlicensed, who will be available for employment on vessels operated for account of the War Shipping Administration. Men will be furnished to these pools from training stations established and maintained by the Coast Guard and from union hiring halls. They may also be furnished to those pools from vessels temporarily laid up or from any other sources approved by the War Shipping Administration. It is the policy of the War Shipping Administration to cooperate with the labor unions and to seek the cooperation of the unions in the proper manning of merchant vessels with civilian crews."

The last sentence, the reader will note, comes at the end of a long series of Regulations which contradicts the entire meaning of the union hiring hall, denies men the right to union representation in the settlement of beefs on board ship, and does away with virtually all payment of overtime. And the War Shipping Administration says it wants to "co-operate" with the unions! This is more of the kind of "co-operation" seamen got from the U. S. Shipping Board after the last war.

This move by the War Shipping Administration to charter and operate the entire American merchant marine under

open shop conditions represents the high point of the government's drive to smash the union hiring hall in this vital industry. Here again an attempt was made to use the tough method, the way of the old U. S. Shipping Board. But the seamen's unions today do not gasp and die simply by fiat of administrative order from Washington. Most of the unions were prepared to make a fight for self-preservation. The Seafarers International Union stated its position unequivocally:

"The time has arrived to fight! The time has arrived to serve notice upon our enemies that the SIU has no intention of folding up shop and returning the seamen to the days of the Fink Hall and slavery! In 1939, 12,000 men banded together in the SIU to protect themselves against the avaricious shipowners and the reactionary politicians—they will not disband now! Let the shipowners mark these words! Let the Maritime Commission mark them! Let Knox and Macauley and Admiral Land and Joe Curran mark them!"

By this time the Stalinists, with Joseph Curran as their chief spokesman in his capacity as president of the National Maritime Union, had gone so far in their pro-war frenzy as to openly advocate a government shipping pool for all seamen.

The Maritime Commission found itself faced with a united-front opposition of all marine unions except the National Maritime Union. It was compelled to countermand the Administrative Order of the War Shipping Administration. The "surprise" move was a bit premature.

The War Shipping Administration was forced to sign a "Statement of Policy" in which "it is understood that all disputes shall be settled through the regular machinery now in existence under the collective bargaining agreements between the unions and the steamship operators."

But if the pool has not yet replaced the union hiring hall in this country it does not mean that the government has given up. It has simply taken another tack. It is forced to experiment for a while with other methods.

The latest "clever" scheme to drag the American seamen into a pool was launched in May. This time the War Shipping Administration used officials of the International Transport Workers Federation as a union front. It was an attempt to establish a giant shipping pool of all seamen of the United Nations. It was proposed formally at the 12th session of the Joint Maritime Commission, a sub-committee of the International Labor Organization (of the League of Nations), in London, June 26-30, 1942. "The ITF proposal," said Omer Becu, representative of the International Transport Workers Federation in this country, "vests sweeping powers in the proposed tripartite Maritime Commission and demands that seamen now serving in the armies of their countries be released for employment in the merchant marine. Several features of the plan are already in operation in Great Britain and corresponding action is as necessary on this side of the Atlantic as on the other."

Although the Seafarers International Union (AFL) formally affiliated to the International Transport Workers Federation in June this year, government hopes for immediately establishing an Allied shipping pool were shattered when Morris Weisberger, SIU delegate to the London session, made known the following instructions from his membership:

"We (SIU-SUP) are opposed to joint boards of labor, operators and government. We firmly believe that the disputes and conditions relating to merchant seamen should be directly handled between the shipowners and the unions. With the three-

cornered boards composed of government, operators and unions, the seamen have two strikes against them because, in the final analysis, invariably the government will take the side of the shipowner. Furthermore, the seamen do not want to be serfs or wards of the government. Seamen are free men and should be allowed to maintain their status as such."

On this basis, the SIU rejected the pool. That kind of stand is pretty hard for the Maritime Commission to get around right now.

But the SIU position is essentially defensive. It is of course correct in rejecting the pool, but it betrays a misunderstanding of the part the government plays today in the shipping industry. All questions *should* be settled directly between the union and the shipowner. However, the government *is* the shipowner. Who are these people referred to as shipowners? They do not build ships. They do not own ships. They do not load ships. They do not route ships. And they have nothing to say about wages and conditions on ships today except in their capacity as appointed government representatives. These questions are all settled in Washington between the unions and the Maritime Commission or one of its agencies. In turn of course the Maritime Commission is under the control of the handful of really big shipping magnates, who openly sit on the War Shipping Administration: Robson and Wilcox of United Fruit, Knight of the Isthmian Line, Bradley of Matson, and Cushing of American-Hawaiian. And certainly, having wiped out the smaller fry, the government after the war will turn the ships over to the big operators. But the essence of the problem of the unions to-

day, and for a long time to come, is that they are confronted by the government and not by private operators.

This, then, is the crooked set-up that seamen face today. At the moment the Maritime Commission appears to be cooking up another scheme, perhaps awaiting developments within the union movement itself. Meanwhile the unions are being attacked from a new quarter, as the Army requisitions ships and operates them under open shop conditions, openly violating all the government pledges to the unions. When the unions demand that the Maritime Commission get the Army to live up to those commitments, they are given the off-the-record apologetic answer: "You know how the Army is." Just as the Army is thus used to intimidate the unions, so is it used against the individual seaman. He is being told that the Army will put him in uniform if he fights to save union conditions.

Thus seamen today have to take ships to the far corners of the world for a war that has meant only more concentrated attacks upon their democratic rights and more profits for the "private operators." The operators, naturally, will be around after the war because they "operate" without risk of life or property today. But thousands of today's seamen will not be here then. The seaman is in danger wherever he turns. At sea he faces the Nazi submarines. At home he faces the dictatorial government agencies and brass hats. The inspiring fact is that, in the face of all this, the seamen and their unions have come through with the union hiring halls still intact.

# A Transitional Program for India

## *The May 1942 Program of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India*

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

In our March and April 1942 issues, we published two parts of the program of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party, Indian section of the Fourth International. Below we publish a third part, which is of particular significance for understanding the present struggle in India. The fourth and final part of the program does not deal with India but with the general situation of the international labor movement which led the various workers' parties and groups which formed the Bolshevik-Leninist Party to affiliate it to the Fourth International.

The program for India was first outlined at a conference in March 1941 attended by delegates from the Revolutionary Socialist League of Bengal, the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of the United Provinces and Behar, and the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of Ceylon. The draft program was then drawn up and submitted to a conference in November 1941, which brought together certain other workers' groups in addition to those at the March conference. This was followed by full discussion of the draft program in the various groups, while at the same time a Provisional Committee elected by the conference began to function as the leadership

of the whole movement. After the adoption of various amendments—particularly to the transitional program here published in its definitive form—the program as a whole was adopted in May 1942, democratic centralization as a single party was established, and the all-India party formally launched in May 1942, on the very eve of the present struggle.

This inspiring event, so auspicious for the revolutionary development of the struggle in India, is especially significant because the party, though just launched formally, includes in its leadership and ranks workers, peasants and professional revolutionists who have stood the test of great mass struggles and imprisonment under the bestial colonial rules of British imperialism.

Since the adoption of this transitional program, the party has been putting forward, beginning with its May Day leaflet, the slogan of "Workers' Committees of Defense," to be formed on a factory and chawl (workers' living block) basis, to act on behalf of the workers in all matters where their lives, livelihood or other interests are endangered as a result of the war.

In reading the transitional program, the reader should note particularly the careful

formulation of the program for the agrarian revolution. It was arrived at only after long thought and experience. In addition to the antagonism between peasant and landlord, there also exists in India, in a much more extensive form than was the case in Czarist Russia, the antagonism between hired agricultural worker and employer. What role would this latter antagonism play in the revolution? In the Russian revolution, the agrarian masses—rich, middle, poor peasants and landless laborers—were more or less united and this gave tremendous force to the revolution in the rural areas. Differentiation took place only after the revolution. Will the same thing happen in India? Our comrades have come to the conclusion that it probably will. Although there are 50 million landless laborers, they still share too closely the misfortunes of the hundreds of millions of the peasantry as a whole, to appear in the revolution as a separate force. This fact gives the agrarian revolution in India an extremely explosive character: a century of British manipulation of land relations has failed to secure them any rural allies other than the relative handful of zamindars!

The strategic task of the Bolshevik-Leninists in the present period—a pre-revolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organization—consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions in India (accentuated enormously by the present imperialist world war) and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard. This strategic task is unthinkable without the most considered attention to all, even small and partial questions of tactics. It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the program of the Indian revolution. The Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India stands in the forefront of all day-to-day struggles of the workers and lends its support to the struggles of the peasantry and other oppressed sections. But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the actual, that is, revolutionary perspective of the overthrow of imperialism.

At the same time the party puts forward a program of transitional demands flowing from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the masses and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the overthrow of imperialism and the conquest of power by the proletariat. This is of particularly great importance in the present epoch, when every serious demand of the proletariat, and every serious demand of the peasantry and wide strata of the petty bourgeoisie, is incapable of realization under imperialism (nor in fact within the limits of capitalist property relations and of the bourgeois state). The present epoch is distinguished not for the fact that it frees the revolutionary party from day-to-day work but because it permits this work to be carried on in indissoluble connection with the actual tasks of the revolution. The essence of the transitional demands is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be directed against imperialism and the very bases of the bourgeois regime itself. The task of the transitional program lies in the systematic mobilization of the masses for the Indian revolution under the leadership of the proletariat.

### **The National Political Movement**

The supreme task of the Indian proletariat is the conquest of power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But to fulfill this task the proletariat must, as a precondition, lead the peasantry and other democratic petty bourgeoisie to the overthrow of British imperialism, the liquidation of landlordism and the abolition of the Native States. This is the only road in India to the proletarian dictatorship. The struggle for the revolutionary achievement of these democratic tasks can go forward only under the leadership of the proletariat and will necessitate the most resolute struggle against the Indian bourgeoisie and their petty-bourgeois agencies in the political movement.

Hence the Indian situation not only demands that the Indian proletariat advance by all the means within its power its own class struggle against capitalism, imperialist and native alike. It is also imperative that the proletariat should participate actively in the wider national political movement, with the aim of wresting the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle from the hands of the reactionary native bourgeoisie and, further, that it should give its fullest support to the developing peasant struggle against landlordism, thereby laying the foundations of the revolutionary worker-peasant alliance, which is the absolute prerequisite of the victory of the Indian revolution.

The necessity to participate in the national political movement does not, however, in the least imply a policy of mass affiliation (individual or collective) to the Indian National Congress which, though predominantly petty-bourgeois in composition, is completely dominated and led by the Indian bourgeoisie and functions as the servile instrument of its class policies. To regard the Congress as a "National United Front," or to entertain any illusions, whether of capturing the Congress from the bourgeoisie or of successfully exposing its bourgeois leadership while remaining loyal to the Congress, would be fatal to the independence of the proletarian movement and its assumption of political leadership, and would serve only the reactionary interests of the bourgeoisie. The Bolshevik-Leninist Party therefore characterizes the Indian National Congress as the class party of the Indian bourgeoisie, and calls upon the workers to place no trust whatever in the Congress or its leaders. This does not of course absolve the Bolshevik-Leninists from the task of doing faction work (of course, in all cases under strict party discipline) within the Congress, as also in other political mass organizations, so long as there remain within their fold revolutionary and semi-revolutionary elements who may be won away from these organizations.

Nor does the Bolshevik-Leninist Party follow a sectarian policy with regard to such activities of the Congress as are progressive. It will discern the progressive acts of the Congress and support them, but critically and independently, without confounding its organization, program or banner with the Congress for a moment. "March separately, strike together" must be the watchword of the policy of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party in relation to all progressive actions under the aegis of the Congress as well as to every oppositional and revolutionary action undertaken by other political organizations in India. At the same time the Bolshevik-Leninist Party must put forward its own slogans, foresee the inevitable betrayals of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaders, warn the masses against them, and thus gain the confidence of the masses on the basis of their revolutionary experience.

### **Constituent Assembly**

The slogan of Constituent Assembly has been widely accepted by many political organizations in India as the central slogan of the anti-imperialist movement. But this slogan, conceiving of an intermediate democratic stage in the Indian revolution, when a democratically elected parliament will have the power, is illusory and deceptive. It is destined in the later phases of the revolution to be utilized by the bourgeoisie and its agents as a slogan in opposition to and for the sabotaging of the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship in the soviet form. Hence the Bolshevik-Leninist Party cannot under any circumstances give it unqualified support.

However, the slogan of Constituent Assembly, advanced as a fighting slogan to overthrow imperialism, is capable of assuming a progressive character in the early stages of the revolutionary struggle. In such circumstances the Bolshevik-Leninist Party will lend its critical support to the slogan, not as one capable of objective fulfilment even after a successful revolution, but as a rallying cry in the specific stage of the struggle. At the same time, the Bolshevik-Leninist Party must advance and popularize its own slogan of soviets. In any case the Bolshevik-Leninist Party cannot render any support whatsoever to the fraudulent slogan of Constituent Assembly as put forward at present by the Congress. In

the mouths of the bourgeoisie this slogan does not connote the overthrow of imperialist rule but becomes a deceptive catchword signifying their evasion of the struggle; for it is advanced as an aim to be realized without a revolutionary victory over imperialism and dispensing with the need for its overthrow.

## Democratic Rights

With the development of the mass political struggle in India since the beginning of the century, British imperialism has instituted a system of repressive legislation, progressively inaugurating a gendarme regime not less systematic and ruthless than that of Russian Czarism or German fascism. Since the commencement of the imperialist war, repression has been many times intensified. Even those nominal rights previously possessed by the masses have been openly withdrawn, and a naked rule of terror substituted through the Defense of India Act, administered by a bureaucracy discarding every pretense of constitutional government. The press has been gagged by a series of iniquitous Press Acts and a systematic police censorship of all publications. Rights of free speech and assembly have been so curtailed that they are practically non-existent. Radical and revolutionary political parties are compelled to lead an underground existence. Even the formation and functioning of mass organizations, such as trade unions and kisan sabhas (peasant unions), is seriously hampered by innumerable restrictions on their working, by the persecution of their members, and by the frequent illegalization of the organizations themselves. The right to strike no longer exists in all "essential war industries," and elsewhere is so fettered by arbitrary legislation as to be practically non-existent. Thousands of militant mass leaders have been imprisoned on flimsy pretexts or detained without trial. The restriction of individual movement by means of externment and internment orders has become a commonplace. The spearhead of these repressive actions has been directed against the working class and its allies, the peasantry, and they have as their special aim the beheading of the mass movement against imperialism.

The widespread hostility towards British imperialism among all oppressed sections in India, and the fact that in their economic struggles the masses daily collide with the repressive machinery of the government, gives to the struggle for democratic rights in the pre-revolutionary stage an ever increasing revolutionary potency. The Bolshevik-Leninist Party must prepare the proletariat to lead the democratic struggle of all oppressed sections with the aim of directing it towards the general assault on British imperialism. The Bolshevik-Leninist Party therefore advances the following transitional demands:

- Release of all political prisoners
- Freedom of speech, press, and association
- Repeal of all repressive laws.

The struggle for democratic rights assumes a special importance in the Native States in view of the fact that the most elementary civil rights have always been openly denied to the masses of the people by the feudal despotism. These Indian States have long lost all semblance of historical justification and are maintained artificially by British imperialism solely as bastions of support for itself scattered throughout India. Hence every form of feudal tyranny is tolerated and supported by the British in the Native States, and their rulers have been repeatedly defended by British arms against

the revolts of the oppressed masses, especially of the exploited peasantry. The party puts forward as a transitional demand the slogan of the COMPLETE DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE NATIVE STATES. The struggle of the masses in the Native States against their rulers will inevitably draw them into the struggle against British imperialism, on which the rulers are utterly and directly dependent. Consequently it is impossible to view the two struggles in the Indian States and in British India in cross-sections. Furthermore, the fermentation that the Indian struggle produces and has produced in the Native States only reinforces the closeness and even identity of the two movements.

## Sliding Scale of Wages and Hours

Two basic afflictions in which are summarized the increasing absurdity of the capitalist system: *unemployment* and *high prices*, demand generalized slogans and methods of struggle.

The Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India declares uncompromising war on the politics of the capitalists which, to a considerable degree, like the politics of their agents the reformists, aims to place the whole burden of militarism, crisis, the disorganization of the monetary system and all other scourges flowing from capitalism's death agony upon the backs of the toilers. The Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India demands *employment* and *decent living conditions* for all.

Against the bounding rise in prices caused by the war, one can fight only under the slogan of a *sliding scale of wages*. This means that collective agreements should assure an automatic rise in wages *in proportion to the increase in prices of consumer goods*.

Under the menace of its own disintegration, the proletariat cannot permit the transformation of an increasing section of the workers into chronically unemployed paupers, living off the slops of a crumbling society. The *right to employment* is the only serious right left to the worker in a society based upon exploitation. This right today is being shorn from him at every step. Against unemployment, "structural" as well as "conjunctural," the time is ripe to advance along with the slogan of public works, the slogan of a *sliding scale of working hours*. Trade unions and other mass organizations should bind the workers and the unemployed together in a solidarity of mutual responsibility. On this basis all the work on hand would then be divided among all existing workers in accordance with how the extent of the working week is defined. The average wage of every worker remains the same as it was under the old working week. Wages, under a strictly guaranteed minimum, would follow the movement of prices. It is impossible to accept any other program for the present catastrophic period.

If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. "Realizability" or "unrealizability" are in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery.

The Bolshevik-Leninists stand in the front line trenches of all kinds of struggles, even when they involve the modest material interests or democratic rights of the working class. They take active part in mass trade unions for the purpose of strengthening them and raising their spirit of militancy.

They fight uncompromisingly against any attempt to subordinate the unions to the bourgeois state and bind the proletariat to "compulsory arbitration" and every other form of police guardianship.

## Trade Unions in the Transitional Epoch

At the same time the Bolshevik-Leninist Party resolutely rejects and condemns trade union fetishism. Trade unions, even the most powerful, embrace no more than 25 per cent of the working class in any capitalist country, and at that predominantly the more skilled and better paid layers. This percentage is even smaller in the colonial conditions of India. For the inability and unwillingness of the imperialist and Indian bourgeoisie alike to grant concessions have hindered the development of a stable trade union movement, and the repression with which every attempt at independent proletarian organization is met is a formidable obstacle to the growth of trade unions. The more oppressed majority of the working class is drawn only episodically into the struggle, during a period of exceptional upsurges in the labor movement. During such moments it is necessary to create organizations *ad hoc*, embracing the whole fighting mass: strike committees, factory committees and, finally, soviets.

Therefore the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India should always try not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments, advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists; but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the problems of mass struggle against bourgeois society, not stopping, if necessary, even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions. If it be criminal to turn one's back to mass organizations for the sake of fostering sectarian fictions, it is no less so to passively tolerate subordination of the revolutionary mass movement to the control of openly reactionary or disguised conservative ("progressive") bureaucratic cliques. Trade unions are not ends in themselves; they are but means along the road to proletarian revolution.

## Factory Committees

During a transitional epoch the workers' movement does not have a systematic and well-balanced but a feverish and explosive character. Slogans as well as organizational forms should be subordinated to the indices of the moment. Sit-down strikes, the latest phenomenon of this kind of initiative, go beyond the limits of "normal" capitalist procedure. Independently of the demands of the strikers, the temporary seizure of factories deals a blow to the idol—capitalist property. Every sit-down strike poses in a practical manner the question of who is the boss of the factory—the capitalist or the workers.

If the sit-down strike raises this question episodically, the *factory committee* gives it organized expression. Elected by all the factory employees, the factory committee immediately creates a counterweight to the will of the administration. The prime significance of the factory committee lies in the fact that it becomes the militant organ for such working-class layers as the trade union is usually incapable of moving into action. It is precisely from these more oppressed layers that the most self-sacrificing battalions of the revolution will come.

From the moment that the committee makes its appear-

ance, a factual dual power is established in the factory. By its very essence, it represents the transitional state because it includes in itself two irreconcilable regimes: the capitalist and the proletarian. The fundamental significance of the factory committees is precisely contained in the fact that they open the doors, if not to a direct revolutionary, then to a pre-revolutionary period—between the bourgeois and the proletarian regimes. That the propagation of the factory committee idea is neither premature nor artificial is attested to by the fact that sit-down strikes have already taken place in India. Waves of this type will be inevitable in the immediate future. It is necessary to begin a campaign in favor of factory committees in order not to be caught unawares.

## Expropriation of Certain Industries

The socialist program of expropriation, that is, of political overthrow of the bourgeoisie and liquidation of its economic domination, should in no case during the present transitional period hinder us from advancing, when the occasion warrants, the demand for the expropriation of certain key branches of industry vital for national existence or of the most parasitic group of the bourgeoisie.

The difference between these demands and the muddle-headed reformist slogan of "nationalization" lies in the following: (1) We reject compensation; (2) We warn the masses against demagogues who, giving lip service to nationalization, remain in reality agents of capital; (3) We call upon the masses to rely only upon their own revolutionary strength; (4) We link up the question of expropriation with that of the seizure of power by the workers.

## The Peasantry

The party actively supports all concrete struggles of the peasantry against exploitation and oppression, including struggles for the reduction of land revenue and rent, reduction of debt, and the abolition of feudal dues, forced labor, serfdom, etc. It participates in the activities of kisan sabhas and all genuine peasant organizations as representatives of the revolutionary proletariat, popularizing its own program in relation to the peasantry, and seeking to lay the foundations of the worker-peasant alliance which is the indispensable condition of the victory of the Indian revolution. Above all, it seeks to expose the reactionary role of the Congress and to wean away the peasantry from the influence of the bourgeoisie, pointing out that not one of the fundamental demands of the peasantry will ever be conceded by the bourgeoisie and that it is only with the leadership and assistance of the proletariat, standing in opposition to the vested interests of all the exploiters, that these demands can be fulfilled. The party seeks to link up each concrete struggle of the peasants with the general political struggle against imperialism—a task rendered easier by the direct role of repression and extortion played by the imperialist bureaucracy. Finally, the party will pay special attention to the interests of the more oppressed and down-trodden sections of the peasantry and, as these layers increasingly come to consciousness, will help them to formulate and come forward with their own special demands.

In the initial phase of the agrarian upsurge, the slogan of ABOLITION OF LANDLORDISM WITHOUT COMPENSATION is likely to rally behind it the middle peasantry, drawing with them considerable sections of the more



oppressed sections of the peasant masses. The party accordingly advances this slogan.

The abolition of landlordism alone, however, will not meet the needs of the lowest and most exploited layers of the peasantry (agricultural laborers and landless peasants). But as the struggle develops, these sections will become increasingly articulate and will come forward with their own demands involving a more thoroughgoing solution of the agrarian problem. Accordingly, in proportion as the agrarian struggle deepens with the coming into consciousness of these layers, the party increasingly advances the slogan of **LAND TO THE TILLERS OF THE SOIL**, which connotes a more radical redistribution of the land.

The party puts forward the slogan of **LIQUIDATION OF AGRICULTURAL INDEBTEDNESS**, which is capable of uniting all sections of the exploited peasantry in the agrarian struggle.

## Soldiers

The rank and file of the Indian army is recruited almost exclusively from the peasantry and increasingly from its more depressed and backward strata. By a policy of carefully segregating the army from the mass of the population and of making invidious distinctions between so-called martial and non-martial races, British imperialism attempts to keep the army immune from the political ferment in the country. The soldiers, however, being mainly peasants in uniform, are naturally sensitive to peasant demands and cannot fail to be affected by an agrarian upsurge in the country. Since the attitude of the soldiers is of decisive importance in every revolution, the Bolshevik-Leninist Party must face the urgent task of widespread revolutionary propaganda (against imperialism and the imperialist war and on the land question) in the Indian army. It must link up this propaganda with the concrete grievances of the soldiers (the unsatisfactory conditions of service, their dispatch for wars abroad, etc.). This task, which has been immensely facilitated by the increased accessibility of the soldiers in the prevailing war conditions (the quartering of troops amidst the civilian population, frequent movement of troops, etc.), becomes all the more urgent with the heavy recruitments that are being increasingly made for the purposes of the imperialist war.

However, under the very strict conditions of discipline that obtain in the army, the possibility of carrying on partial struggles is practically non-existent. The vital need is for a broad central slogan which will provide a focal point for all the specific demands of the soldiers, and thus rally them at a time when the repercussions of the class struggle in the country or the lowering of soldiers' morale through military defeats is breaking down the discipline of the army. Accordingly the Bolshevik-Leninist Party, whilst carrying on the widest revolutionary propaganda amongst the soldiers by all means within its power, advances the transitional slogan of **SOLDIERS' COMMITTEES** to put forward all demands of the rank and file and to act on their behalf.

## Students

The Bolshevik-Leninist Party recognizes that students, particularly in India where for the most part they come from all strata of a petty bourgeoisie that is fast heading for pauperization and ruin, are a fruitful source of cadres for the revolutionary movement. Nevertheless the student body is not a homogeneous one performing a separate social role,

or capable of interfering independently in politics. The Bolshevik-Leninist Party can attach no serious significance to the "independent" mobilization of students for the realization of "specifically student demands," as the Stalinists and other radicals of various shades are attempting to do. The party's own aim is to draw students into the revolutionary political movement, and with this aim it works in existing student organizations, and participates in the agitation for student demands. Nor is it a question of setting up revolutionary student organizations, but of doing revolutionary propaganda among the students. Further, the existing student organizations offer to a limited extent a platform for political propaganda which can reach wide strata of those engaged in the national political movement. Hence the Bolshevik-Leninist Party will utilize to the full all opportunities of advancing its own program on the platform of student organizations—not however as a "student program" but as that of the revolutionary proletariat.

## Soviets

Factory committees, as already stated, are elements of dual power inside the factory. Consequently, their existence is possible only under conditions of increasing pressure by the masses. This is likewise true of special mass groupings, such as peasants' committees, etc., that may arise for struggle, the very appearance of which bears witness to the fact that the class struggle has overflowed the limits of the traditional mass organizations.

These new organs and centers, however, will soon begin to feel their lack of cohesion and insufficiency. Not one of the transitional demands can be fully met under the conditions of preserving the imperialist regime. At the same time, the deepening of the social crisis, enormously accentuated by the war, will increase not only the sufferings of the masses but also their impatience, persistence and pressure. Millions of toil-worn "little men," to whom the reformist leaders never gave a thought, will begin to pound insistently on the doors of the workers' organizations. The unemployed will join the movement. The peasant masses, the soldiers, the oppressed layers of the cities, the women workers, proletarianized layers of the intelligentsia—all of these will seek unity and leadership. As the struggle moves ever more openly in the direction of civil war, and as the fullest resources of the counter-revolutionary terror are mobilized by the government, the prime need will be for the coordination and centralization of the vast and increasing forces daily awakening to consciousness and struggle.

Such a form of organization is required as will harmonize, coordinate and centralize the different demands and forms of the revolutionary struggle. In marshaling the mass forces during this critical period, the working class must necessarily take the lead, guided by its party in adapting the lessons of its own revolutionary experience in the European and Chinese arenas to the problems of the Indian revolution. The main form of mass organization for the concrete battles to smash British imperialism in India will be the *soviets*; revolutionary councils of workers', peasants', and soldiers' delegates, elected on the widest possible franchise of the exploited, subject to immediate recall, and therefore voicing with the least distortion the ever sharpening demands of the masses in the struggle. The *soviets* will concretize the worker-peasant alliance.

*Soviets* are not limited to an "a priori" program. The

organization, broadening out together with the movement, is renewed again and again in its womb. All political currents of the proletariat can struggle for the leadership of the proletariat on the basis of the widest democracy. The slogan of SOVIETS therefore crowns the program of transitional demands.

Soviets can arise only when the mass movement enters an openly revolutionary stage. From the first moment of their appearance the soviets, acting as a pivot around which millions of toilers are united in their struggle against the exploiters, become competitors and opponents of local authorities and then of the central government. The soviets initiate a period of dual power in the country.

Dual power in its turn is the culminating point of the transitional period. Two regimes, the dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry, stand irreconcilably opposed to

each other. The fate of India depends on the outcome. Should the revolution be defeated—the dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie will follow. In case of victory the power of the soviets, that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat, will be established and the road to the socialist transformation of Indian society will be opened.

With the entry of the struggle into the openly revolutionary stage, the Bolshevik-Leninist Party calls for:—

1. The formation of Workers' Soviets
2. The formation of a Workers' Militia
3. The seizure by the workers of factories, banks, plantations, etc.
4. The direct seizure of the land by Peasant Committees
5. The organization of the peasant poor in Peasant Soviets and of the soldiers in Soldiers' Soviets
6. The overthrow of imperialist rule.

## From the Arsenal of Marxism

# A Program of Action for France

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The document which we publish below was adopted in 1934 as the Program of Action of the Communist League of France, as the Trotskyist organization was then called. It was published in *La Verite*, organ of the League, in June 1934. Some months before, on the sixth of February, an armed demonstration of the fascist and reactionary groups against the Chamber of Deputies and the Daladier government had abruptly changed the political life of the country, revealing in broad daylight just how far the process of disintegration of the democratic bourgeoisie had gone. The workers had answered the reactionary demonstration with the one-day general strike of February 18th and with demonstrations throughout France. The country rapidly became polarized around two opposing camps. The paralyzed "democrats" of the Daladier government gave way to the openly reactionary Doumergue government, which maintained "order" with the help of the police and the army. France was manifestly entering a pre-revolutionary period. Everyone clearly saw that life could not continue as in the past, that a new way had to be found—everyone, that is, except the "democrats," the "socialists" like Leon Blum, and the Stalinists.

Leon Trotsky was then living in France.

The Doumergue-Sarraut government deprived him of the meager liberties accorded him by Daladier, banishing him to a small village in the Alps under police surveillance. But revolutionary necessities were too pressing for Trotsky to hold himself aloof from French politics. It was then that he instilled the Communist League with the idea of a Program of Action which would emphasize the immediate revolutionary perspective and give the organization a basis on which to conduct precise and concentrated agitation. In general, Trotsky always insisted on concentrated propaganda: the selection of a series of slogans adapted to the situation, and unceasingly repeated in the activity of the party in demonstrations, in speeches, in the press. All the ideas in this program came directly from Trotsky. Some parts were dictated by him in French to his secretaries. Other parts were drawn up according to his suggestions. The whole document was carefully checked by him.

This Program of Action is, in a sense, a first draft of the Transitional Program adopted by the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in 1938. The latter is of much greater scope, but the 1934 program is more precise and detailed as far as France is concerned, and thus furnishes an excellent example of the adaptation of a

general program to the particular realities of a given country.

We must especially note the attention given to all the democratic tasks that the French bourgeoisie never carried out, such as the election of judges, etc. The Program speaks patiently to the small peasants, showing them the advantages they can gain from an honest alliance with the workers and guaranteeing them the opportunity to till the soil in their own way until they are convinced of the superiority of socialism.

We must also note the important place occupied by the question of "business secrets." In France more than in any other big capitalist country, the bourgeoisie knew how to surround its exploitation with the deepest mystery. French statistics are scarce and deceiving. The laws protecting "business secrets" stopped all serious inquiries. To know just what part of the national income is devoured by the pirates of "high finance" is extremely difficult. Hence the revolutionary urgency of the abolition of business secrets.

The Program of Action of the Communist League remains the model of its type for young parties approaching a pre-revolutionary situation. It is their duty to study it seriously in order to know how to translate it into the tongue of their own countries.

### TO ALL THE TOILERS OF FRANCE!

#### I. Fascism and War Are Threatening!

Led by the big bourgeoisie, France is foundering in the disintegration of the capitalist world. In the ruling circles of society, in all the institutions of the regime, scandals are multiplying, the corrupting influence of the rich is spreading.

For the workers, growing unemployment; for the small peasants, ruin; for all the exploited, misery is increasing.

Dying capitalism is bankrupt. And the ruling class has only one plan for trying to get out of this historical bankruptcy: still more misery for the laboring masses! Suppression of all reforms, even the most trifling! Suppression of

the democratic regime!

Throughout the entire world the iron heel of fascism is becoming the last resort of desperate capitalism.

Imperialism, given a death blow by the Russian revolution of October 1917, was able to maintain its domination over society because of the defeat of the proletarian parties in the two periods of the post-war epoch: the general betrayal by the social democracy, and the degeneration of the Communist International following these defeats. The defeat of the German revolution in 1923, of the Chinese revolution in 1927, of the German and Austrian proletariat in 1933 and 1934, mark the decisive moments when capitalism succeeded in stabilizing itself.

However, these precarious victories, obtained without the former ruling class in Soviet Russia having been able to re-establish itself, only served to sharpen the universal crisis. More violently and anarchistically than ever, the pressure of the monopolies on the world market clashes with national boundaries and the principle of private property.

Benefiting from the reverses of the proletariat in its revolutionary march towards socialism, the world bourgeoisie is using its last resort, fascism, by means of which it is making desperate efforts to clear the organized working class from its road.

Such is the international situation which is pushing the French bourgeoisie towards fascism.

But fascism alone is still not the last word of disintegrating capitalism. When it has fought its internal enemy, each imperialism must expand externally. This is the source of a new *world war*. Fifty million men perished in the atrocious suffering of the last war and its aftermath. Workers all over the world will be massacred by the hundreds of millions in the next war. France, whose population is stationary, will escape this less than any other country.

The workers must oppose these criminal plans of the bourgeoisie with all their might!

## II. The Plan of the French Bourgeoisie

To try to emerge from the chaos in which it has plunged the country, the French bourgeoisie must first resolve the monetary problem. One section wants to do this by *inflation*, i.e., the issuing of paper money, the depreciation of wages, the raising of the cost of living, the expropriation of the petty bourgeoisie; the other by *deflation*, i.e., retrenchment on the backs of the workers (lowering of salaries and wages), extension of unemployment, ruin of the small peasant producers and the petty bourgeoisie of the towns.

Either alternative means increased misery for the exploited. To choose between these two capitalist methods would be to choose between two instruments which the exploiters are preparing to cut the throats of the workers.

Brutal deflation is the first step in the plan of the French capitalists. The workers are being deprived of unemployment relief; social insurance is being menaced, wages are being reduced. Government employees are already being affected, the small peasants are next.

This will not prevent the bourgeoisie from passing to the other method of inflation tomorrow if it is expedient. Hitlerite Germany is an example. The exploited must vigorously oppose this plan of the bourgeoisie!

To the program of deflation, of the reduction of their means of existence, the workers must counterpose their own program of fundamentally transforming social relations by the complete "deflation" of the privileges and profits of the

band of Oustrics and Staviskys who exploit the country! This is the only road to salvation.

## III. Abolition of "Business Secrets"

To find a solution favorable to the toiling masses, we must draw up, without delay, the pitiless balance sheet of capitalist bankruptcy, conduct an inventory of the receipts and expenditures of all classes, of all social groups.

For the proletarians, the exploited of all categories, this is not difficult. The workers' wages are recorded in capitalist account books. As for expenditures, small businessmen register them from week to week. The income and expenditures of the peasants, artisans, small businessmen, petty functionaries are a secret to no one. The rapacious banks estimate precisely by mortgages the rate of increase of ruin of the peasants!

But the capitalists, the great exploiters, jealously guard their secrets. The trusts, the monopolies, the large companies which dominate the total production of the country by directly possessing nine-tenths of it, never give an accounting of their larceny.

This exploiting *mafia* covers itself with the sanctity of "business secrets."

Business secrets are but a device for controlling the life of the poor, disguising all the banking, industrial and commercial affairs of the rich, the Staviskys and the De Wendels, who hide under the cloak of "general welfare" and "national economy."

*Down with business secrets:* Those who demand sacrifices must start by presenting their account books. Thus will their crookedness be unveiled!

## IV. Workers' and Peasants' Control Over Banks, Industry and Commerce

Bourgeois democracy accorded the laboring masses a semblance of political control over their leaders by the ballot box. As long as this did it no harm, the bourgeoisie permitted such democracy. But it never permitted even a shadow of control over its economic administration, over the basis of its exploitation, which ends in anarchy, bankruptcy and destitution of the masses.

The parasitic shareholder has the right to know how the business which enriches him functions. The worker, the exploited producer, has only to obey and keep his mouth shut: he is merely a part of the machinery.

But the workers want to know all parts of the machine. They alone can judge its functioning. Over the capitalist rule of management let us set up the implacable control of the laboring people.

Factory committees, peasant committees, committees of small functionaries, of employees could very easily, with the help of honest technicians, engineers, accountants loyal to the working people, do away with the "business secrets" of the exploiters. It is by this method that we must establish *public control over banks, industry and commerce*.

## V. To the Workers!

Under this general appeal the Communist League fights for the following measures in behalf of the workers:

1. *Forty-hour week, wage increases.* Workers' control will demonstrate that the level of productive forces permits the reduction of the working day. Wage increases at the expense of the magnates of the Comité des Forges, of the Comité des Houillères, of the Finalys, the Schneiders and the

Staviskys, and to the material and moral advantage of the laboring people.

2. *Real social security* and first of all, unemployment insurance. Annual vacation of at least one month. Retirement pensions permitting one to live after fifty years of age.

3. *Equal wages for equal work*. Abolition of the super-exploitation imposed on women, young people, aliens and colonials.

4. *For working women, the same wages and same rights as for working men*. Maternity protection with supplementary leaves of absence.

5. *For young people, wages equal to adults*. Extension of study and apprenticeship at the collective expense. Special hygienic measures.

6. *Suppression of all special legislation over foreign and colonial workers*.

## VI. Nationalization of Banks, Key Industries, Insurance Companies and Transportation

At the present time, it is the banks who direct and actually control the whole economy of the country. But if the working people seize the banks and through their medium start to manage industry, transportation, commerce, the general standard of living could be raised immediately.

The nationalization of banks, big industry, transportation and insurance companies is the preliminary condition for an economy directed toward the welfare of the great laboring masses, of the whole people.

This nationalization must allow no indemnity for the big capitalists who have enriched themselves by bleeding the proletarians for years and years, and who were able to offer only wretchedness and economic anarchy.

The nationalization of the great means of production and exchange absolutely does not mean the crushing of the small peasant, commercial, and artisan enterprises. On the contrary, the great privileged monopolies are the ones who strangle the small concerns.

Not only must the small concerns be left free, but the workers, having nationalized the large enterprises, could then come to their aid. Planned economy, based on the immense riches accumulated by the banks, trusts, corporations, etc., would permit the establishment of a plan of production and distribution which offers the small producers direct orders from the state, raw materials and credits under entirely favorable conditions. Thus the peasantry would receive agricultural machinery and fertilizer at low prices.

*Nationalization by the workers means the destruction of the great private monopolies, support of small enterprises, redistribution of products for the benefit of the great mass of producers.*

## VII. Monopoly of Foreign Trade

All foreign trade must pass through the hands of the state. Thus trade would no longer be controlled by private monopolies which regulate imports and exports with no care for the consumers' interests. Invaluable advantages for the great masses would arise from this intervention between national production and the world market. Thus only the state, ruled by the workers, would really control all foreign commerce for the benefit of the collectivity.

## VIII. The Alliance of the Workers and the Peasants

The peasantry constitutes nearly half the French population. The proletarian state must rest on the exploited peas-

ants as well as on the workers of town and country. Our program answers the needs of the great rural masses as well as those of the working class.

We affirm that our final aim, as a higher form of progress, is the *collectivization* of agriculture as well as of industry. But the proletariat cannot force this aim on the peasantry. It can only facilitate the evolution toward this goal. The proletariat can only make proposals in this direction which must then be completed, corrected, and broadened through the common experience of the two classes equally oppressed by the capitalist exploiters. We must first secure for the peasants a real opportunity to determine their own fate, the use of their forces and their property, of expressing their preferences in methods of farming, of choosing by their own judgment the moment to pass from private to collective economy.

The rural population is far from being homogeneous. The ruling class and its servile professors carefully hide the fact that a small minority has monopolized a great part of landed property and has concentrated in its hands the best means of agricultural production (machines, tractors, cattle, etc.), not to mention sources of credit.

We propose the struggle for immediately putting into effect the following measures:

1. *The same rights for agricultural workers as for those of the towns*. General laws bearing on contracts, the work-day and the weekly day of rest, social security (including unemployment insurance). Labor legislation must be applied in its entirety to agricultural workers.

2. *Expropriation of the large properties, estates and model farms* on behalf of collective and cooperative farming and small peasant farming.

3. *Abolition of sharecropping slavery*. Revision of current leases by committees of peasant laborers elected by departments.

4. *Revision of mortgages*. Moratorium. Stop all suit and foreclosures.

## IX. Social Services for the Collectivity

The great institutions of the state (post office, customs, education, etc.) which exploit several million toilers, function for the benefit of capitalism. The recent scandals have shown the corruption which reigns among the higher functionaries.

The small government employees are exploited by the corrupt and venal officials who utilize their office to permit the possessing class to crush the laborers still more.

We must make a clean sweep. With the collaboration of all the exploited, committees and unions of small government employees will make the necessary changes to establish real social services which function by and for the laboring masses.

## X. Disbanding of the Police, Political Rights for Soldiers

The government extorts billions of francs from the poor, the exploited, from people of all conditions, to develop and arm its police, its *gardes mobiles* and its army—in a word, not only to develop the *civil war*, but to prepare the *imperialist war*. Young workers mobilized by the hundreds of thousands into the armed forces of land and sea are deprived of all rights.

We demand the dismissal of the reactionary and fascist officers and non-commissioned officers, instruments of *coup d'etat*. On the other hand, the workers under arms must

retain all political rights and should be represented by soldier committees elected in special assemblies. Thus they will remain closely linked to the great mass of toilers and will unite their forces with the people organized and armed against reaction and fascism.

All the police executors of the capitalist will, of the bourgeois state and its cliques of corrupt politicians, must be disbanded. Execution of police duties by the workers' militia. Abolition of class courts, election of all judges, extension of the jury for all crimes and misdemeanors: the people will render justice themselves.

#### **XI. Right of Self-determination of Nationalities, Including Separation**

The robber treaty of Versailles is a source of atrocious evils not only for the workers of all Europe, but also for those of the "victorious" country, France. Defense of the international relations issuing from this treaty, by which the bourgeoisie annexed Alsace-Lorraine without even a plebiscite like that which it demands for the Saar, *today leads to war.*

The French bourgeoisie not only oppresses indirectly a whole section of Europe; it also lays waste and crushes immense colonies. For all the peoples oppressed by the big French capitalists—by the De Wendels and the Michelins, the banks of Paris and others—for the people of Alsace-Lorraine as well as of Indo-China, Morocco and Madagascar, *we demand the right of complete self-determination, up to and including separation if they desire it.*

The toiling masses of this country have *no* interest in helping the French banks maintain their domination over other peoples. On the contrary, by winning allies and supporters for their own struggle the toilers are helping the fight for liberation.

#### **XII. Against the War, For the Socialist United States of Europe**

In order to transform society and lift it out of chaos we must first save it from the war in which the bourgeoisie would plunge it anew.

Against the moves of German fascism, the French capitalists have set up a policy of blocs of states bearing allegiance to the criminal treaty of Versailles. France uses the League of Nations, the gathering of the rapacious bourgeoisie, to cover its actions with a veil of pacifism while it places the burden of the crushing cost of the armaments race on the laboring people. And the "defensive" lie of "security" allows chauvinistic frenzy to do its work, to hurl the country towards the monstrous massacres of tomorrow.

Proletarians, peasants, tradesmen, artisans, government employees can avoid this future only by establishing all forms of their control, by unmasking secret diplomacy, by opposing with every means the preparations for the war, by wresting the government from the hands of imperialism.

Only the victory of the revolutionary toilers of France can eliminate all possibility of imperialist war and arouse the enslaved peoples of Europe and the colonies. Pacts and treaties would then turn to dust; the only possible solution, which was seen as early as 1919, would then be: *The Socialist United States of Europe.*

Against the politics of imperialist blocs, against the pacifist lie of the League of Nations, against the secret diplomacy of the war and the madness of armaments! Throughout the aged European continent, divided, militarized, blood-stained, threatened with total destruction by a new war, we raise the

only banner of liberation, that of *the Workers' and Peasants' United States of Europe, the fraternal Federation of Soviet States!*

#### **XIII. For the Defense of the Soviet Union**

For every proletarian, the first step in this direction is the *unconditional defense of the Soviet Union*, where the October revolution of 1917 created the great foundations of the first experience of proletarian dictatorship based on the abolition of private property of the big capitalists.

The struggle against the Soviet Union still remains the fundamental objective of world imperialist reaction.

The toilers of France will fight for the defense of the Soviet Union by unmasking the "pacifist" plans of the bourgeoisie. Pacts and treaties will not effectively defend the Soviet proletariat, but revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in other countries will.

The union of the Socialist Republics of France and Russia will broaden international proletarian solidarity, not compromises with Barthou, Tardieu, Herriot and their imperialist gangs.

Only these broad measures can save the masses from misery, and lead them to socialism. From today on, all the toilers must vigorously struggle for their fulfillment.

Moreover, not through individual action, not through activity of one grouping or another, can these measures be fully applied; it can be done only through the state power which is at the helm of the economy, of the politics and the culture of the whole country. In whose hands is the helm? That is the whole question!

#### **XIV. Down with the Bourgeois "Authoritative State"! For Workers' and Peasants' Power**

The bourgeoisie is starting to carry out its plan of the transformation of state power, to eliminate once and for all the resistance of the workers: decreasing the rights of elected democratic institutions (Parliament and the Communes), and even complete suppression of these rights, for the proletarian pressure is felt there even though in a perverted way.

The bourgeoisie is trying to concentrate the executive power in the hands of a few men who impose their decisions by means of an administrative, military and police apparatus, which is brutal, uncontrolled, costly.

The bourgeois plan of the "authoritative state," directed against the exploited, must be ruthlessly attacked by the toiling masses.

Only the laboring masses, taking their future into their own hands, in one powerful revolutionary thrust, can energetically and with iron will create the necessary great power to save society from the capitalist oligarchy which corrupts it and leads it to ruin.

The task is to replace the *capitalist state*, which functions for the profit of the big exploiters, by the workers' and peasants' *proletarian state*. The task is to establish in this country the rule of the working people. To all we declare that it is not a matter of secondary "modification," but that the domination of the small minority of the bourgeois class must be replaced by the leadership and power of the immense majority of the laboring people.

*The alliance of the peasants and the workers is necessary for this.* Reaction tries to frighten the peasants with the spectre of a proletarian dictatorship which subjugates the peasants to the workers. But in reality the proletarian state

cannot be achieved as long as the proletariat is isolated from the peasantry.

The example of the October revolution, of Soviet Russia, helps us. However, in France we can do better than our Russian brothers and avoid some of their mistakes. France's economic level is higher, and we intend to act in conformity with the actual conditions of our country. It is on the basis of a clear and precise program and a close understanding between the proletariat and the exploited peasants that the dictatorship of the proletariat can be established.

The peasantry is scattered. This is one of the reasons for its political impotence, in spite of its numbers and its importance in production. The peasants can only gain power by making common cause with the workers against the bourgeoisie.

### **XV. The Struggle for the Workers' and Peasants' Commune**

The alliance of the peasantry and the workers will be achieved only if the working class shows its strength, its decided initiative and its ability to carry out this program. This is why we must, above all, create conditions for unity of action.

The *Workers' Alliance of parties and trade unions* must be organized, uniting all the forces of the laboring people without exception.

A National Committee of the Workers' Alliance, regional committees, local committees, should be organized. Creation of shop committees elected by the workers.

The impulse given by these Workers' Alliance committees, their authority among the masses, will inspire the laboring people of the countryside to organize themselves into *peasant committees*.

In the struggle against fascism, reaction and war the proletariat accepts the aid of petty-bourgeois groupings (pacifists, League for the Rights of Man, the Front Commun, etc.), but such alliances can be only of secondary importance. *Above all, the task is to secure the united action of the working class itself in the factories and the workers' neighborhoods of industrial centers.* The alliance of the important workers' organizations (Communist Party, Socialist Party, CGT [Federation of Labor], CGTU [United Federation of Labor], Communist League) will have no revolutionary value unless it is oriented toward the creation of:

1. Committees of struggle representing the mass itself (embryo soviets);
2. Workers' militia, always united in action, even though it is organized by various parties and organizations.

To reinforce the struggle of both the workers and peasants, the workers' committees should establish close collaboration with the peasant committees. Constituted as organs of popular defense against fascism, these Workers' Alliance committees and these peasant committees must become, during the course of the struggle, organisms directly elected by the masses, organs of power of the workers and peasants. On this basis the proletarian power will be erected in opposition to the capitalist power, and the Workers' and Peasants' Commune will triumph.

### **XVI. For a Single Assembly**

We are thus firm partisans of a Workers' and Peasants' State which will take the power from the exploiters. To win the majority of our working class brothers to this program is our primary aim.

Meanwhile, as long as the majority of the working class

continues on the basis of bourgeois democracy, we are ready to defend it with all our forces against violent attacks from the Bonapartist and fascist bourgeoisie.

However, we demand from our class brothers who adhere to "democratic" socialism that they be faithful to their ideas, that they draw inspiration from the ideas and methods, not of the Third Republic, but of the Convention of 1793.

*Down with the Senate, which is elected by limited suffrage and which renders the power of universal suffrage a mere illusion!*

Down with the presidency of the Republic which serves as a hidden point of concentration for the forces of militarism and reaction!

A single assembly must combine the legislative and executive powers. Members would be elected for two years, by universal suffrage at 18 years of age, with no discrimination of sex or nationality. Deputies would be elected on the basis of local assemblies, constantly revocable by their constituents, and would receive the salary of a skilled worker.

This is the only measure that would lead the masses forward instead of pushing them backward. A more generous democracy would facilitate the struggle for workers' power.

If, during the course of the implacable struggle against the enemy, the party of "democratic" socialism (SFIO), from which we are separated by irreconcilable differences in doctrine and method, were to gain the confidence of the majority, we are and always will be ready to defend an SFIO government against the bourgeoisie.

We want to attain our objective not by armed conflicts between the various groups of toilers, but by real workers' democracy, by propaganda and loyal criticism, by the voluntary regrouping of the great majority of the proletariat under the flag of true communism.

Workers adhering to democratic socialism must further understand that it is not enough to defend democracy; democracy must be regained. The moving of the political center of gravity from Parliament towards the Cabinet, from the Cabinet towards the oligarchy of finance capital, generals, police, is an accomplished fact. Neither the present Parliament nor the new elections can change this. We can defend the sorry remains of democracy, and especially we can enlarge the democratic arena for the activity of the masses only by annihilating the armed fascist forces which, on February 6, 1934, started moving the axis of the state and are still doing so.

### **XVII. The Bourgeoisie Will Never Give Up Voluntarily**

The bourgeoisie will never willingly consent to measures which can pull society out of chaos. It wants to perpetuate **all its privileges**, and in order to protect them is starting to use fascist gangs.

Our slogan is not the disarming of the fascist gangs of finance capital by finance capital's own police. We refuse to spread the criminal illusion that a capitalist government can actually proceed to the disarming of the capitalist bands. The exploited must defend themselves against the capitalists.

*Arming of the proletariat, arming of the poor peasants!  
People's Anti-Fascist Militia!*

The exploiters, who are but a tiny minority, will recoil before the unleashing of civil war, the fascist and reactionary bands will lose their audacity, *only* if the workers are armed and lead the masses.

Only if the workers proceed in this way will the greater part of the soldiers and sailors, children of laboring people

to whom our propaganda must unceasingly recall their origins and their class duty, be won to the cause of the workers, take the side of the working masses against the reactionary and fascist officers who would use them against their class.

The task is enormous, but it is the only road to salvation! The Communist League shows the way.

Society, which can exist only by your labor, is rotting away because the ruling bourgeoisie will not give up a single one of its odious privileges. To retain them the bourgeoisie is

preparing fascist bands which threaten your existence.

On February 12th you displayed your power and your determination not to submit to this violence. But on that day your leaders betrayed you: they outlined no concrete slogan, no serious perspective of struggle for you. To attain your strength, to defend your right to live, to work no more for the enrichment of a minority of shameless exploiters—prepare your revolution, join the action of the Communist League!

# The National Question and Europe

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We publish below the section on Europe from the Political Resolution of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party for the forthcoming convention.

We regret that the second of Marc Loris' discussion articles on the national question in Europe, which we promised to publish in this issue, was not ready in time; it will appear next month.

11. The fall of France not only testified to Germany's economic and military superiority on the European continent; it exposed the rottenness of French bourgeois democracy as well as the inability of the French bourgeoisie to defend their own nation against the fascist invaders. After crushing the workers' bid for power in 1936, the capitalist politicians and their Stalinist, socialist and syndicalist lieutenants in the labor movement called upon the French workers to fight for the capitalist fatherland in order to defend democracy and national independence. Duped by the bourgeoisie and betrayed by their leaders, the French workers suffered the loss of their democratic rights and their class organizations together with national unity and independence. The main section of French capitalism has entered into collaboration with the fascist conquerors; another group has gone over into the Anglo-American camp.

12. The fate of France contains a great political lesson for the workers of the whole world. It has again demonstrated that the bourgeoisie puts its profits and privileges above either national independence or democracy. Whenever their social and economic interests and their political predominance are imperiled by the proletariat, the bourgeoisie will give up national independence, destroy democracy, substitute their naked class dictatorship and collaborate with the oppressors. For the sake of preserving private property, privileges and profits, or even in the hope of preserving some of them, the bourgeoisie will turn against their own people. Official patriotism serves simply as a mask to conceal the class interests of the exploiters. The subsequent capitulations of the French bourgeoisie to Hitler have proved this to the hilt.

13. The aspiration of the masses of France and the other occupied countries for national liberation has profound revolutionary implications. But, like the sentiment of anti-fascism, it can be perverted to the uses of imperialism. Such a perversion of the movement is inevitable if it proceeds under the slogans and leadership of bourgeois nationalism. The "democratic" imperialist gangsters are interested only in recovering the property which has been taken away from them by the fascist gangsters. This is what they mean by national liberation. The interests of the masses are profoundly different. The task of the workers of the occupied countries is to put themselves at the head of the insurgent movement of the people and direct it toward the struggle for the socialist re-

organization of Europe. Their allies in this struggle are not the Anglo-American imperialists and their satellites among the native bourgeoisie, but the workers of Germany. Peace, security and prosperity can be assured for the people of Europe only by its economic unification based on the socialist collaboration of the free nations. Only with this perspective is national liberation worth talking about, still less fighting and dying for. The central unifying slogan of the revolutionary fight is "The Socialist United States of Europe" and to it all other slogans must be subordinated.

14. The German proletariat made a revolution in 1918, only to be robbed of its fruits by the bourgeois-Social-Democratic coalition. For fifteen years thereafter the proletariat remained loyal to the parties avowing workers' socialism. A revolutionary situation in 1923 was lost by the incapacity of the German Communist Party leadership disoriented by the Comintern, already then in the first stages of its Stalinist degeneration. In the last regular election (1932) the workers' parties polled 13,000,000 votes. Hitler came to power only by the help of the rottenness, incapacity and treachery of Social Democracy and Stalinism. Betrayed by their own parties the German workers were crushed by Nazism. It may be assumed that Hitler's diplomatic and military victories created a certain amount of chauvinist intoxication among the masses for a time. Now, however, they gaze on the ruin of Europe—and the ruin of Germany. They mourn millions of dead and wounded, the masses grow hungry as in 1916-1918, and the end of the war is far away. Chauvinist intoxication must begin to give way before the grim realities. The fear of a new and worse Versailles is the most potent weapon in Hitler's hands. But that weapon will fall from his hands with the first serious revolutionary developments in the "democracies" or in the occupied countries. The mighty German proletariat will say the most decisive word in the socialist revolution of Europe.

15. The workers of Britain are being impelled toward proletarian revolution by the collapse of the British Empire. The reformism of the British Labour Party and the trade unions was based on the crumbs thrown to a privileged section of the workers by a sated imperialist power; that reformism is losing its foundations. Therewith the road is being cleared for the stormy development of a revolutionary party of the Fourth International. Only the Socialist United States of Europe offers the British proletariat a perspective for hope. All the objective prerequisites for a proletarian revolution are now present in the British Isles. The British Trotskyists stand before their great historic task of organizing and leading the British workers to their revolutionary destiny.

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