

# Bulletin

## OF THE WORKERS PARTY

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THE STRUGGLE FOR THE WORLD TODAY:  
CAPITALISM, STALINISM AND THE THIRD WORLD WAR.

The world of capitalist imperialism headed by the United States and the new totalitarian despotism of Stalinism headed by Russia face each other over the whole world as imperialist rivals and as antagonistic systems of class exploitation vying for the privilege of oppressing the peoples of the earth. Their "cold war" is the dominant fact, and the threat of the third world war is the overshadowing issue, of all current politics.

There has been no interlude of peaceful illusions. The two big powers openly jockey for positions and allies, through a series of warlike crises. Their diplomats and statesmen hurl defis and denunciations at each other in language seldom used between states not at war or preparing for imminent war. Between the two contenders lies a Europe still suffering hunger, want and disease from the unprecedented devastation of the Second World War, and deathly afraid of the universally expected destructiveness of a foreseeable war of atom bombs, long-range guided missiles, bacteriological weapons and radioactive dust.

In this situation a paradox exists: Never before has there been such universal revulsion and horror in the face of the gathering storm of civilization on the part of the peoples of the world, and a concomitant will to stop the mad course to destructions; and at the same time never before has there been such widespread fear that the holocaust is inevitable. Not only the people but also the socialist and working-class movements stand with divided mind, unable to orient themselves in the midst of new, unclearly grasped, and unanticipated phenomena.

The working classes of Europe, of America and of the colonial world have displayed no lack of fighting spirit and will to struggle since the end of the Second World War. The contrary is true, manifested by a scarcely interrupted series of class battles, from the Labor-Party-led political overturn in England, to the Stalinist-led general and political strikes on the Continent, to the nationalist-led struggles for independence in the colonial countries. The danger of war and the driving need for economic security ensures that the working class will continue to fight.

But this irrepressible class struggle is confused and its effectiveness partially nullified by the rise of a new factor, Russian bureaucratic-collectivism, to the role of a first-class contender for world domination and by the development of new trends in the capitalist world which amount to a new stage of the old system. In most of Europe and in most of the world, the struggle for socialism is no longer merely the classic duel -- proletariat vs. bourgeoisie -- but a three-cornered fight for power, with the working class ranged against not one class enemy but two: a degenerating capitalism which is anti-Stalinist and a totalitarian Stalinism which is anti-capitalist.

The basis for the disorientation of the proletarian forces consists in this: that these rival exploiting systems are not clearly

recognized as enemies on an equal footing; that, since they are in mutual antagonism, one or the other is regarded by sections of the working class as a possible ally -- as an ally as well against the threatening war.

The first task of Marxists in the face of this new constellation of world forces is a thorough reorientation of socialism in the light of the new phenomena in the capitalist and Stalinist sectors of the world. This means the adaptation of Marxism to the problems of our day in at least as sweeping a fashion as the adaptation accomplished by Leninism in its time on the basis of a recognition of the new stage of imperialism. It is on an analysis of the new conditions that the politics of the Workers Party is founded -- "Neither Washington nor Moscow!" -- and it is on this that the socialist struggle against the war is based.

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## I. CHANGES IN CAPITALIST IMPERIALISM

### A. The Bureaucratic Militarization of Capitalist Economy

1. Under the impact of the First World War, Karl Kautsky, the leading theoretician of social-democratic reformism, elaborated his theory of "ultra-imperialism," according to which the organic growth and internationalization of capitalist monopoly would lead to a single world-wide trust and international peace. We have seen, in fact, that a kind of "super-imperialism" has indeed emerged from the advance of monopoly -- two superimperialist powers, each imposing its own imperialist sway over other modern and equally imperialist states. Far from making for a more peaceful combination of national states, the world-racking imperialist rivalry and the increased shift of all national economies for war and destruction has been brought to a pitch never before seen. For the first time, the life of every important country in the world, including the United States, is being organized more and more on the basis of a permanent war economy and a permanent militarization of society.

2. In economic terms, this means the rapid growth in the economic structure of capitalism of a third great department of production alongside the production of the means of production and the production of the means of consumption. This newly significant sector of the economy is the production of the means of destruction -- production of goods which do not re-enter either into the process of reproduction or into (what is at bottom part of the same process) the production of labor power. While the production of war goods and the devotion of means of consumption to the production of "soldier power" has always been a part of capitalist economy (where its economic effects have been similar to those of luxury goods consumed by the capitalist class), the rise of this production to the immense role it now plays has been accompanied by far-reaching changes.

3. The link between the economic and political changes thus produced is the fact that the market for this third department of capitalist production is the state. The rise to dominance in the economy of this type of production effects, therefore, the partial

negation of the blindly-operating market as the regulator of capitalist economy and its replacement by the partial planning of the state bureaucracy. In proportion as production for war purposes becomes the accepted and determining end of economic activity, the role of the bureaucracy ceases to be limited to that of a political superstructure and tends to become an integral part of the economy itself. This bureaucratization of economy in the capitalist countries leads to the growth of the state bureaucracy in size, in the importance of its role for the regulation of the economy, and in its relative independence from the direct control of the capitalist class.

4. In this stage of the dominance of war economy and the bureaucratization of capitalism, the role played by state intervention ("statification of the economy") changes accordingly. From its role in the early period of capitalism of forcing development (especially in the case of latecomers like German or Japanese capitalism), and from its role in the middle period of capitalism of "socializing the losses" of particularly sick or weak individual industries, its dominant role today is that of building or maintaining the war potential of the economy in anticipation of future conflict or planning war production in actual conflict. This new character of statification is founded upon the new dominance of war economy and the new role of the state bureaucracy, tending to substitute state-organized planning for the blind operation of the market, largely at the expense of petty capitalism but also partly at the expense of limiting or infringing upon the political and even social power of the bourgeoisie (as in the case of the fascist war economies).

5. This development has not advanced equally in all capitalist countries or all spheres of capitalist economy, being especially marked in those capitalisms devastated or bled white in the war (like England and France) and less marked in proportion to the wealth of the country (as in the United States). Nationalization in England has already gone beyond the limits expected by Marxists (including Lenin) in the days when British capitalism still appeared as a going concern, albeit in a state of historical decline, in particular still able to feed on the wealth produced by its colonial slaves. If nationalization in England does not go further (say, to steel) in the next period, this will not be because such a step is excluded by the nature of forces operating in the degeneration of British capitalism. While a nominally socialist government staffed by the Labor Party is the vehicle through which these changes are taking place, the bourgeoisie has so far put up a comparatively weak resistance and the Conservative opposition has been compelled to promise that its resumption of power might slow up or temporarily halt the trend but would not turn it all the way backward. Likewise in France, since the end of the Second World War, nationalization has played a role which, before the war, would have been scouted as impossible of realization under capitalism by all Marxists.

6. The all-pervading degeneration of capitalism marked by the new phenomena outlined above is superimposed upon its decades-long decline, just as the new stage of the bureaucratic militarization of capitalism does not negate but is superimposed upon its stage of

imperialism. It must be emphasized that while, both in economic structure and in political consequence, a new stage is marked, it is yet a new stage of capitalism, indeed of capitalist imperialism. The fundamental social reason for the emergence of this new stage is the delay of the socialist revolution and working-class intervention in cutting short the agony of capitalist decline in favor of a new social order based on workers' power.

7. Out of this partial self-negation of the capitalist world, however, the new traits rising to prominence have more and more in common with the rival social order whose power has mounted parallel with the degeneration of capitalism: Russian bureaucratic collectivism. Thus already in 1939, discussing the bracketing of the New Deal, German fascism and Russian Stalinism under one head, Trotsky commented that "all these regimes undoubtedly possess common traits, which in the last analysis are determined by the collectivist tendencies of modern economy," and that "the tendencies of collectivization assume, as the result of the political prostration of the working class, the form of 'bureaucratic collectivization.' The phenomenon itself is incontestable. But where are the limits, and what is its historical weight?" While in 1939 Trotsky expected this inner tendency of capitalism toward "bureaucratic collectivization" to be aborted by post-war revolution and to be therefore only of academic interest, the prolongation of capitalist degeneration and the continued "political prostration of the working class" more and more brings it to the fore and lends it increasing historic weight. The limits of this tendency are set by the struggle of the working class for power and, even aside from this, by the fact that the complete negation of capitalism short of working-class revolution requires the intervention of some other revolutionary social force which is visible in the western capitalist countries only in broad outline.

8. This capitalist tendency toward "bureaucratic collectivization," therefore, by no means erases the distinction and antagonism between the rival social systems of capitalist America and bureaucratic-collectivist Russia, but bears on the direction of capitalist degeneration -- given working class failure to fight the trends created. Capitalism itself is doomed. In the looming war between Western imperialism and Stalinist imperialism, the victory of the former can be achieved by it only by intensifying precisely those tendencies which push it in the direction of its enemy. War economy -- bureaucratization -- bureaucratic planning -- controls -- regimentation -- declining standard of living in the midst of "full employment" for war production -- these are the social prerequisites for gearing capitalism toward victory in the threatened war. It is irresponsible and utopian to believe that the victory of American imperialism in this war can be ensured at any cost lower than the acceleration of its own descent into that modern-type barbarism upon which it wars. The fight against the inevitable assault of today's capitalism on the most firmly entrenched economic gains and democratic rights of the people is part and parcel of the socialist struggle against the war itself and its preparation. This is the most fundamental historical basis for our slogan "Neither Washington nor Moscow!" and the refusal of the Marxists to make the slightest compromise with social-patriotic notions of supporting the capitalist side of a war in order to gain a "breathing spell" from the threat of Stalinist totalitarianism.

## B. National Independence and Capitalist Imperialism

9. The degeneration of today's capitalism is most noticeable at its peripheries, in the relations between it and the colonial world. The end of the First World War brought the strengthening of the colonial empires at least of the victorious powers. The Second World War has brought a thoroughgoing disintegration into all of world imperialism where it counts most, among their colonial slaves. For the first time since the early progressive days of capitalism, peoples in revolt have won their national independence from big powers. The British and French empires, greatest in the world, are breaking up. India, classic example of colonial subjection, is now politically independent. Egypt and most of the Arab world are no longer under direct British mastery. This change is not due to any change of heart by a reformed British imperialism under Labor Party control. On the contrary, British imperialism has not given the slightest sign of having changed its spots -- in Africa, for example, where it still maintains a firm hand. Nor is it true, on the other hand, that "nothing new has really happened," that India's independence is a "fake," etc. India's political independence is as real as the political independence of any state today other than the Big Two themselves.

10. What is noteworthy, from the point of view of the Marxist prognosis, is that this change has been accomplished without a socialist revolution and not under the leadership of the working class in these colonies. If this stands in contradiction with the prognoses based on the theory of permanent revolution, it is so not because the theory misread the character of the colonial bourgeoisie, but because it did not envisage the transformation which has actually taken place: the accelerated degeneration of capitalism and therefore the disintegration of capitalist imperialism. Capitalism, falling apart and held together at home through bureaucratic militarization, loosens its grip first at its outer fringes. The sweeping and world-wide changes in the colonial world testify to the entrance of capitalist imperialism onto a new stage of its degeneration.

11. But at the same time -- and equally characteristic of the new stage of capitalism -- national political independence has come to mean less and less in today's world. It no longer opens the doors it used to, in the earlier day when it meant (for the native bourgeoisie) the opportunity to itself enter upon the road of economic expansion and development among the powers of the world. For the old relationship of colonial slave and colonial master, a new relationship is being established not only for the former colonial dependencies but also for countries which have enjoyed national independence for a century and more. This is a hierarchical relationship of economic subordination under the over-all hegemony of American super-imperialism.

12. This relationship, under which the situation of the ex-colonies is being subsumed, is that which American imperialism is on the way to establishing between itself and the advanced countries of Western Europe. As noted in previous resolutions of the Workers Party: since the Second World War, for the first time in modern days, the spirit of national resistance has found a social basis in

these lands -- not merely, as during the war, directed against actual military occupation, but directed against the usurpation of their national sovereignty by the United States through the economic levers of the Marshall Plan. The relationship which is being established between American imperialism and (for example) Italy is not the same as the pre-war relationship between England and India. It is no longer that of master and colonial slave, but of overlord and vassal. The capitalist-imperialist world is no longer divided into two more or less distinct spheres consisting of a number of exploiting states and a larger number of bondsmen nations without rights; it is a hierarchy under the overlordship of Washington, in an imperialist system of mutual but unequal obligations with the dominant imperialism of the United States skimming the cream. The newly independent colonies are fitted into this framework.

13. The American overlordship in Western Europe does not take the form of political suppression of national sovereignty, just as it did not in its conquest of Latin America; the vassal continues under the form of a "sovereign" independent state, subordinating itself to Washington of its own "free will" -- that is, under the compulsion of economic necessity to knuckle under lest its own capitalist economy collapse. In addition, the counter-threat from the east, from Moscow, drives it into the arms of that imperialism which at least seeks to prop up its existing ruling class. Thus the threat of Russian expansion becomes, in addition to their own economic weakness and need, the cement which binds together the new American hegemony being established on the Continent and over the rest of the capitalist world. Only by convincing the peoples of Europe that it is the lesser evil can the United States mitigate the outbursts of national resistance which would otherwise greet its encroachment on their sovereignty. This has its counterpart in the propaganda appeal of Russia to the peoples under its own heel. The two super-imperialisms feed on each other. In the European working class, the politics of the reformists who paint the victory of American imperialism as the lesser evil and as the prerequisite for a "breathing spell" is precisely the line of propaganda and conviction which permits Washington to realize its world ambitions.

14. American overlordship in Western Europe is indeed a necessity if capitalism is to withstand Stalinist Russia's assaults on its bastions. It is irresponsible -- or at least inconsistent -- to greet the Marshall Plan as a necessary bulwark against Stalinism and at the same time object to America's utilization of the Marshall Plan for the purpose of dictating what its recipients shall or shall not do economically or politically. Capitalist Europe cannot defend itself while maintaining a real independence, in its present stage of degeneration. Economically and politically, it cannot organize itself into a unity, as against the Russian empire's integrated totalitarianism, except under outside tutelage. As a social force, European capitalism has little or no appeal for the masses, either in its own countries or in Eastern Europe. The European reformists, who have never entertained the thought of socialist revolution as a bulwark against Stalinism, conclude that the only "practical" alternative is reconciliation to American imperialism or dependence upon it. In every part of the world -- outside Europe too, where Stalinism's threat is far-flung -- the politics of supporting America in its cold war now, or in the shoot-

ing war tomorrow, makes impossible any struggle for national independence beyond grumbling or pleading. Here too the shadow of the third world war determines all politics.

### C. The "Theory of Retrogressionism"

15. If world capitalism, in its senility, is entering upon a new stage in our epoch of war and revolution, accompanying this development are retrogressive symptoms in all fields -- social, political, ideological, cultural. The old system awakens barbaric echos of its past; as civilized values in the broadest sense crumble with the economic structure. The appearance of these symptoms, however, does not mean that two centuries of capitalist development and social change have simply been put in reverse and wound back on the film of history. Thus the reappearance of national-liberation movements and strivings in modern Europe represents, on one side, a hurling back of working-class consciousness, but it does not and cannot mean a throw-back to the social conditions that prevailed in the early days of capitalism. Thus the hurling back of culture in so many of its aspects (most evident in German fascism and totalitarian Stalinism but visible also even in the United States) is a retrogressive movement, but it does not simply take society back to the problems and solutions of a previous epoch. These symptoms are superimposed on an entirely new constellation of social forces.

16. The political dangers latent in an erroneous theory on this question are most evident in, but not confined to, the formulation of the theory of retrogressionism put forward by the IKD group. According to it, the process of retrogression "harks back in reverse order to the end of the Middle Ages, the epoch of 'primitive accumulation,' the Thirty Years War, the bourgeois revolutions, etc." and is "showing society back to the barbarism of the Middle Ages," bringing about "a reversal...of all relations, foundations and conditions valid for the ascending development of capitalism" and producing "the exact counterpart" in reverse of this ascending development, creating "conditions in economics, politics, social relations, etc., which are like the conditions of the epoch of the origins of capitalism," etc. In the political conclusion drawn from this theory, the IKD group, in emphasizing the "democratic revolution" against the despotic regime of capitalist barbarism minimizes the specific and leading role of the proletariat as a class and even slurs over the decisive question of class distinctions in the broad popular and democratic movements against capitalism into which all oppressed classes and strata are driven by its decay. At the same time, by failing to emphasize the fact that for Marxists the conscious and consistent struggle for democracy can be conceived of in no other way than as the struggle for workers' power and socialism, the position of the IKD, which is at best ambiguous on this score, leaves open a return to the political program of the immature proletariat in the days of immature capitalism.

17. On the theoretical side, its theory ignores precisely the new driving forces of capitalist degeneration in favor of a sterile schematism. Far from lessening the leading role of the working class in the struggle for both socialism and democracy, the degeneration of capitalism and of its "democratic" sections in particular more than ever leaves the proletariat as the only social force which can



lead all the oppressed in combating the descent to a new barbarism. At the top of the agenda today for the socialist movement is the fight for every democratic demand, including national independence of subject peoples and nations, but this struggle has progressive significance only insofar as it leads to or creates more favorable conditions for the achievement of the proletarian socialist revolution by the overthrow of capitalism.

#### D. The Role of the Social Democracy

18. The degeneration of capitalism exercises a penetrating effect on all aspects of its society and on all its wings, from its reactionaries to its liberals. Not least of all does it affect social-democratic reformism, in the latter's capacity as the bearer of capitalist ideology in the ranks of the working class. Where the social-democracy has seemed to take a new lease on life in the countries of Western Europe, it has been at the expense of a change in its role corresponding to the changes working within capitalism itself.

19. Social-democratic reformism is today increasingly one of the political channels through which the "bureaucratic collectivization" of capitalism expresses itself. The "collectivist tendencies" within capitalism press forward, and in many cases -- as has happened often before -- the old capitalist representatives are unwilling or unable to become their vehicles, hidebound by tradition and personnel. The social-democracy is in many respects peculiarly fitted to do so. After the First World War, discredited capitalism required a "democratic" face-lifting, sops and stopgaps; and permitted the social-democracy to take the lead in this direction until it was no longer useful. Today the needful for capitalism is not democratization; it is bureaucratization, a measure of bureaucratic state planning accompanied by increasing Bonapartism. Just as two decades ago the social-democracy "democratized" under the impression that it was thereby fulfilling an installment of its own program, so today it plays a role in the bureaucratic militarization of economy under the impression that it is achieving a slice of "socialism."

20. This is possible for the social-democracy because -- precisely in that basic respect which distinguishes revolutionary Marxism from all petty-bourgeois ideologies in the working-class movement -- there is an underlying ideological kinship between social-reformism and Stalinism: the aim of a rationalized society plus a fear of the masses in movement and a rejection of the working class's claim to social leadership; its ideology of collectivism without trust in workers' democracy and initiative. This is also why the soul of social-democracy is split throughout Europe between capitulation to American domination and capitulation to Stalinism, depending upon their relative power. Where Stalinism has not yet taken power, social-democracy mainly gravitates toward the former; in Italy, lapped by the wave of Russian power, it split between the two until the Stalinist debacle in the last election; but it then becomes anti-Stalinist in order to play the role of the vanguard of the native, capitalist tendencies toward bureaucratization.

21. In the United States, where the reformist social-democracy is organizationally insignificant and capitalist degeneration least

advanced, this ideological role is adopted by elements outside the miniscular Socialist Party or Social Democratic Federation -- the neo-liberals who have abandoned the traditional liberal fetish of freedom from state power in favor of another fetish, "planned capitalis," i.e., bureaucratized capitalism, denominated in liberal jargon as "progressive capitalism." In the case of American liberalism, as in the case of the European social-democracy, the same split is seen, however: into the pro-American liberals and the pro-Stalinist liberals (Wallaceites, neo-Stalinists), while in both camps the well-known phenomenon of "totalitarian liberalism" grows apace.

22. This development -- a modification of the long-standing political role of reformism -- by no means erases what we have emphasized as being the fundamental social distinction between reformism and Stalinism, a distinction which also determines a basic difference in attitude toward the two on the part of the Marxists. The reformist parties are based on the existence of a more or less free labor movement in a more or less bourgeois-democratic state structure. Where this has ceased to be true, as in the totalitarianized satellites of Russia, the basis for the social-democracy has ceased to exist and consequently the social-democracy itself has ceased to exist, being absorbed by the Stalinists or converted into new underground revolutionary movements.

23. In those countries, therefore, where the social-democracy is still a mass organization, then -- in the absence of sizable revolutionary parties, which is the situation in Europe today -- the possibility exists of setting up within its left-wing ranks a pole of attraction for those independent workers who wish to orient away from both Washington and Moscow, an incubation center of the revolutionary third camp. This possibility does not and cannot exist within the Stalinist movements because of their totalitarian character. Reformism still acts as a tail to capitalism and, at the same time, incubates elements of revolutionary socialist struggle against capitalism -- which means, by the same token, against reformism itself.

24. Above all, it is not reformism which is today in most of the world the main enemy of revolutionary Marxism within the working class movement. That is Stalinism. In the period leading up to the First World War, the effect of the development of imperialism on the working class was to distort its ideology in the direction of reformism. Today the effect of the bureaucratic degeneration of capitalism on the working class movement is to distort its ideology in the direction of Stalinism. The dominance of social reformism was the result of the imperialist development of the system; the Stalinization of the working class is the result of the new stage of capitalism. In this sense Stalinism is the contemporary analogue of pre-war reformism, although not merely a variety of reformism.

#### E. The Socialist Struggle for Democracy

25. The attitude of revolutionary socialists toward democratic demands and slogans has undergone substantial modification in the last period, especially during and since the Second World War, under the impact of the changes in capitalism itself. One of the first

and biggest manifestations of this change was the position on the national-resistance movements in Europe adopted by the Workers Party in 1944. At the same time, the recognition of the world Stalinist parties as an anti-capitalist but reactionary movement highlights the crucial role of democracy today in the proletarian struggle against capitalism, in contradistinction from Stalinism.

26. The fundamental difference between the reformist and the revolutionary view of the struggle for democracy dates back in modern times to the contrast between the politics of the pre-1914 Social Democracy and of its revolutionary Marxist wing of the same period, when both operated on the common Marxist belief that the road to socialism lay through the unceasing struggle for the broadening of democracy. But the Social Democrats based their fight on the view that there was an unlimited perspective of democratization before capitalism, which need only be driven to its ultimate conclusion in line with the natural tendency of a peacefully developing capitalism; among other revolutionary Marxists, the Bolsheviks viewed their struggle for democracy in Russia as inevitably bringing the masses in conflict not only with the autocratic régime of the czar but also with the capitalist class. Where, therefore, the former view led the Social Democrats to adaptation to and support of capitalism, and finally even support of its wars, the Marxist view led to the carrying of the democratic struggle over to the socialist revolution, without which it could not achieve fruition.

27. The Russian October and the period of the first world revolution of 1917-1923, which saw a proletarian revolutionary wave sweep over all of Europe and shake up the whole world, with soviet power and the overthrow of capitalism immediately on the order of the day, also saw the formation of the Communist International and the crystallization and codification of Marxist doctrine as developed by Lenin taking place under these conditions. The fundamental difference between social-democracy and revolutionary Marxism took another specific form: the reformists undertook the task of defending and preserving capitalism against the assaults of the revolutionary proletariat, calling this betrayal "the defense of bourgeois democracy." To this bourgeois democracy, under which guise the capitalist system was making its last stand, the Marxists counterposed workers' power and socialist democracy. Under the cover of the bourgeois-democratic regimes, temporarily staffed by the reformists, the continued dictatorship and oppression of the capitalist rulers restabilized itself -- until the temporary burgeoning of democratic and republican forms in Europe gave way, once the revolutionary tide had receded, to fascism and the drive to a second world war.

28. This last struggle against the bourgeois-democratic form of capitalism, however, left its lasting impress on the Marxist movement and on its attitude toward the struggle for democracy under capitalism. While it is certainly not excluded that, with the rise of a second wave of world revolution, bourgeois democracy (or what is left of it) will again be able to be counterposed to workers' power, in a last attempt to head off the final overthrow of capitalism, the present trends and relations of forces in the world call imperatively for the revival of the revolutionary Marxist struggle for democracy, exemplified by the Bolsheviks, which led up to the first world revolution, and not the mechanical repetition of the

slogans and attitudes which were characteristic while the direct struggle for socialist power was on the order of the day. The fact that this revival has been delayed in the Marxist movement can be ascribed to two factors besides political inertia in general: the effect of the Stalinization of the Communist International even upon those who broke with Stalinism (like the Trotskyists); and the universal expectation of the Marxists that the outbreak of the Second World War would be the prelude to a second world-wide upsurge of proletarian revolution which would bring back the conditions of 1917-1923 on an even higher plane. The actual aftermath of the war makes the readaptation of the Marxist-Leninist struggle for democracy an imperative necessity.

29. The trend of capitalism today is not toward democratization but its reverse: militarization and authoritarianism, "bureaucratic collectivization" and Bonapartism. The "defense of bourgeois democracy" conducted by the reformist Social Democracy today, this time as a "lesser evil" in comparison with Stalinism, is such as to drive them and their similars to whitewash and condone -- i.e., not struggle against but support -- an unending series of inroads upon democracy necessitated by capitalism's degeneration. In the United States, as has been noted, even "old-fashioned" liberalism is giving way to emphasis upon statism instead of democratic controls as the cure to the evils of capitalism. Only the revolutionary socialists today can inherit and prosecute militantly and consistently the fight for the defense of every democratic right under capitalism, and for the extension of democracy, as part of its struggle to mobilize the masses for the abolition of capitalism.

30. The key to the struggle for socialism today is the struggle for democracy -- the fight to awaken a mass movement behind the most thoroughgoing democratic demands as an indispensable means of leading this fight on to socialism. The Workers Party therefore seeks to be the champion of every popular democratic struggle against the manifestations of degenerate capitalism; is implacably opposed to every plea that any such struggle should be subordinated, soft-pedaled or sidetracked because of its effect on United States power in its struggle for the world against Stalinist Russia; and determined to push such a fight for thoroughgoing democracy consistently and unwaveringly to its final conclusion, a socialist democracy.

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## II. STALINISM AND THE RISE OF THE NEW RUSSIAN EMPIRE

### A. The Nature of Stalinism

31. The basic analysis of the Russian state and of Stalinism which has been developed by the Workers Party, like every other theory on this subject, has been tested in the past two years by a series of events of world importance. We can ascertain that it has not only stood up under this test but that it has shown itself to be the only line along which these events can be understood.

32. During the period since the end of the war, Russia has emerged not only as a major imperialist power but as one of the Big

Two of the earth. Its imperialism has matured and expanded with a rapidity characteristic of change in our epoch. Beginning the war as Hitler's junior partner in the Stalin-Nazi Pact, it is today capitalist America's only rival for world domination -- a rivalry not only between different imperialists but also between two different systems of class exploitation, which meet each other with different political, social and economic weapons in the struggle for the "right" to oppress the people. Russia has not merely "expanded;" it has set out to build and has already acquired in part a far-flung empire on every side of its own borders, consisting of states which are not merely "satellites" but subject nations held in chains by the same totalitarian terror that operates within Russia itself. The euphemism of Russian "expansionism" as a substitute for "imperialism" can be used only if all reality is ignored.

33. During the past two years the unfolding of Stalinist policy, in the satellite states especially, has helped to confirm and clarify the nature of Russia and Stalinism. First and foremost among these developments has been the clear fact that the Stalinist regimes have without exception pursued a policy of bureaucratic nationalization of economy and destruction of the capitalist class. In all of the satellite zone, the major part of industry has been nationalized; whatever sector of the economy still remains in private hands is almost exclusively made up of small enterprise, and even these are rapidly on the way to complete nationalization or state control. The socio-economic system, as well as the political system, has been made identical with that of Russia itself in every important respect. The bourgeoisie has been expropriated not only politically but economically. The event which marked this development most dramatically was the CP coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948, this being the last country in the Russian empire in which the bourgeoisie had retained any vestige of political control.

34. With this demonstration the last props have been knocked from under the two theories on the "Russian question" heretofore posed in the Marxist movement as alternatives to our own. The "orthodox" Fourth International theory that Russia is still a (degenerated) workers state since "nationalized property equals workers state," now requires the conclusion that the East European satellites are likewise "workers states." But this means that Stalinism -- by no matter what unexpected or unpleasant means -- has shown its ability to make the social revolution and overthrow capitalism in favor of a form of workers' power. It means further that while the working class and a revolutionary socialist workers party is a good thing and perhaps even necessary for a further healthy development of the "revolution," they are not necessary for the making of the socialist revolution. It means further that the only role to be played by the revolutionary party is as a democratic opposition in, or wing of, the Stalinist movement. While formally only the British section of the Fourth International has actually openly acknowledged the conclusion that the satellite countries are workers states, the reaction of the Fourth International to the Tito-Stalin break demonstrates that it is actually tending to assume this character and role of a "left wing" or "democratic wing" of Stalinism. While tradition and pressure from within may slow up or zigzag this trend, it is unquestionably demanded by the theory to which they still cling.

35. If the "workers' state" position has been well nigh taken out of the realm of the theoretical dispute by its refutation in life, the same is even more true of the theory that Russia is essentially capitalist: -- whether capitalism heavily overladen by stratification, or capitalism "at its highest" peak of development -- or the theory that Russia is developing in the direction of capitalism. The destruction of capitalism and of the capitalist class, the refusal of the Stalinist rulers to compromise with it, politically or economically, in the satellite zone, leaves no more room for doubt that we have here a social system different from and antagonistic to the capitalist system in any form. Meanwhile, on the negative side, in Russia itself all predictions of internal Russian development based on either the "workers state" or "state capitalist" theory have utterly failed to show the slightest sign of being realized.

36. In noting the confirmation of the Workers Party analysis of Russia and Stalinism by the events of the past two years, it must not be concluded that the Russian state and social system, or the international Stalinist movement, is already a finished social formation, about which a final set of formulas can be drawn up. Stalinism itself is still meeting new problems as a result of its new role in the world and its characteristics are emerging -- even to itself -- only step by step as it grapples with its new problems. It is only in this sense that we can and do claim that the theory of bureaucratic collectivism has shown itself to be the indispensable key to understanding the Stalinist phenomena.

37. The sweeping character of Stalinist nationalization in Eastern Europe also reinforces another conclusion. It has been traditional in the Marxist analysis of capitalist phenomena to make or allow a distinction between the "progressive form" and "reactionary social content" of certain capitalist developments (like the growth of monopoly out of large-scale production). The sense in which the term "progressive in form" was applied to monopoly was contained in the thought that the concentration and centralization of large-scale industrial enterprise in the hands of a few capitalists prepared the way technologically for socialist collectivization, provided in fact the prerequisites for the latter. This was and is correct. It is impossible, however, to apply the same distinction to the bureaucratic nationalization of industry under Stalinism. Stalinist nationalization is in no sense at all a prerequisite for the socialization of the means of production; nor does it "prepare the way" for the latter. Industrialization and centralization in the past represented the impact of what Engels metaphorically called "the invading socialist society" upon capitalism, developing capitalism to the point where socialism first became possible; Stalinist nationalization and industrialization represents not a necessary preparation for socialism but an abortion of this pre-socialist evolution, resulting in a social system which is the deadly enemy of socialism. The form of nationalized economy per se as opposed to capitalist property forms can be characterized only as "potentially more efficient" - an abstraction which permits a social characterization of actual phenomena only given a live historical context.

38. Stalinist nationalization, therefore, is in no sense progressive, occurring as it does at a time when the problem before

society on a world scale is no longer that of abolishing the domination of man by nature (sufficient at least for the realization of socialism) but when the problem is that of abolishing the domination of man by man. This is the only basic criterion for the category of "progressiveness" in today's world, and means: that is "progressive" which is a prerequisite for, or does in fact lead to, the establishment of socialist democracy.

### B. The Stalinist Road to Power in the Satellites

39. The events of the past period have provided also the historical spectacle of new Stalinist states and bureaucracies in the process of formation. Up to the end of the war, bureaucratic collectivism, which was analyzed as a new social formation different from both capitalism and socialism (as well as from all pre-capitalist societies) was still a Russian phenomenon, limited to one country. An analysis of this new society through this one case was complicated by the fact that in this single specimen bureaucratic collectivism had arisen through the degeneration of a nationally-confined socialist revolution. In the early years of the war, this bureaucratic-collectivism-in-one-country already had expanded its own borders through purely military conquests, but had not yet spawned. The bureaucratic-collectivist states set up by Stalinism in East Europe did not arise through the degeneration of a socialist revolution in power. Nor did they all arise in exactly the same way. In the case of Poland, Rumania and Bulgaria, for example, the Stalinist regimes were set up, from the beginning of the "liberation" (from the Nazis), on the bayonets of the Russian army as pure-and-simple quisling regimes, put into power by military ukase and maintained in power by terrorism. If any other road to power was possible in these cases, the Russians at any rate did not experiment with it, although individual bourgeois captives were temporarily utilized as figureheads to ease the transition. These satellites were and are nothing but formally independent satrapies of the Russian power.

40. In Czechoslovakia, however, after five months of military occupation, the Russians left behind a mixed government, in which the Communist Party was handed control over the central institutions of state power (army, police) and of propaganda; but at the same time a certain measure of political power was shared with representatives of the shattered and weakened bourgeoisie who engaged themselves in return to follow the pro-Russian line in international relations. The difference between Czechoslovakia and the first type of satellite was determined essentially not by any greater power enjoyed by the Czech bourgeoisie as against the Polish, etc., but by the existence of a proletariat which was the most numerous and the best organized in Eastern Europe. The Czech CP did not dare to move for complete control until in the intervening period it had succeeded in insuring its rear by subjugating and breaking possible resistance by the working class to complete totalitarianization through a regime of constantly stepped-up terror. In the end the Stalinist drive to gather all power into their own hands achieved success by counting on the passivity of the working class in the face of a coup from above by picked terror squads recruited from the proletariat and used against the proletariat.

41. The passive reaction by the Czech proletariat to the coup

was based on the following conditions: (1) The essence of state power was already in the hands of the Stalinists as a result of the Russian conquest; the Stalinists were not overthrowing the state power but merely utilizing it to complete the totalitarianization of the country. (2) Czechoslovakia's geographical position and common border with Russia as well as its original military occupation by Russia, had already put it in Moscow's orbit from the beginning; and this objective fact was recognized by all. The coup represented no change in this respect but only blasted the illusions of the bourgeois politicians and their followers that their country could revolve in Russia's orbit as a maverick planet. (3) There was no alternative visible to the workers which did not involve dependence on the totally discredited bourgeoisie, which was clinging to its own economic power by a thread and to its political power by sufferance. Like the majority of European workers, the Czech proletariat in the mass looked with hope only to socialism, nor was there left a viable bourgeoisie which could appear even as a practical lesser evil to Stalinism. In such an impasse, the immediate alternatives were only support of the Stalinist dictatorship for venal or illusory reasons, or passive toleration and immobilization.

42. The fact, however, that the Stalinist road to total power in Czechoslovakia did not take place completely under Russian guns but was at least consummated after a semi-public struggle of political forces permits an insight into another aspect of the nature of Stalinism. The CP apparatus, which came riding in on the Russian army's gun-carriages, sought to establish social roots of its own within the country. In the West (e.g., France and Italy) where the Stalinists place their anti-capitalist face out in front, it is well known that the Stalinist movement has displayed great attractive power for coralling militant and revolutionary elements in the working class who see no other mass party fighting the enemy in power, the capitalist class. In most of Eastern Europe, where the CP leadership was plucked out of Moscow's Hotel Metropole and placed on top, the consequences are different. Insofar as and as long as the Czech CP was still able to use the remnants of the bourgeoisie as a bogymen, it exercised a gravitational pull on socialist workers. With the tightening of its own reins and the progressive enfeeblement of bourgeois control in the government, its influence over the illusions of the workers and its possession of their active support waned (e.g., victory of the anti-Stalinist wing of the SDP over Fierlinger before the coup). Throughout, in any case, the Stalinists sought, and found, points of support outside the circle of pro-Stalinist workers with revolutionary illusions, knowing that the latter were unreliable props.

43. The Stalinist bureaucracy-in-formation seeks to recruit not merely to the ranks of the party but also specifically to the bureaucracy. In the conditions of the satellite zone, the first recruiting group is the labor and social democratic bureaucracy itself. Already noted in Part I is the extent of the ideological kinship between the bureaucracies of reformism and Stalinism, and, as the counterweight in the capitalist countries, the different social basis of the reformists and Stalinists. Where, however, capitalism has been well nigh destroyed or at least seriously enfeebled and on the way out, as in Czechoslovakia, the reformist labor bureaucracy is left rootless and its habitual ways of thought and life push sec-



tions of it to absorption into the Stalinist bureaucracy. Hence the common phenomenon in Eastern Europe today of an influx of social-democratic turncoats into the Stalinist apparatus, in some cases providing the tops with their only really native elements. A second fertile source of recruitment to the Stalinist bureaucracy under Eastern European conditions is the middle class intellectual, socially rootless even under declining capitalism, repelled by the anarchy and inefficiency of capitalist society and its inability and unwillingness to give rein to his special talents even in its own behalf. The type is common, for example, in the leadership of the Yugoslav CP. Given the plethora of bureaucratic jobs opened up by Stalinist nationalization, to which must be added a large number of jobs not directly paid by the government but controlled by it, such elements - plus workers raised into an aristocracy of management - are absorbed into the new Stalinist regime. To them, in the case of Czechoslovakia, must be added the adaptable elements of the old bureaucracy. Far from requiring a clean sweep of the entire old bureaucracy when they take power, the Stalinists have a real need to try to integrate into their own regime as many of the old political figures and office-holders as possible.

44. The Czech coup showed that the Stalinists' aim is to avoid unleashing the mass action and revolutionary initiative of the workers in their road to power. While, as long as remnants of the bourgeoisie remain, they are willing to gingerly use the club of working class action against them, the Stalinists do not themselves wish to arouse the masses to revolutionary self-activity even to make their own Stalinist coup. It would be a mistake to consider that this is due in any concrete situation only to a calculated fear that the masses may get completely out of hand, though this operates as a strong deterrent where the CP itself has no independent power. In Czechoslovakia, where the CP was already in complete control of the state apparatus of coercion, the awakening of mass revolutionary activity was neither necessary nor desirable for them. In France and Italy, where the CP has several times now led the proletariat to the verge of insurrectionary action in battering-ram action against the capitalist government, it has each time drawn back before the danger of revolution could spill over. The Stalinist bureaucracy tends to develop the same mental cast toward action-from-below that is developed by every reactionary and anti-popular force which is interested in defending its own privileges above all. Just as even in the most democratic capitalist countries, this inherent fear of the masses takes forms not strictly demanded by the actual relationship of forces but flowing from the nature of the class (e.g., the widespread fear of revolution in the American bourgeoisie in the depression years of the '30s), so the Stalinists' fear of the masses flows from their anti-working-class character. Like the bourgeoisie itself at times, they may be compelled to call on working-class action to take the stage to a greater or lesser extent, while seeking to keep it within limits. They can moreover do this all the more freely in proportion as there is no organized working-class opposition to crystallize the anti-Stalinist democratic revolutionary forces. In this they follow a course analogous to the bourgeoisie's utilization of proletarian class struggle against feudal power in their time.

45. The Stalinists do not seek their road to power through

working-class revolution or revolutionary action. They seek to utilize class struggle only to support the foreign policy of the Russian state or hasten the process of the breakdown and disintegration of the capitalist framework, to create a chaotic vacuum into which they can step from above through their control of an apparatus. Their adventurist sabotage strikes in France and Italy play the short-range game of pressure for a pro-Russian appeasement policy and serve the longer-range aim of creating the conditions under which Stalinism wishes to take power without the revolutionary intervention of the masses. In France and Italy these conditions are not near; and neither, therefore, is Stalinist power on the Atlantic. The victory of Stalinism in Western Europe -- which would mean the longest step toward world Stalinist domination -- is abstractly a possibility; but it can be posed as a possibility only given an extreme stage of disintegration of Western capitalism such as was true in the East as a result of the Second World War and such as creates a near-vacuum of political and social power. But this abstract possibility has already been sufficiently expressed in the very enunciation of the historic alternatives of Socialism or Barbarism. Not abstractly but in terms of the real world situation, long before such a stage can be expected, war between Russia and the Western capitalist world and the revival of the movement for proletarian revolution will first have settled the question of the fate of capitalism. The last word is still to be said by the working class. The outcome is not to be deduced from abstract analyses but will be determined by the struggle itself.

### C. The Tito Split and the Contradictions of Russian Imperialism

46. After the satellites militarily conquered by Russia and after Czechoslovakia, a third case from which new light has been cast on the nature of Stalinism is represented by Yugoslavia. This is the only country in the Stalinist empire in which the Stalinist revolution was made by a native mass movement. This native mass movement, the Tito Partisan army, upon which the Yugoslav CP rode to power, was indeed not primarily a working-class movement but overwhelmingly a peasant force, recruited from the peoples of a multinational state which is the most agrarian in all Europe. Tito's bourgeois rival Mikhailovich was based on an exiguous bourgeoisie which was not only weak even before the war and exercised social power only through the monarchy, but which was further weakened by the Nazi occupation. At the same time, the emergence of Russia during the last years of the war as a major partner in the Allied camp and its domination over Eastern Europe exacted from the Western Allies the abandonment of Mikhailovich and the recognition of Tito's Partisans by the United States and England. While therefore it is true Tito's Partisan army was indeed a native mass movement, it is also true that it was able to come to power and squeeze out Mikhailovich with the toleration of the capitalist West only because of the background fact of Russia's heightened military-diplomatic strength. Thus Tito's apparatus came to power not as imported quislings but as leaders of a mass struggle with native roots independent of the Russian state; it is this fact which was decisive in hastening the emergence of centrifugal forces leading to the break with the Cominform (Moscow).

47. Where the Czech events represented the last stages in the

consolidation of Stalinist power in Eastern Europe and cast a sidelight on its road to power, the Yugoslavian events four months later represented the first major break in the Stalinist empire, forecast the beginning of the end of Stalinist power, and cast a sidelight on the inherent contradictions which will tear it apart. Russian imperialism is driven by its very nature to come into head-on conflict with the aspirations for national independence on the part of its newly acquired satellites. The tempo with which this clash develops is determined by three factors: (1) Russia's totalitarian regime, which requires complete totalitarianization not only within Russia itself but also in its empire. (2) The tenseness of the war situation in the world engendered by Russia's rampant imperialism as well as America's. (3) The degree to which the Stalinist bureaucracy of the satellite countries is able to realize its inherent aspirations to exploit its country independently. Russia's policy in Eastern Europe is the coordination of its satellite states into an integrated war machine -- economically and politically. It aims at the complete subordination of economic life in the satellites to the needs of Russian war economy. This takes no account of the independent economic needs and aspirations of the satellites but seeks to dictate their economic policy and place them under the tutelage of the Russian planners as if they were merely provinces.

48. In Yugoslavia this led to a clash over the industrialization of the country, which in Russian eyes figures as an agrarian supplier of food and raw materials to an Eastern European economic unit. In Rumania the development of industry takes place under Russian ownership and control. In Czechoslovakia, whose economic ties have been traditionally with the West, Russia imposes an economic iron curtain, tying Czech economy to its own war machine. In all the satellites normal relations with the West are hindered and the economies artificially distorted in order to coordinate them with Russian war plans. This over-all aim of the "Russification of economy" in Eastern Europe stands in the way of the full and healthy development of countries which have suffered long because of their under-development and their predominantly agrarian character.

49. The Stalinist bureaucracies in these countries, moreover, seek to transform themselves from merely agents (proconsuls, tax-farmers and policemen) for the foreign Russian power, into indigenously-rooted native ruling classes -- to become a real class in the first place, a status they naturally do not possess through the mere fact of their importation. The social roots for a bureaucratic-collectivist ruling class, however, require not a nation of small peasants but a modern nationalized -- therefore an industrialized -- economy. In the agrarian countries the independent interests of the Stalinist bureaucracies drive them to push the industrialization of their countries whether this does or does not accord with the over-all plan of Russian war economy. In the more industrialized states of East Europe, as Czechoslovakia and Poland, similar independent economic drives are at work. Economically and politically, the new Stalinist bureaucracies, even when imported by Russian military might, seek the same status as an independent native ruling class as is enjoyed by their Russian similars.

50. Russia cannot keep its subject states under control simply or primarily through the pressure and power of its economic forces,

as capitalist United States is trying to do through the Marshall Plan. This is, first of all, not in the nature of its system, which operates through bureaucratic planning from above by the terroristic political apparatus. It is, secondly, not wealthy enough to do so. For both reasons it cannot even retain the forms of autonomy or permit even illusions of national autonomy to exist for long.

51. In the present international situation, moreover, the integration of Eastern Europe into its war economy means that it is the satellites which are doomed to bear the first brunt of war with the West, because of their geographical position. While the social bases of the new Stalinist bureaucracies are the same as the Russian and a community of interest prevails as against the capitalist world, their own self-preservation requires them to seek a more independent status than that of frontier guards for the Russian ruling class.

52. These factors, operative in different forms and to different degrees in all the satellites, reached their greatest strength of expression in Yugoslavia first of all because the Yugoslav Stalinist regime is the only one which started with indigenous social roots on the basis of a native mass movement and secondly because the need for independent economic development is most pressing here. In two other satellites, (Poland and Albania), however, sympathy with Titoism reached the point where even the secretary-general of the CP had to be purged; and there is no doubt that everywhere else (particularly Bulgaria) the same inherent contradiction between totalitarian war planning and national independence, powered by the strivings for independent ruling class status on the part of the new Stalinist bureaucracies, is shaking the structure of Russian imperialism.

53. Although the clash between Russia and Yugoslavia did not -- as appeared possible at first -- lead to an armed attack by Russia (directly or through a neighboring satellite) upon Yugoslavia for the purpose of bringing Tito into line, it can be stated that in this event the position of the anti-Stalinist workers should be to wish for the victory of Yugoslavia in its war against the invader; such support would have been determined by the nature of the war itself, limited to a duel between the two states, in which Tito's regime would be fighting for the national independence of the country as truly as this was the politics behind the Ethiopian side of its war with Italy. The independent class support and aims of the Marxists in such case would not differ, with respect to Tito, from the attitude taken by revolutionists toward the bourgeois government of the Spanish loyalists or the semi-feudal regime of Haile Selassie. While, however, the conflict between the two totalitarian regimes remains propagandistic and diplomatic and on the bureaucratic level, the Marxists give no support whatsoever to the Tito-Stalinist regime in Yugoslavia but expose its reactionary character and identity with the Moscow regime, and seek to mobilize all popular support against it.

54. The irrepressible conflict in the Stalinist empire is indeed the reflection of the basic inherent contradiction of bureaucratic collectivism itself -- the contradiction between totalitarianism and social planning. The "potentially more efficient" form of nationalized economy requires, under bureaucratic collectivism, a

terroristic police regime which is warp and woof of the social system and which leads to its own contradictions while it eliminates those peculiar to capitalism. The break between the Yugoslav and Russian Stalinists, therefore, is symptomatic of the instability of the Russian empire. The latter has barely had time to reach its post-war peak before significant cracks and fissures have begun to appear. It is such breaks in the previously closed ranks of the tops which open the door to the independent movement of the masses from below; thus the apparently seamless iron hoop of totalitarianism is broken. It is such breaks in the Stalinist superstructure which point the way, under totalitarianism, for the masses' yearning for real freedom and peace and security to express themselves in revolutionary action.

#### D. The Line of Struggle against Stalinism.

55. If the masses behind the Iron Curtain are not yet ready for such action today, it is because the first steps required are the beginnings of mass struggle for the simplest economic demands -- on wages, vacations, working day, police regime in the factories, etc. The flowering of Russian imperialism and the consequent necessity of shaping the whole economy toward a permanent war footing, added to the enormous waste inherent in a bureaucratic collectivist economy, makes it impossible for the regime to allow an improvement in the standard of living of the masses. But under bureaucratic collectivism, there are not and cannot be any purely economic struggles. The struggle for the simplest economic demand is by definition from the beginning a struggle against the totalitarian state -- a political struggle. Similarly, every struggle against the "excesses" of the police regime is a struggle for workers' democracy, for control of the nationalized economy by the people. But under bureaucratic collectivism the struggle for control of the nationalized economy by the people, the struggle for workers democracy, is necessarily the struggle for socialism. Where the state already owns and controls the economy, every struggle over the state power becomes a struggle for the democratic rule of the working class as against the bureaucracy.

56. In the Stalinist states, the ruling class -- and therefore the main enemy -- is the bureaucracy. There is no big bourgeoisie at all, this class having been completely destroyed in all of the Russian satellites. There are remnants of the small and middle bourgeoisie in some sectors of the economy, shorn of all political power, and tightly controlled by the Stalinist state; even those socially powerless remnants are progressively being cut down by advancing stratification and control. All responsibility for both economic and political life is centered in the hands of the Stalinist state, which necessarily is the focal point on which all movements of discontent and opposition converge. The aim of all opposition in such state inevitably centers around the demands of democracy. Not only is this demand the essence of the socialist struggle under the bureaucratic-collectivist regime, it is at the same time the program around which the widest strata of the population can be effectively mobilized. Even in the case of the peasants -- the only important social force remaining in the Stalinist satellites still based on private property -- the socialist program, which advocates truly voluntary collectivization founded on education, sup-

ports the struggle of the small peasants against the despotism which deprives them of the land on the basis of a "collectivization" which scarcely conceals the fact that the peasants are reduced to state serfs on the land, exploited and lorded over by the government police. Such a program is a powerful weapon capable of drawing the peasantry around the anti-Stalinist workers in opposition to the agrarian policies of a totalitarian state based on terrorism and enslavement to the state. The task of the Marxists, therefore, is to enter into battle against the main enemy alongside every genuinely popular movement of resistance to the despotism of the state. They will seek to organize the class forces of the working class independently in such a struggle, raise their own class banner and achieve working-class hegemony over this democratic struggle, along with whatever bourgeois elements are involved in the fight or are even temporarily at its head.

57. In Poland, before the complete coordination of the country by the Stalinists, this anti-Stalinist camp of national resistance to Russian domination was headed by Mikolajczyk and included a remnant of reactionary-bourgeois elements as well as socialist working-class and peasant forces. Without giving one iota of political support to Mikolajczyk but indeed fighting his influence over the anti-Stalinist opposition, the task of the Marxists in this situation was to give unequivocal support to the struggle of the movement on which he temporarily rested. The struggle of the Marxists and of the working class in such a popular democratic camp is in no sense a struggle for "bourgeois restoration" but on the contrary the only way in which bourgeois restoration can be fought as an alternative to Stalinism and the broad masses led in a socialist direction. Even the leadership of Mikolajczyk over the movement, in Poland was only the temporary expression of a transitional period during which the Stalinists openly took over all power.

58. In Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, the advance of the Stalinists to open and complete control did not even meet with such resistance from the old bourgeois leaders, who capitulated completely, their own social basis having been destroyed through the progressive expropriation of the Czech bourgeoisie. Those signs of resistance and opposition which appeared during and soon after the CP coup arose, it would appear, from the student population and from the Sokol movement. Despite the appearance of pro-American or pro-British slogans from the manifestation of these elements of resistance, it is the task of the Marxists to give unequivocal support to all such popular elements of opposition to the regime while seeking to infuse it with their own class leadership and class program. If the bourgeois politicians of the Benes camp had -- as they did not -- either the will or the ability to resist, and if a civil war based on a genuine popular movement had resulted from this hypothetical situation, we emphasize that it would have been the duty of all socialist workers to fight along with this camp against the Stalinist camp, supporting it in the same manner in which the Marxists supported the bourgeois-democratic Loyalist regime in the Spanish civil war: by their own (i.e., revolutionary) methods, by building a proletarian wing in the democratic camp and fighting behind the banner of that proletarian power.

59. The threat of a bourgeois-restorationist movement in East-

ern Europe looms, however, in proportion as disillusionment with the Stalinist regime finds no revolutionary alternative through which it can be channelized and in proportion to pressure by Western capitalism. Given the largely agrarian character of many of the Russian satellites and the presently atomized state of its working class, the revitalization of working-class revolt against Stalinism -- the seeds of which revolt are sown by Stalinism itself -- may require first a series of demonstrations in the West. Insofar as the Western proletariat shows that the power of Stalinism can be broken in their own countries; insofar as they prove that Stalinist power is not fated to roll over Europe's working class; insofar as they exhibit in struggle a non-capitalist alternative to Stalinist totalitarianism -- to this extent the revolt of the East European peoples will be speeded, their self-confidence raised, and the situation created whereby they can take advantage of the cracks in the Stalinist structure and push through these fissures in a wave of assaults upon the Stalinist power.

60. This demonstration, however, cannot be made as long as the working class of the West channelizes the fight against Stalinism through support of capitalism. The overthrow of Stalinism in the East requires the revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalism in the West.

61. This basic political approach to the problem of fighting Stalinism is even more important in the West, where the Stalinist movements are still followed by large sections of the working class. During the past two years there has been a marked decline in Stalinist influence from the post-war high point in almost every country of Europe. This decline is due partly to the masses' experience with Stalinist policy both in the West and in the East, and partly to the Marshall Plan offensive of American capitalism. Neither the Marshall Plan nor the prospect of temporary economic improvement has, however, convinced the Western European workers that the restabilization of capitalism under American domination offers an alternative worth fighting for enthusiastically as against Stalinism. The chief reason why the Stalinists still remain the strongest parties supported by the working class -- in spite of their own crimes and progressive disillusionment with them -- is the fact that they appear as fighters against capitalism and for peace. Any movement which follows the policy of supporting capitalism as against Stalinism, or of supporting American imperialism as against Russian, deprives itself of the possibility of winning those masses away from the Stalinists and for a progressive movement. At the best, given sufficient self-exposure by the latter, the masses will be left without any alternative for which they are ready to fight devotedly and actively. The sine qua non for breaking the workers away from Stalinist leadership is the regroupment of the scattered forces with a revolutionary third-camp position and the making of a new beginning in forging a new instrument for the mobilization of the proletariat against both capitalism and Stalinism.

62. The only mass party of the working class in existence in Western Europe is the Social Democracy, which bases itself on the "lesser-evil" policy. While it is the only movement which appears before militant workers as an alternative to following the Stalinists, the reformist pro-American and pro-bourgeois-democratic

character of its line and leadership is an insuperable obstacle to its effectively playing the role of bulwark against Stalinism within the working class. Nevertheless, in most places, given the feeble state of the independent Marxist movement, the rise of a Marxist third-camp wing within the social-democratic movements offers the best opportunity for setting up a pole of attraction for the disillusioned Stalinist workers as well as for leftward-moving socialists; and thus contributing toward the regroupment of forces from the existing working-class movement.

63. Such a new beginning is the first task in Europe and America today. In most of the world, and above all in Europe, it is no longer enough for working-class revolutionists to chart the lines of class struggle against capitalism in the assurance that every blow struck against capitalism is a blow for the socialist future. They face two enemies: a capitalism which is anti-Stalinist and a Stalinism which is anti-capitalist. This three-cornered struggle for power was implicit in the Czech events; and it is this utterly new constellation of social forces which disorients and confuses the working-class movement. It is the recognition of this new stage which is the basis of the politics of the third camp. Without the working-class struggle, no socialism; this is truer than ever before. What is not true is that mere anti-capitalist struggle automatically equals socialist struggle. The conscious planned intervention and leadership of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard, anti-capitalist and anti-Stalinist, which has not been poisoned at its source by a false conception of the relation between socialism and workers democracy is more than ever the key to socialist victory.

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### III. MARXISTS AND THE THIRD WORLD WAR

64. The imperialist nature of the present struggle between the two colossi is evident in the sight of all. More and more, even liberalistic apologies for social-patriotism do not attempt to deny the imperialist basis of the clash but only argue that one or the other of the imperialists is worthy of support as the lesser evil. The basis of all these anticipatory rationalizations is the old and wellworn one, marked by not the slightest originality or freshness: namely, the thesis that one or the other of the combatants is, if not less imperialist, at least more democratic or more peace-loving than the other. In every essential respect, the character of the looming world war, as we see it developing now -- will be as thoroughly imperialist as the second and first. The Workers Party's attitude toward this threat of war is founded firmly on our analysis of the character and direction of development of the two social worlds facing each other in enmity. We declare that, as in the first and second world wars, support of either camp amounts to a betrayal of the interests not only of socialism and the working class but of humanity. This view has never been so firmly founded in experience as it is now that the aftermath of the second of the great wars of our era is present before our eyes.

65. The Second World War and its outcome did not fulfill the pre-war expectations of the Marxists that it would be followed by



working-class revolutions, after the model of 1917-1921. But the essential reasons given by our movement for refusing to support it have been fully and terribly confirmed by post-war events.

(a) There can no longer be the slightest doubt that the war was imperialist on both sides and on the part of all its participant nations -- both in motive and consequences. On the part of the United States in particular: it has been proved that it did not enter the war merely in self-defense against Japanese attack; the demagogic war aims put forward by Roosevelt (the Atlantic Charter) became a laughingstock even before the war was over, as the result of its dominant role in the war, American imperialism has extended its interests into every corner of the globe, is feared by the peoples of every country as a new bidder for world-wide mastery, is attempting to subordinate the economies of Western Europe to its own capitalists' interests through the Marshall Plan, has bases and troops throughout the world, and is the chief support of reactionary regimes everywhere as long as they are aligned against its rival Stalinist Russia.

(b) As after the First World War, there is less democracy in the world, not more; less freedom, more hunger and poverty, less hope of permanent peace. The imperialists who waged the second war "for democracy" had no difficulty in dividing up the world with totalitarian Russia at Yalta and Potsdam in secret deals the full details of which are not yet known. If the added power and influence which Russia thereby gained is being decried now, it is only because Russian imperialism is now the main threat to America's full enjoyment of her victor role.

(c) There is not only less democracy in the world, there is less democracy in the United States itself. It is possible freely to admit that the propagandist predictions made before 1939 -- about the onset of war meaning totalitarianism at home -- were exaggerated. But what was not exaggerated and is all-important is the direction of development set up by America's victory. During the war itself the government refrained from launching any general attack on civil liberties and permitted the labor leaders themselves to hamstring labor's rights, both being unnecessary in view of the lack of mass anti-war resistance while the world conflict was going on. It is with the end of the war and the arrival of that period which was supposed to see the fruits of America's victory for democracy, that the militarization of America and the drive against democratic and working-class rights has been gaining strength. A series of "firsts" have been chalked up in short order: the first draft in peacetime; the first attack in over a quarter century on the basic rights of collective bargaining and the right to strike; the revival of government strikebreaking through injunctions; "subversive" lists and "loyalty purges" on a scale never before seen in the United States, more and more resembling adaptations of Gestapo and GPU procedure and based upon the totalitarian precept that anyone under suspicion is guilty until proven innocent. While the social-patriots rationalized the war with the argument that its imperialist content was overshadowed in importance by the difference between capitalist democracy and fascist totalitarianism, it has turned out that the victory even of the "democratic" imperialists drives another nail into the coffin of democracy. The consequences of the victory of

the "democracies" in the Second World War have been reactionary and retrogressive through and through. While the victory of the lesser evil is always posed as necessary for a "breathing spell" for the working class, one more such "breathing spell" won and democracy may cease to breathe.

(d) While the war did not end with the defeat of both sides by the socialist revolution of the proletariat, this only progressive denouement of the war was aborted precisely by the fact that the working class forces had been led to place their trust in the victory of one or the other of the imperialists -- in the Stalinists and their Russian myth or in American democracy and its illusion-makers. The promises of the left-wing defensists with regard to the progressive consequences of Allied victory have been tested and have led only to cruel deception. The policy of the third camp -- opposition to both sides in the imperialist war -- was the only line along which any progressive outcome was at all possible, and in this lies the vindication of the Marxist anti-war policy. The only hope for a reversal of the world trend to destruction lies in pursuing the line of the third camp consistently and rallying the new undeceived masses around it.

(e) While in the period from 1918 to 1939 it was freely predicted from all quarters that the "next war" would mean "the end of civilization as we know it" with "no victors and no vanquished," the Second World War has been gotten through without any such definitive consequences. "Civilization as we know it" still exists in Europe, albeit in the midst of unprecedented shambles and destruction and lapped by the barbaric totalitarianism of Russian Stalinism. But with the atomic bomb in existence, there are few people now reluctant to accept the darkest predictions a second time. It cannot be expected that the third world war, even if there is a victor and even if the "lesser evil" (American capitalism) is that victor, can lead to anything but another "breathing spell" marking another step in the breakdown of civilization and civilized values, not to speak of untold destruction, unless it leads to the overthrow of the present rulers of the world.

66. The Marxists reject with scorn the vulgarized notion often ignorantly or maliciously ascribed to them according to which in an imperialist war there is "no difference" between the two sides. This was not true of the revolutionary Marxist attitude in the First World War and still less true in the Second World War. The main combatants were: fascist capitalism on the one side and bourgeois-democratic capitalism on the other. The question posed before socialists was not whether one side, taken statically, was a "better" or more desirable form of capitalism than the other -- a question long before answered in the affirmative by the Marxists -- but whether this real difference justified socialists in supporting one camp. The third world war now being prepared between America and Russia will be, as we have already pointed out, not merely between two imperialist rivals, and not merely between a totalitarian and a bourgeois-democratic state, but between two different social systems. Far from making for any softening in the Marxist third-camp position, this fact underlines the necessity for the strictest adherence to it. Already in the Second World War, this new element -- the involvement of a bureaucratic-collectivist state in the capitalist war -- played

a role, although a secondary one. The Workers Party was indeed born through the struggle against the conception that when there are two different social systems at war we are perforce required to choose between them. In 1939-40 this struggle was directed against the view that it was Russia that was to be defended against the capitalist world. Today, in the ranks of American socialism and labor it must be directed against the equally anti-socialist view that it is degenerating capitalism that must be defended against Stalinism.

67. Given the fact that the DIRECTION of development of capitalism itself is toward bureaucratic degeneration and totalitarian collectivism in proportion as the system disintegrates without a revolutionary overthrow, the victory in a third world war of unprecedented physical destruction by the capitalist world can only hasten that process of bureaucratic degeneration -- while the working class is disarmed by its support of its own capitalist master and unmobilized for the only struggle which can save humanity, the struggle for socialism. In not the best but the worst case, in any long-drawn-out atomic war under modern conditions in which the victor is as badly wrecked as the vanquished, the working class is certain to be dragged to destruction along with the ruling class unless and until the proletariat strikes out on its own independent road of fighting for its own power instead of for the ever-elusive breathing spell.

68. On this question the thinking of American workers, and even of American socialists and Marxists, is seriously retarded and old-fashioned precisely because of the experience of the recent war, in which continental United States for the second time escaped physically unscathed. That this cannot happen again is a platitude; but the consequences, having not yet been acted out in life here as they have been in Europe, have not been absorbed. Thus it is that proposals for preventive war -- i.e., calculated unleashing of the bomb -- are so much more freely thrown around in American circles. Thus it is too that American social-patriots, apparently relieved by the difference in degree between the predictions and the actual aftermath of World War II in the United States, seem willing to assume that the aftermath of World War III will be qualitatively comparable and measurable in the same terms.

69. There is one basis and only one basis on which the political difference between America's remaining bourgeois democracy and Russia's totalitarianism can be made the ground for supporting the former's victory as the lesser evil: that is, if the goal of socialism is abandoned, explicitly or by implication, as unrealizable in our epoch, and a longer or shorter "breathing spell" posed as the best of possible goals. On the other hand, whether socialist victory interrupts the war or follows it by a longer or shorter interval, as long as it is recognized as the only road out of the blind alley of capitalist-Stalinist degeneration, there is still no other way to fight for its victory, except by consistent adherence to the third-camp struggle.

70. The political problems in international relations thrown up by the "cold war" now being waged revolve around the same issues and considerations, fundamentally, as the question of the war itself. The cockpit of the cold war today lies in Germany and here is dis-

played in miniature not only the methods but the traps raised by the United States-Russian struggle for the world. As in the supreme test of war itself, there is no Marxist solution for the resolution of the conflict short of the struggle for a workers' government.

71. The main problem facing the German people is the restoration of unity and national independence; no fundamental economic or political problem can be solved without this prerequisite. The working class and socialist movement in Germany can be restored only through making this struggle the center of its political program. The road to socialism in Germany and in Europe lies through the most militant and consistent fight for these elementary democratic demands. The power of this struggle for democracy resides in the fact that it is directed at one and the same time against both Stalinist and Western imperialism; and against all conservative and reactionary elements in Germany who -- if not now reconciled -- could easily become reconciled to foreign occupation for the purpose of keeping down a revolutionary people at home. Since the reconstruction of the European Continent is inconceivable without the restoration of German national unity and independence, the struggle for this goal becomes simultaneously the task and duty of the whole European working class.

72. In fighting for An Independent and United Germany, we do not make our demand for United States withdrawal conditional on simultaneous and similar action by the Russians -- a proposal which in any case comes up against the difficulty that Russian withdrawal may or may not be a fake, and therefore tends to turn into the demand that the United States keep its troops there regardless, in order to guard against Stalinist "peace" maneuvers. Such a policy can have only the effect of inculcating dependence upon the armies of American and British imperialism as the bulwark against Stalinist expansion in Europe, for the same reason that the bourgeois and reformist leaders now look to America's atom bomb as the bulwark against Stalinist expansion in the world. On the other hand, an independent and united Germany, created wholly or partly through the awakening of a popular anti-Allied and anti-Stalinist mass movement under the leadership of the working-class in a struggle against the foreign oppressors, would not only be able to rally behind it all of the revolutionary forces of Western Europe but would also be able to wield the only weapon (other than the atom bomb itself) capable of disintegrating Russian Stalinist power over its subject peoples: namely, the contagion of revolution. The biggest "demonstration in the West" capable of firing the revolutionary spirit of Europe's working class would be the demonstration by the German masses that there is a third way outside of submission to either of the imperialist giants.

73. Just as any watering down of the socialist struggle against American imperialism in Germany is a down payment on support of American imperialism in war against Russia, so also is this true in the case of the socialist attitude toward the Marshall Plan. In this connection the convention endorses the analysis and conclusions laid down by the National Committee in its statement on the Marshall Plan at the July 1948 plenum. We note in particular the necessity for socialist opposition to any plans for the channeling

of Marshall Plan aid toward military supplies and arms instead of economic aid or for the setting up of a separate government program toward this end.

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(The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Political Committee of the Workers Party in November, 1948, for consideration by the National Convention.)

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