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SOVIET RUSSIA IN WAR, COUNTER-REVOLUTION AND REVOLUTION

By Jacques Monnier
(Switzerland)

1. The death of Stalin and its consequences have displayed with impressive clarity that behind the "iron curtain" developments are taking place which are of extraordinary importance to the international working class.

These developments are the result of:

- a. the changed international situation in which Soviet Russia finds itself;
- b. the important development of Soviet economy since 1946;
- c. the important changes which these two factors have created in the relationship of forces between the Soviet bureaucracy and the Russian masses, but above all in the structure of the Soviet bureaucracy and in the reciprocal relations among its various layers.

2. The most decisive changes undergone by the world situation during the war years 1939-1945 and since, are chronologically as follows:

- a. resumption of the mass revolutionary movement, especially from 1943 to 1947;
- b. expansion of the positions of the Stalinist bureaucracy outside the borders of Soviet Russia; Stalinism accomplished this expansion by parasitically exploiting the mass revolutionary movement, which it channelized into setting up "people's democracies," while simultaneously beheading its proletarian-revolutionary tendency and breaking its revolutionary spirit;
- c. sharpening of the crisis of the decline of the capitalist system, which has attained such intensity that it now clearly shows itself as the crisis of capitalism in its death agony;
- d. the thrust of the Axis imperialist powers, smashed by the alliance of the Stalinist bureaucracy with Anglo-Saxon imperialism, resulted primarily in weakening Soviet Russia, but imperialist England and France also emerged greatly weakened from the war years 1939-1945; from this war American imperialism, which had taken over leadership of the imperialist camp and which is working successfully for unifying imperialism under its leadership, emerged with greater strength;
- e. explosion of the colonial revolution on a gigantic scale; this explosion was aided by the greater industrialization of these countries because of the war, was stimulated by the rise of the mass revolutionary movements in the mother countries and encouraged by the considerable weakening of the colonial powers and the resulting crack-up of the rule of the exploiting classes in the colonies, especially in Asia.

3. The resumption of the revolutionary mass movement in Europe profoundly shook the foundations of bourgeois rule. Its initial con-

sequence was that it changed the relationship of forces between the classes on the world scale in favor of the international working class; it thereby also undermined the position of the Bonapartist Stalinist bureaucracy in Soviet Russia. The revolutionary masses of France, Italy, Belgium and Eastern Europe were on the march from 1943 on and were ready to sweep away capitalist rule and replace it with the revolutionary power of Councils.

That this did not end in the victory of the international revolution is due solely to the holy alliance of the Stalinist bureaucracy with the imperialist powers against the revolution (Yalta, Teheran, Potsdam).

In Western Europe, the Stalinist bureaucracy put a brake upon the mass movement under its control and activated it only insofar as it served as a pressure instrument upon the bourgeoisie in the interests of the Kremlin.

In Eastern Europe the Stalinist bureaucracy extinguished the revolutionary flame and prevented the mass movement which it had thereby decapitated from setting up a proletarian democratic power. It channelized the mass movement exclusively into actions of the coup d'etat type, which had as objective to bring about a change in regime by removing the bourgeoisie from exercising political power and by establishing Bonapartist regimes, people's democracies, in which the Stalinist bureaucracy occupied the executive positions.

4. Thanks to this development the Stalinist bureaucracy succeeded in extending its positions beyond the borders of Soviet Russia and at the same time in removing the threat against the state existence of Soviet Russia. But this policy led up to the fact that it was not the proletarian revolution which put an end to the war; instead the holy alliance against revolution succeeded, by means of an armistice with the imperialism of the Axis powers, in putting the boot of the occupying powers on the neck of the revolutionary masses of Germany, Austria, Italy and Japan.

5. But the crisis of the capitalist system was in no way averted by this outcome of the war years of 1939-1945. On the contrary, the war years of 1939-45 even sharpened the fundamental capitalist contradiction all the more.

It was therefore logical that the imperialist powers of Western Europe and the United States would use the "grace period" which the Stalinist bureaucracy had guaranteed them, for a decisive challenge of the social revolution and of its position in the Russian soviet state, by improving its armaments and by establishing an imperialist united front. This decisive settlement of accounts was the fundamental tendency which world capital ascribed to the second imperialist world war. It could have been decided in favor of the revolution thanks to the resurgence of the mass revolutionary movement and to the heroic military struggle of the Soviet masses. It was postponed solely because of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The outbreak of the colonial revolution further shook world imperialism vitally. The delicate balance of class forces on the world scale, which had been established thanks to the Stalinist bureaucracy, was thus once again brought into question.

On the other hand, in Western Europe, bourgeois rule was relatively stabilized anew with the aid of the Stalinist parties (France, Italy, 1944-1946). Under pressure of the objective situation, the mass movement of these countries finally, however, began to rise again and to exert pressure against the Stalinist dikes (1946-1947 Belgium, Italy, France).

Thereupon the interest of imperialism in maintaining a holy alliance with the Stalinist bureaucracy vanished. In all countries of Western Europe where the Stalinists had adorned bourgeois governments, they were eliminated. World capitalism then openly oriented itself toward establishing and rearming its worldwide imperialist united front against the masses, against the social revolution and against the Russian workers' state, an important position of the international revolution (Marshall Plan, Atlantic Pact, NATO).

6. The Stalinist bureaucracy answered these moves of imperialism by veering from its practice of holding back the mass movement. It sought by every means to reach a compromise with imperialism -- at the expense of the colonial revolution, especially the Chinese, or at the expense of the masses of Western Europe.

To that end it began to spur on the mass movements under its influence, aiming to exert a stronger pressure against the world bourgeoisie so as to bring it to a compromise by these blows administered by the masses.

Founding the Cominform served mainly for this end.

7. Revolutionary mass movements, however, are not exclusively determined by bureaucratic apparatuses which mislead and deceive them. Trotsky pointed out that of the two factors which determine the orientation of the masses -- on the one hand the objective conditions of declining capitalism, on the other, the policy of betrayal by the "old workers' organizations" -- it is the former which is decisive in the long run: "The laws of history are mightier than bureaucratic apparatuses."

The pressure of the masses in a period of revolutionary upsurge actually differentiated the bureaucracy in the bureaucratic apparatuses which controlled their movement -- a process which could not in years of revolutionary ebb manifest itself so clearly.

The bureaucracy is not a homogeneous social layer. This applies not only to the Soviet bureaucracy which consists of various strata whose character -- especially since the years of the "great purges" -- is far less determined and distinguished by diminishing minorities of functionaries from the years of the revolution and civil war, but far more decisively by their social position and roots. The bureaucracy of the Stalinist bureaucratic apparatuses outside Russia is likewise composed of various bureaucratic strata. Their character, however -- unlike that of the Russian soviet bureaucracy -- is decisively determined by their tradition and by the positions they hold in the mass movement of their country.

A section of bureaucrats in these Stalinist apparatuses outside Russia owe their position to their tradition or to the direct confidence of the masses in them. These "bureaucratic tribunes" are

supported by the masses and thus assure the entire bureaucratic apparatus its necessary social support on the other hand.

Another section of bureaucrats in these Stalinist apparatuses outside Russia maintains its position in the mass movement of its country thanks to the confidence which it enjoys with the Kremlin. These "agent bureaucrats" transmit the pressure of the Kremlin bureaucracy against the aspirations of the masses. They control the apparatus of the party to which the "bureaucratic tribunes" are affiliated and which represents the bureaucracy as a whole.

The attempt to limit a rising mass movement by the bureaucratic apparatus controlling it necessarily contains the danger that at a given moment the "bureaucratic tribunes" may lose their mass support and consequently the base for their political position in the movement and within the bureaucracy. From this moment on they reach a point where they find themselves in "opposition" to the "agent bureaucrats" to whom the existence or loss of mass support may be a matter of indifference, so long as they hold the confidence of the Kremlin bureaucracy and to that end "successfully" accomplish their own mission, which is to carry out the aspirations of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

A similar process of differentiation takes place within the apparatus when as a result of Kremlin policy the mass movement ebbs and the "bureaucratic tribunes" seek at any cost to regain the confidence of the masses which have been sacrificed and disappointed by the Kremlin.

This process of differentiation, which takes place in varying measure in almost every critical period in the life of a Communist party, is most frequently and generally resolved by a victory of the real apparatus elements which reestablish the "monolithism" of the party on the line set by the Kremlin, by forcing the left elements which had appeared to capitulate, or by "purging" them. In the best case, such left elements as have been defeated by the apparatus or thrown out by it, may go over to an open resistance to Stalinism and thus pave a wide road to the creation of the revolutionary party. It is only under objective and subjective conditions of the most exceptional kind (great uprising of the masses which have resolutely taken the revolutionary road; specific weight predominantly on the side of leading elements linked with the masses) that the decision within the apparatus can take the opposite course. In such a case, a victorious struggle in the leadership of a Communist party against the direct agents of the Kremlin can open up the road to the transformation of this party into a centrist party.

8. The course of the colonial revolution in Asia, especially in China, as well as the events which followed the formation of the Cominform, are confirmation of this process.

The colonial revolutionary movement could not be placed under the unilateral control of the Kremlin. The seizure of power by Mao Tse-tung was carried out against the initial wishes of the Stalinist bureaucracy. But it likewise eliminated in this way the most important basis for compromise of which the Kremlin hoped to avail itself.

In Eastern Europe, as a consequence of the Kremlin's policy, the Stalinist bureaucracy was differentiated, which led among other things to a sharp break of Yugoslavia with the Kremlin.

The mass movement in Western Europe was disoriented to such an extent by Stalinist policy that the bourgeoisie was able to stabilize its position anew and to pass over to an offensive against the standard of living of the masses. This led to a series of great defensive struggles by the masses which oriented these struggles on a course which overflowed mere pressure against the bourgeoisie. This pressure of the masses, as well as the influence of events in Eastern Europe, began in turn to differentiate the Stalinist bureaucracy of Western Europe. The Kremlin bureaucracy realized that it might in the long run lose control of the Cominform, which was threatening to unleash mass movements which might even turn against the limitations imposed by the Kremlin bureaucracy.

The Stalinist bureaucracy reacted to this danger by liquidating the non-Russian "bureaucratic tribunes" within the Cominform apparatus and by liquidation of the bureaucrats, even in Russia, who were linked with them or supported by them (assassination of Zdanov).

9. The Kremlin bureaucracy from then on oriented its course on the basis of a rapidly approaching economic crisis in the imperialist camp. But as the pressure of the crisis increased, so also did the speed of imperialism, in its road toward the hot war, the open manifestation of which was the outbreak of the Korean war.

The Kremlin bureaucracy undoubtedly hailed the fact that the military forces of imperialism were engaged in Asia, since this war center meant among other things a strengthening of the dependence of Mao Tse-tung's China upon the Kremlin because of China's need for supplies of weapons. That the Kremlin bureaucracy counted on this development as opening up a chance for a compromise with imperialism at the expense of Korea and China has been clearly demonstrated by its betrayal of North Korea which it abandoned at the moment when a quick victory was possible. In this way it linked China to itself in a far more extensive measure.

Since the summer of 1952 it has become obvious that the "local war" in Korea was insufficient for imperialism to arrest the outbreak of economic crisis. It reacted to pressure of the ever more threatening crisis by increased military and diplomatic pressure against the Kremlin bureaucracy.

The differentiation in the imperialist camp which the Kremlin wanted did not lead to a split of imperialism into two enemy imperialist camps on the basis of which it might maneuver as before 1939. And the masses did not react to the situation with vast movements which could be controlled and channelized by the Kremlin -- a result of the past policy of disorientation of the communist parties, but also, and to a greater degree as its sequel, a result of the pressure of the masses along their own class line (Bevanism). These changed conditions eliminated with increasing obviousness the objective possibility of a compromise between the Kremlin bureaucracy in its entirety and imperialism. It followed that the theory of "peaceful coexistence" which, in the measure it expresses the need of the bureaucracy for an

equilibrium between the classes on the world scale, constitutes an indispensable part of bureaucratic policy, was being continuously reduced to a propagandist role in the framework of peace congresses, where it had for its role the political disarming of the working class, without naturally influencing the orientation of imperialism. It became increasingly obvious that a compromise with imperialism was obtainable only at the expense of the system, that peaceful coexistence of the two systems was over. The only remaining possibility was peaceful coexistence between imperialism and the section of the Russian bureaucracy which was ready to make such a compromise at the expense of the system.

10. But the bureaucracy in its entirety is not prepared to make such a compromise.

The Party, trade union and GPU bureaucracy can under no circumstances conclude such a compromise for in so doing it would deprive itself of its own basis of existence. The fate awaiting it in such an eventuality was clearly demonstrated in the war with Hitlerite Germany when all functionaries who were taken prisoner were indiscriminately slaughtered. Its policy of peaceful coexistence is directed toward a peaceful coexistence of the two systems at the expense of the working class and the colonial revolution.

The military bureaucracy and the bureaucracy controlling the economy, on the contrary, is quite ready to enter into a compromise on this basis. In case of victory over Soviet Russia, imperialism would hardly fall back upon the former Czarist managers and generals, who at the moment are making the rounds in various cities of the world as pimps and other lumpen elements, for assistance in rebuilding the necessary state and economic framework in Russia. Capitalism has far greater need than a workers' state of military men and managers, and the latter have their privileges better guaranteed under capitalism, as members of the capitalist class, than in a workers' state.

Trotsky characterized this layer of the bureaucracy in advance, the layer which would crystallize following upon a threat to bureaucratic existence as a result of war:

"These compradore-candidates are not without reason of the opinion that the new ruling stratum can only assure its privileged positions by doing away with nationalization, collectivization and the monopoly of foreign trade in the name of a return to 'western civilization,' that is to say, to capitalism."

In a world situation in which a "peaceful coexistence" of the Russian Soviet workers' state with imperialism (such as in the period 1920-1939) has become practically impossible, in a world situation in which objective conditions no longer permit of a long-term compromise between the whole of the bureaucracy with a united imperialism, in such a world situation, these two bureaucratic strata which make up the Kremlin bureaucracy must separate, for they no longer have the same common fundamental interest. For matters would go differently, at least for a section of the bureaucracy, if Russia again became capitalist through a counter-revolution: this section of the bureaucracy could preserve its privileges, even have them guaranteed by the state.

11. The progress made by Soviet economy in the course of the past years has profoundly changed the situation of the country and of its population. In terms of world-wide production, the Soviet Union has become the second industrial power on the globe. However, what is the determining factor for the position of Soviet Russia in the world is not the relationship of its production with that of capitalist powers in stagnation but with the whole world-wide capitalist economy. And even today this relationship as a consequence of the war is worse than it was in 1939 so far as the leading imperialist power is concerned. Despite the successful achievements, labor productivity remains below that of the advanced capitalist countries.

The greatest part of the Soviet population henceforth lives in the cities. The proletariat has developed greatly both numerically and culturally. The Soviet workers, especially the youngest generations, are ever more reluctant to share in the progress of production in such meagre measure, and grow less and less tolerant of the privileges of the bureaucracy. That is shown by the repeated declarations by the Soviet press against "egalitarian utopias," etc. (In Stalin's article in "Bolshevik," particularly the polemic against Jarochenko.)

Although the dynamics of the Soviet proletariat have visibly improved, it still remains atomized by the bureaucratic regime, however, and lacks a vanguard organization.

As Trotsky has shown, the dynamics of economic growth more rapidly develop needs than it permits their fulfillment and "while it slowly improves the living conditions of the workers, it rapidly acts to form a privileged stratum." At the same time that it provokes the struggle of the masses against the bureaucracy, economic progress likewise stimulates the efforts of the privileged and reinforced the tendencies toward private appropriation and the internal contradictions of the bureaucracy. As in the past, the contradiction existing between state industry and kolkhoz (collective) economy remains the liveliest.

Even if the concentration of Kolkhozes has reduced the influence of individual centrifugal forces (the tendency to direct reestablishment of private property in land), it increases on the other hand the specific weight of the new "millionaire" Kolkhoz units, and of their representatives in the bosom of the bureaucracy.

The latter demand, as is most precisely shown by the polemic of Stalin against Sanina and Wencher, the sale of the means of production for machines and tractor depots to the kolkhozes, which would change them into production cooperatives of a bourgeois type.

The privileged bureaucratic caste consists of 25 million individuals on whom the Kremlin oligarchy rests and "certainly one cannot expect that it will abdicate in favor of socialist equality" (Trotsky). The military caste has grown during the war in number and in privileges and thanks to the positions which it occupies in the buffer zone, it has a certain autonomy from the party bureaucracy. The exacerbation of the conflict among the various castes which make up the bureaucracy reflects the sharpening of the class struggle within Soviet society, which, in its turn, is stimulated by the sharpening

of the class struggle on the international arena.

From these structural changes in Russian Soviet society, the resultant relationship of forces in Soviet Russia is tending to develop in favor of the emancipation of the proletariat, a growing new threat against the existence of the bureaucracy.

12. Caught in the vise of this double threat to the existence of the bureaucracy -- disappearance of the possibility of a compromise on the international arena, internal political development characterized by a strengthened pressure of the masses -- the Kremlin bureaucracy has been torn apart.

The strata of the bureaucracy which depend least upon collective property and whose privileges in the event of counter-revolution are not threatened but on the contrary even assured, the elements of the military bureaucracy, the managing elements of the economy (managers) and of the State apparatus more specifically, no longer hold, in this changed international and national situation, the same interests as the strata of the bureaucracy which, in prosperity or in decline, primarily depend on the existence of the workers' state (party, trade union, and also GPU bureaucracy).

And in this way the Soviet bureaucracy as a whole has lost its ability to appear to the outside world as a whole and to maintain its "unity."

Stalin, up to then the intermediary and arbiter between various strata of the bureaucracy, made a last desperate attempt to overcome once again the divergences surging up within the bureaucracy and to "liquidate" the difficulties in internal policy in the bureaucracy which were dominant even before the 19th Congress.

The 19th Congress of the CP of the USSR was mainly in the service of this end. It is now obvious after the event that the statutory and organizational decisions made there in order to moderate the situation to a certain extent were more important than all the other decisions.

It was obviously a matter of establishing two decisive innovations:

1. To reorganize the relationship between the party apparatus (and that of the GPU) on the one side and the State apparatus on the other, in the direction of equalizing the "state" bureaucracy (military, management of economy) with the bureaucracy of the party and GPU.

2. To enlarge within the party the basis for political responsibility by eliminating the old political bureau and installing a significantly larger Presidium. This measure must have been viewed as a counterweight to the concession of the party (and GPU) bureaucracy to the "state bureaucracy." By introducing a wider representation of the various bureaucratic strata of the party bureaucracy, their contradictions would be moderated and their strength of resistance toward the state bureaucracy (military heads, economy heads) increased.

13. Faced by a bureaucracy whose various strata no longer have the same fundamental interest, this desperate attempt at conciliation had to fail however. Especially in the face of the changed international situation which no longer opened up the possibility of a lasting compromise at the expense of China or of the European masses, the basis of such an internal compromise to preserve the unity and wholeness of the bureaucracy had disappeared.

Upon this the election of Eisenhower came about, which increased the strain of the situation to such a degree that the "counter-revolutionary" stratum of the bureaucracy felt compelled to establish its positions for the decisive struggle. The positions of the military apparatus are considerably more important outside Russia, in the buffer zone countries, than in Russia itself. It is therefore not accidental that the attack against the compromise of the 19th Congress began there (Slansky trial, arrest of Anna Pauker, etc.), and was followed up later in Russia with the accusation against the "criminal doctors" (of the GPU).

In the course of this quarrel Stalin died. Whether he died a natural death or was killed is relatively unimportant. However, everyone talks along the line that he was liquidated (Kennan report, Borkenau article) because of the fact that he lined up in the manufacture of the doctors' conspiracy alongside the restorationist wing of the bureaucracy, against the party, GPU and trade union bureaucracy, which must defend itself and did tooth and claw, against a restoration of capitalism.

What is important, however, is that immediately after his death, the party and GPU bureaucracy passed over to the counter-attack, nullified "the agreement" of the 19th Congress, sought to win the support and sympathy of the masses by an amnesty, and has since sought to rebuild its own positions by a series of domestic political acts, and is undermining, liquidating or at least seeking to prepare the liquidation of the positions of the military and the rest of the state bureaucracy by appropriate means.

It is unquestionable that this process is only in its beginning. Other people will follow Stalin in a natural or political death who were or are representatives of the state bureaucracy of Soviet Russia, whether outside of or within Russia proper, just as counter-blows are possible by the latter against the party and GPU apparatus. And it is likewise unquestionable that the faction of the bureaucracy which has secured immediate control, Malenkov-Beria-Molotov, will do everything possible at the same time to alter the foreign political situation (and its possibility for compromise) for the bureaucracy -- whether this be by an attempt to split the imperialist front or by sharpening mass pressure on the bourgeoisie in order to force the bourgeoisie, despite all resistance, to a compromise.

14. Everything indicates that imperialism will for the time being under these conditions reverse its international strategy (war and counter-revolution into counter-revolution and war). A relaxation of the war pressure would mean a relaxation of the pressure on the bureaucracy and would, consequently, increase the specific weight of the domestic factor, pressure of the masses. An unpostponed unleashing of war would have for consequence a temporary halt in the process

of differentiation in the Soviet bureaucracy: a good part of the restorationist elements in the bureaucracy want a "national" Russian independent capitalism above all and would therefore oppose an attack against the USSR.

On the other hand, maintenance of the status quo, bearing in mind a new growth of the international revolution as a result of the armament and colonial policy of imperialism, is identical with a growing weakness of its jumping off positions for the final struggle (Burnham). Consequently it will do everything it can in order to support and encourage the ripening of the counter-revolutionary factors in Soviet Russia (active support of counter-revolutionary elements, alluring offers to deserters) as well as to throw back the Kremlin's positions (in Asia and in Eastern and Western Europe).

On its side the Russian bureaucracy will renew all its efforts to secure a temporary compromise at the expense of the working class and the colonial masses. In exchange for this compromise, it will offer imperialism to restrain and subsequently abandon the workers' movement in Western Europe, and abandonment of the "peoples' democracies."

This is the goal implicit in the "peace offers" of both sides.

15. But at the same time the disappearance of Stalin acts in a disintegrating way on the Stalinist bureaucratic apparatuses of Western Europe. The centrifugal forces which already existed there and which have been active since the internal conflicts following upon the liquidation of the Zdanov wing of the Cominform will be reinforced because of the absence of a sufficiently attractive center of gravity at the top of the Kremlin bureaucracy. Pressure of the masses, aggravated by the objective situation, will on its side speed up the differentiation of the Stalinist apparatus outside Russia and will lead to other "bureaucratic tribunes" and their support in opposition to the center.

In this situation our task consists essentially in this:

(a) To create a center of attraction, visible to the masses influenced by the Stalinists, by means of a firm and unshakeable defense, tactically adapted to its goal, of the Trotskyist program, by means of our independent organizations.

(b) To enlighten and reorient the masses on the new problems which are being posed daily and on the contradictions of the Stalinist movement, by responding with the greatest flexibility in all our activity -- naturally in a way which the masses can readily understand.

(c) Expedite the process of regroupment in the masses by a combination of this independent activity by our sections with corresponding fraction work in the Stalinist organizations (not along the lines of pulling out one or another "opposition" member, but in the direction of gathering the necessary information for more effectively orienting our activity, along the lines of a very subtle encouragement of critical currents within the Stalinist organizations, and above all along the lines of a close contact with supporters of the "bureaucratic tribunes," who are standing up in opposition, whose

movement must be carefully and seriously followed by us and encouraged by a friendly "critical support").

But at the same time it is necessary:

(a) To oppose resolutely every inclination toward conciliat-
ionist attitudes toward Stalinism.

(b) To oppose every illusion about the possibility of an automatic and genuine passing over to a revolutionary program by the "bureaucratic tribunes" who are rising in opposition, while at the same time using every occasion to link ourselves with such oppositional tendencies.

(c) To overcome especially every tendency in our ranks which hopes that because of events within the Russian bureaucracy, the Communist parties outside Russia will as a whole go over to the camp of revolution, or who see in Soviet Russia only the revolutionary pressure of the masses and not the bureaucracy reacting to it and to the international pressure above all by the consolidation of a counter-revolutionary wing.

16. The proletarian revolutionists of Russia will develop their programmatic orientation corresponding with the foreign and domestic situation and this will coincide with what Trotsky formulated for the Russian revolutionists in the Transition Program:

"A fresh upsurge of the revolution in the USSR will undoubtedly begin under the banner of the struggle against social inequality and political oppression. Down with the privileges of the bureaucracy! Down with Stakhonovism! Down with the Soviet aristocracy and its ranks and orders! Greater equality of wages for all forms of labor!

"The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of Soviet democracy.

"The bureaucracy replaced the soviets as class organs with the fiction of universal electoral rights -- in the style of Hitler-Goebbels. It is necessary to return to the soviets not only their free democratic form but also their class content. As once the bourgeoisie and kulaks were not permitted to enter the soviets, so now it is necessary to drive the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the soviets. In the soviets there is room only for representatives of the workers, rank and file kolkhozists, peasants, and Red Army men.

"Democratization of the soviets is impossible without legalization of soviet parties. The workers and peasants themselves by their own free vote will indicate what parties they recognize as soviet parties.

"A revision of planned economy from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers! Factory committees should be returned the right to control production. A democratically organized consumers' cooperative should control the quality and price of products.

"Reorganization of the kolkhozes in accordance with the will and in the interests of the workers there engaged!

"The reactionary international policy of the bureaucracy should be replaced by the policy of proletarian internationalism. The complete diplomatic correspondence of the Kremlin to be published. Down with secret diplomacy!

"All political trials, staged by the Thermidorian bureaucracy, to be reviewed in the light of complete publicity and controversial openness and integrity. Only the victorious revolutionary uprising of the oppressed masses can revive the Soviet regime and guarantee its further development toward socialism. There is but one party capable of leading the Soviet masses to insurrection -- the party of the Fourth International!"

They will orient themselves in this way upon the differentiation of the bureaucracy itself, which undoubtedly will give rise to a "Reiss wing" in a subsequent phase. United with it, they will be guided by the directive clearly developed in our Transition Program:

"From this perspective, impelling concreteness is imparted to the question of the 'defense of the USSR.' If tomorrow the bourgeois-fascist grouping, the 'fraction of Butenko,' so to speak, should attempt the conquest of power, the 'fraction of Reiss' inevitably would align itself on the opposite side of the barricades. Although it would find itself temporarily the ally of Stalin, it would nevertheless defend not the Bonapartist clique but the social base of the USSR, i.e., the property wrenched away from the capitalists and transformed into State property. Should the 'fraction of Butenko' prove to be in alliance with Hitler! (today with Western imperialism -- author's note) "then the 'fraction of Reiss' would defend the USSR from military intervention, inside the country as well as on the world arena. Any other course would be a betrayal."

The victory of the counter-revolution or of political revolution in the USSR is ever more decisively dependent on the forward march of the international revolution and therefore on the creation of the revolutionary leadership for the masses, on the victory of the program and parties of the Fourth International.

May 6, 1953

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE PREPARATORY DISCUSSION
FOR THE WORLD CONGRESS

By Internationale Socialister, Denmark

Collaboration or Split

Comrade Pablo's document "From the 3rd to the 4th World Congress" is capable of producing a disconcerting effect by its very one-sided orientation toward Stalinist organizations, by its very harsh formulations and because it sets out lines of demarcation cut very deep between the IS and groups holding other opinions, so that one gets the impression that there is involved either unconditional surrender of the latter or a split in the International.

We refer especially to page 18.

"...no compromise with sectarian tendencies which have emerged on this question, nor with others which will eventually take form within the International, is possible."

There is mentioned in the following paragraph a line of demarcation between these tendencies and the IS, and on page 9 there is a scarcely veiled attack against the American Party, because it attacks the Stalinists unrestrainedly, and on the last page is written "only a miracle in any case could spare us from internal shocks." Thus we see clearly from this that it is the IS which is looking forward to a struggle, provoking its adversaries and is ready to engage in combat inexorably.

The new line is correct, but...

On page 16, we see the new line defined in the sharpest manner:

"The ranks of the Communist Parties -- and this in all countries without exception -- still constitute the sole revolutionary vanguard aside from our own nuclei."

We are very happy to learn of the appreciation by the IS of work among masses under Stalinist influence -- even in countries where the Social-Democracy is the strongest workers party. We have always been of that opinion; and here in Denmark we have worked along that line for several years. But no later than June the representative of the International expressed himself in terms of contempt for this work. He persisted in the schema of the IS: Denmark is one of the countries where work should be done in the Social-Democracy.

But setting aside this appreciation of our work, we think that this document will have disastrous consequences for the future of the 4th International because: the slogan of entrism sui generis into Stalinist organizations in given countries is still maintained, and possibly will be applied to other countries. (2) the extremely polemical form of the document alone, along with the previous acts on the part of the IS lead one to believe that the IS, far from seeking a solution of the French problem with the reintegration of

the expelled party, on the contrary is disposed to expel other groups, and perhaps other sections. And finally, (3) the document shows an inclination to make of the bulk of the sections pure and simple apparati, which will be exposed to bureaucratization, while the bulk of the members will be sent into other parties, where the absorption of some them is inevitable, as we have already witnessed in France.

We have not forgotten the conflict with the French party which is now expelled from our International. We were opposed to the conduct of the IS and we have protested against it. The French party was denied any discussion on Stalinism, although debate on this question had not been exhausted (there still remained to be discussed China, and Comrade E. Germain's Ten Theses) and although the tactic of entrism sui generis was not voted on at the World Congress. The party's leadership was suspended and the party was denied the right to freely elect its leadership to the national congress.

But the expelled party continued its work after the expulsion; and during the August strikes it was extremely active, carrying out powerful revolutionary agitation and publishing a large number of documents and newspapers. On the other hand, it was very difficult to observe the work of the official party during the strike. It was impossible for us to find its members or leaders while we were in Paris (during the August days). But, when we read in the official publications of the extensive activity of the official party, we have no means of contesting this. Only we take the liberty of assuming it was inferior to the activity of the others. We do not understand how the official section could compromise itself by publishing a leaflet in which it solidarized itself with the CGT leadership, which openly betrayed the workers. We expose that, because that conduct seems to be a consequence of the new line, a detail which must be taken into consideration when one judges this new course. Is this part of the tactics, solidarizing oneself with an organization which betrays the workers? It seems to us a bit peculiar.

It is with these facts in mind that we are somewhat disturbed as we read the new document by Pablo. And the question naturally arises: are other sections to be expelled?

Our uneasiness increases as we recall previous actions of the present leadership of the International.

Previously, the IS had stated that Yugoslavia and other "buffer" countries were capitalist states, in spite of the transformations effectuated during the Russian occupation; but, as soon as Yugoslavia broke with the Kremlin, we learned that a revolution had taken place in Yugoslavia and that it was a workers state. And with a suddenness which characterizes the whole manner of working of the IS, the activity of all sections was now to be oriented toward Yugoslavia. One got the impression that now Yugoslavia was to build our International! later it became necessary to retrace our steps; and the question arose: Could not a more circumspect policy have served the International? Was it necessary to approve to such an extent Yugoslavia's policies? Was not the International at the time too timid in its criticism of the circumstances around Yugoslavia?

This question is relevant at the present time, when a sudden turn is again made, when again, applying very strong expressions, a clearly marked path is sketched out, which besides -- if we leave out the entrism sui generis into the Stalinist organizations -- is essentially correct, but seems to carry with it reticencies and very dangerous positions (compare what we have remarked above about the solidarization of the official French party with the CGT and the disapproval of the criticism of the American comrades directed against the Stalinists).

We are against the entrism sui generis in Stalinist organizations, but we are for fraction work inside Stalinist organizations and any other work to rally the Stalinist ranks to our cause. We remember that in January 1952 Comrade Pablo had one of his sudden impulsions: now it became immediately necessary, in France and Italy, to enter into the CPs. Otherwise we were lost. And he said that the PCF would go further and further to the left. Aside from some episodes, we have seen a very pronounced rightist course, betrayal of the workers in the August 1953 struggles and the proclamation of a National Front. Nor do these actions reassure us in our fear that the IS fails to guard proper proportions in carrying out the new line, and does not always know how to correctly appraise the facts which are the foundation of its tactics.

A FEW WORDS ON DISCIPLINE AND FLEXIBILITY

Formally the IEC has always been in approval of the measures taken against the French party. But here some considerations are not out of turn. First we must say that it is a bit difficult to advance an appraisal of the IEC when we receive reports so arranged as those we have received up to present, reports which give almost exclusively the minutes of speeches by Pablo and other IS members, and which give extracts from the discussion so summary that they become necessarily distorted and perhaps even false. However we are led to pose the question whether members of the Executive Committee have been abreast of the situation. For a leadership it is not always enough to be merely a confirming assembly. The question must be studied with a view to finding a solution; and we think that, in a certain measure, this has been lacking. The "compromises" arrived at have always been in favor of the IS.

There has been a great inadequacy in that the IS and the IEC have been at the mercy of this atmosphere of panic which is disseminated at every turning point ("we are lost if we do not..."). The 4th International must be considered from this point of view: here are rallied all those who declare themselves for revolutionary Marxism. Now there exists a tendency to make of the International a sect grouping around itself only such revolutionists who think that now we must orient work toward the Stalinist cadres, and who also think that their parties must be made over into pure and simple apparati (as is evidently the case in France at this moment), while the membership goes into Stalinist or social-democratic parties.

We must be able to see far enough ahead to understand that a comrade can be a revolutionist, even if he cannot follow all the abrupt turns of the IS and that, consequently, he has the right to remain in the International. Too many brilliant effectives have been

hounded into obscurity by the tough policy of the international leadership and/or by the policy of one of the sections, and in such a way the revolutionary movement has been weakened for a long time to come. Let the International leadership as well as individual section leaderships learn from the lessons of history! A movement is not strong for the sole reason that it consists of marionettes!

And as for discipline? It goes without saying that one must submit to majority decisions. But the leadership, on its side, also has the duty of displaying more flexibility. One must ask: if a group of comrades, who very often have a more profound grasp of their conditions of work than the international leadership, think that they can work better in a certain way, and if that is possible in a given situation, is it not to the benefit of the movement that they should have that freedom? A movement progresses the more it has as members conscious men and not automatons. The unity of the 3rd World Congress on all fundamental questions was perhaps not so much an indication of strength. Was it not in consequence of the fact that persons and groups with independent opinions had been shown out the door in advance? And are we to go further along this road? The document by Comrade Pablo is, it seems, a sinister indication of this.

Moreover, the present tactic, where national sections tend to become leading apparatuses and with the ranks in the Stalinist organizations, carries with it the danger that our movement will become bureaucratized beyond recovery.

This is perhaps a distress call at the last moment: Let us save the International! Do not apply the muzzle to us for mere tactical considerations!

Don't make of the International a sterile instrument, where all independent opinions are forbidden. Only by the struggle of opinions in our own ranks do we gain strength.

Nov. 24, 1953

After this document was written we received from the IS some documents on the conflict between the IS and the SWP of the USA. But the documents received do not afford us the possibility of making a judgment on the affair, as several documents which are mentioned in the received literature and which explain the reasons for expulsion of American minority members, are not in our possession.

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