

INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION BULLETIN

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JUNE, 1949

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INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL
(April 1949)

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Note: This material is reprinted from the Internal
Bulletin of the International Secretariat of
the Fourth International.

January pg 22

Published by the

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY
116 University Place
New York 3, N.Y.

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THE WAR DANGER AND OUR TASKS

1. Three main features stand out in the development of the world situation this past year: On the economic plane, there is the end of the boom in the United States, with this country as well as the capitalist countries of Western Europe heading toward depression conditions that characterized prewar capitalist economy, now that the brief period of full employment is finished. On the plane of international relations, there is the persistence of the "war-like peace" and the "cold war" between the USSR and the United States, interspersed with attempts at a compromise. On the social plane, there is a temporary ebb in the great struggles of the proletariat of Western Europe owing to the politics of attrition to which the workers have been subjected by the Stalinist leadership and also owing to the relative strengthening of the bourgeoisie; at the same time, a new and more powerful upsurge than ever is in evidence in the struggles of the colonial peoples in the Far East and a new phase in the politicalization of the American masses is taking place.

Economic Development

2. Stimulated principally by a favorable conjuncture during the war, and later by the conjuncture following immediately upon the liquidation of the war, American industry experienced an upswing never before attained in the history of capitalism.

Under the pressure of shortages created by the war in the United States itself and in all the capitalist countries dependent upon its aid, coupled with the world demand following the liquidation of the conflict which no other capitalist country was in a position to satisfy even as late as a year ago, the American capitalists appeared to have a market for unlimited expansion. Corresponding to this period of upswing the capitalist mechanism was speeded up to the point of frenzy: there was a constant rise in prices tending to stimulate production still further, domestic credits and foreign loans expanded, constant capital increased.

All these factors tended in the long run to hasten the crisis and depression. Constantly climbing prices gradually exhausted the purchasing power of the American masses, above all that of wage earners with fixed and frozen incomes, while part of the world demand turned for the same reason toward markets other than that of America.

The relative recovery of the capitalist countries of Western Europe, thanks to U.S. aid, began moreover to turn to the disadvantage of the latter. The resumption of European production began to have a detrimental effect upon a segment of American exports, as is already the case in Latin America, Canada, some colonial countries as well as Western Europe itself.

3. Already in 1948, which was still a year of record-breaking American production and capitalist profits, there were advance signs of a possible depression.

These signs began to multiply especially toward the end of 1948 and the beginning of 1949, denoting a fundamental shift from the previous trends of the American economy: A prolonged and wide-spread decline in farm prices within the framework of a more general price decline of consumer goods; a rapid increase in unemployment which has already passed beyond the "normal" ceiling of 3,000,000; an appreciable reduction in the growth of the productive apparatus (industrial construction and equipment); decline in the building industry; disappearance of the "gray" market in steel, indicating the falling-off of demand; reduction in the back-log of the automobile industry.

All these indices taken as a whole are characteristic of a condition of gradual saturation of the market and of the movement of capitalist economy toward depression and crisis: A price decline, limited at first to consumer goods because of a relative overproduction of the latter in the face of the reduced purchasing power of the masses, and then extending gradually to prices of capital goods.

4. Left to its own dynamics, such a process would inescapably unleash the chain reaction of capitalist crisis: a more pronounced general decline of all commodities, accelerated spread of unemployment, business failures, drying up of credits. The depression would then extend into a general crisis, agricultural, industrial, commercial, financial, encompassing the entire capitalist world.

However, the means at the disposal of American capitalism for attenuating and retarding such a volcanic and catastrophic process are still powerful.

Thanks to the extension of the armament policy and to the financing of exports through the ECA and its projected amplification into a world recovery plan, American imperialism has the possibility of imposing a less spasmodic and less violent rhythm on the depression which has begun, and thus delaying its transformation into a general crisis of the 1929-33 type.

Armaments are already absorbing more than one-third of the budget, that is, sums greater than the total exports of the United States, and such expenditures are constantly growing. Furthermore, the policy projected by the "fourth point" of the Presidential address, concerning the development of the "backward countries," Latin America and more particularly Equatorial Africa and the Far East, aims at funneling into these territories the surplus of inactive capital and goods of the American economy.

This means that the threat of crisis which weighs ever more heavily upon America tends to determine at one and the same time developments leading fatally to war as well as a far more fierce drive than in the past for the exclusive domination of the world market by Yankee imperialism to the detriment of all the other capitalist powers.

5. The incipient depression and the threat of a crisis are bound to aggravate to fever pitch all of the contradictions inherent within the most concentrated and the most highly developed capitalist regime, that of the United States.

With a rapidity and on a scale unparalleled in the history of capitalism, American imperialism is plunging headlong through the various stages: the militarization of economic and political life is advancing with giant steps; its penetration of the world and its leading role in international relations at the head of all capitalist powers proceeds at a similar pace. Isolationist, provincial, unmilitaristic, democratic America is fast becoming a pale memory. But this spectacular rise, which becomes more evident with each passing day, is taking place within a completely decaying capitalist world. The instability of the latter is thus aggravated and thereby the chances of America's own stability are in the long run undermined.

The age-old capitalist equilibrium rested on the division of production and exchange between the various capitalist countries and their colonies, and permitted a certain independent development to each national economy and multilateral exchange. In its place, the extension of Yankee imperialism introduces an evermore total seizure of the world market for its own profit, and a growing dependence of all the other economies upon its own economy. The incipient depression and the threat of the crisis will aggravate this process in the extreme.

The capitalist countries which have recovered relatively thanks to American aid, are now all confronted with the problem of expanding their markets in order to maintain and develop their increased production. They will suffer not only from competition among themselves, but above all from American competition which will become ever more ruthless.

Furthermore, the application of the policy implicit in Truman's "fourth point" will mean the beginning of a decisive attack by Yankee imperialism upon the colonial domain which up till now has remained subject to exploitation by other capitalist countries, first and foremost in Africa, upon which British and French capitalism tend to depend more and more.

Thus, the advance of Yankee imperialism, while offering it temporary expedients to cushion the depression and postpone its extension into a general crisis, is shaking up the whole structure of the capitalist world and destroying the very foundations of its equilibrium. It is condemning the old capitalist powers to an existence without perspectives and it is developing new capitalist forces in the colonies which are at a later stage bound to turn against it and thereby, aggravate still further the general instability of the capitalist system.

6. The disproportion between Yankee imperialism and the other capitalist powers, their dependence upon its economy and their fear of the power of the USSR -- all these exclude for a whole period the possibility of an inter-imperialist conflict between the USA and any other rival capitalist power or bloc of capitalist powers.

On the other hand, the logic of the unfolding arms program, coupled with the material interests which Yankee imperialism has in Soviet markets and in European and Asiatic zones under Soviet control-- a control which hampers its free penetration in these domains -- pushes in the direction of war against the USSR.

In its race to war Wall Street is pulling along behind it the entire capitalist world. This is not only because of the inability of the other countries to pursue an independent policy any longer and not only because of their genuine fear of seeing Soviet domination extend over Western Europe and Asia, but also because their economies threatened by depression and devoid of any perspectives will also find an expedient way out in the growth of armaments and in the war itself.

Thus the general orientation of the capitalist world toward war is above all an expression of its historic impasse, of its need to find an outlet for the productive forces, which are threatened with asphyxiation, in the domain of armaments and in the war itself. This trend will become reinforced to the extent that the world depression spreads and all attempts to maintain the functioning of the capitalist economy through the normal growth of production and exchange prove to be illusory.

International Relations

7. International relations continue to be characterized by the continuing "cold war" between the USA and the USSR. Neither of these two blocs has succeeded in changing the relationship of forces in its own favor to any appreciable degree.

Faced with the successes of the Kremlin in the Far East, particularly in China, and with the Kremlin's tighter hold upon the European countries under its control, American imperialism has been obliged to modify its own strategic plan and to concentrate all its efforts mainly on the organization and domination of Western Europe.

The policy of the Kremlin has chalked up some successes in exploiting for its own ends the colonial movements in the Far East which, in Burma, in the Malay peninsula, in the Viet Nam, in Indonesia and above all in China have succeeded in upsetting the century-old positions of imperialism. On the other hand, and particularly after the open conflict between the Cominform and Belgrade, the Kremlin has concentrated on the task of tightening its political, economic and ideological control over the countries of the East European "buffer" zone, accelerating the process of their structural assimilation and of their ever more complete integration within its orbit.

American imperialism, for its part, has concentrated on consolidating its hold on Western Europe and particularly Western Germany

The Marshall Plan served U.S. imperialism to prevent any new dislocations of capitalist economy in Western Europe and to permit the latter to recover relatively. Cushioned by this aid and by its effects on the economic plane, the bourgeoisie of the Western European countries has been able, particularly in France and in Italy, to resist the assault of the masses, aroused to action by the increasing pressure on their living standards consequent upon the inflation which has accompanied economic revival in these countries. The essential cause of this resistance by the bourgeoisie, is due nevertheless to the Stalinist leadership of the working class movement in these countries, to its treacherous policy which has split the unity of the workers' front and has led to an ever greater isolation of the vanguard. This explains why the bourgeoisie was able to pass from the purely economic to the military stage of the Marshall Plan (Atlantic Pact) without fearing a major social crisis.

This whole development can be summarized as follows: While in the Far East the relationship of social forces evolved against the bourgeoisie, in Western Europe they evolved in its favor.

But the main success of American imperialism has unquestionably been the economic revival of Western Germany and its remaining in Berlin up to the present, by means of the "Air Lift."

A relative stabilization of Western Europe, including Germany and England, linked militarily to the United States which is rearming intensively as at present envisaged by the Atlantic Pact, within which the advanced bastion of Norway is to be incorporated, will weigh far more decisively in the scales of international forces than all the successes achieved by the Kremlin in Asia and in the "buffer" zone, and for a whole period of years at that.

8. This consideration explains the efforts now being exerted by the Kremlin to prevent the establishment of a Western German state and against the Atlantic Pact.

The "peace offensives" are not merely propaganda weapons aimed against Wall Street and Western capitalism, but actual attempts to arrive at a deal with imperialism.

The latter is still rejecting a deal because it believes that time is working in its favor and that in a short while, its trumps -- American rearmament and the organization of a Western Europe including Germany -- can fundamentally change the present relationship of forces in its favor.

9. Such a development would be feasible provided the economic recovery of the countries of Western Europe could be maintained, without a depression overcoming these countries and disrupting their capacity for resistance and for effective coordination of their efforts, under the blows of a new wave of mass actions and amid a revival of their own rivalries.

Such a development also presupposes that the efforts to integrate Germany -- once again a major chess piece -- in Western Europe and in the Atlantic Pact will succeed.

But agreement has still far from been reached between the imperialist-occupying powers and the German bourgeoisie concerning the constitution of this country. The inter-imperialist rivalries are growing sharper in the same measure as capitalist Germany recovers. Britain sees in Germany her main competitor, threatening to disrupt her own recovery, which is based on an intensive export drive and the conquest of new markets.

France fears Germany's economic power as well as the reconstruction of a centralized state which will immediately challenge her leading role in Western Europe and which, through a shift in alliances, which are always possible in the future, could menace her mortally once again.

American imperialism itself is obliged to take into account British and French reactions as well as its own interests which require a resurgent Germany, but under American economic and political control

The German bourgeoisie maneuvers amid these inter-imperialist antagonisms in order to extort the maximum advantage for itself and to shake itself free from the occupying powers.

10. In reality only the revolutionary action of the German masses is capable of foiling both the plans of the occupying powers as well as those of the German bourgeoisie and thereby deprive imperialism of its main base in continental Europe. Only thereby can the whole imperialist stranglehold on the continent be broken and the whole system of imperialist war preparations thoroughly disorganized.

The battle for Germany, like the battle for all of Western Europe can be won only on the plane of revolutionary mass action for the conquest of power.

The Kremlin, which is seeking to win this battle on the plane of diplomatic or military maneuvers and whose past and present policy has deprived it of the only real ally, the German masses, is in reality compromising its own chances of success as well as those of an effective defense of the USSR.

The development of a powerful independent revolutionary movement in Germany and generally in the countries of Western Europe is the only guarantee for beating back the war plans of imperialism, to the extent that these plans are actually based upon the economic, military and strategic support of Western Europe.

Such a movement, on the other hand, would accelerate the growth of centrifugal tendencies in the Stalinist camp inside the USSR and in the "buffer" countries and favor their progressive orientation in a revolutionary direction.

The Development of the Social Struggles

11. The Marshall Plan and the relative economic recovery of Western Europe have not been able to prevent great struggles by the proletariat of these countries, particularly in France and Italy. For, the capitalist recovery has been based on increased living costs and growing inflation, while wages have been frozen everywhere.

In England, despite an appreciable increase in the cost of living, the wage freeze and the still severe food rationing, the discontent of the workers has not been manifested in great struggles by the British proletariat because of the existence of a Labor Government in which the workers still have confidence, and because of the experience they still intend to follow through with its "socialist" policy and program.

In order to overcome this dilatory attitude, it is not sufficient for the living conditions of the masses to grow worse; a revolutionary tendency must arise in the British labor movement capable of exposing the false character of the Labor Party program; capable of submitting each of its steps to devastating criticism and of counterposing to it other measures that are clear and convincing to the masses.

In Germany, the monetary reform and the economic revival have re-established money values and purchasing possibilities in a market becoming better stocked with goods. Thereby, industrial struggles of the proletariat have been stimulated.

But it is especially in France and in Italy that we have witnessed large-scale struggles of the proletariat often going beyond the strict limits of the purely economic and industrial struggles. These struggles have, however, undergone a decline, owing to the adoption by the Stalinists in these two countries of a policy of "revolving strikes," that is, partial combats to harass the bourgeoisie, with a view to disorganizing its recovery efforts and of exercising pressure upon it to make a deal with the Kremlin.

This policy of draining the revolutionary energy of the masses amid conditions which make possible an effective general struggle, has in reality served to reinforce the offensive of the bourgeoisie and to push part of the petty bourgeoisie toward the extreme right, particularly in France (de Gaulle).

The depression which at present appears to be striking one after another of the Western European countries, manifesting itself by a growth of unemployment (which has already passed the 4,000,000 mark) while the living costs still show no important tendency to decline, opens up new perspectives for a renewal of workers' struggles.

12. The decline of the great workers' struggles in Western Europe has been accompanied in the United States by a new awakening of the American proletariat, and particularly by a new surge -- still confused and contradictory -- of its political consciousness.

For more than a year the American bourgeoisie had been conducting an uninterrupted offensive against the proletariat. This offensive appeared headed for its culmination with the expected victory of the Republicans. The unexpected victory of Truman was made possible by the mass turnout of the workers in the elections. This has lent to this victory a precise meaning: for the first time in its history, the American proletariat has intervened as a class in order to influence politics in the United States and to express, in a still distorted fashion to be sure, its opposition to the anti-labor, anti-Negro and warmongering policy of the Wall Street monopolists. The dynamics of this vote will express itself in an inevitable advance of the American proletariat during the months and years ahead, toward more advanced political positions and toward the creation of a labor party.

However, more than anything else, the incipient depression begun in this country, the fact that the ascending curve of American post-war economy has passed its peak, will tend to revolutionize the entire development of the American proletariat.

It has been possible up to now to combine the "Fair Deal" policy with the arms program of American imperialism only owing to the favorable conjuncture of the boom and of capitalist super-profits.

The incipient depression will put an end to this and make necessary an ever more obvious attack upon the standard of living of the masses in order to permit the pursuit and development of the arms program.

The revolutionary party in the United States will play a major role, and at the same time, a role decisive for its own future. Break-

ing with every conservative fetter reflecting the previously slow and gradual development, it will have to boldly inject itself into the dynamics of the new situation being created in the United States, in order to utilize thoroughly every shift, every movement, every revolutionary potentiality of the masses.

13. Above all, the colonial sphere continues to experience the most profound turmoil and to revolutionize the dynamics of the entire world situation.

Ever since the war, we have witnessed a weakening of the positions of imperialism in these regions, particularly accelerated last year, with immense immediate and future consequences for the world socialist revolution.

Under the blows of the powerful mass movements, and faced with the enfeeblement of its economic and military means as a result of the war, imperialism has seen itself condemned to defeat or retreat in the Viet Nam, Indonesia, Burma, Malaya and, above all, China.

The efforts expended by imperialism to maintain its foothold in these territories are exhausting it without any sign of a decisive success. Even India is able to profit from British impotence to spur the independent rise of its own bourgeoisie.

The vast masses of Asia have entered a movement which is breaking the imperialist hold upon them. These developments undermine above all any basis for a serious rehabilitation of the old imperialist powers, England, France, Holland. And, in the long run, they undermine the whole capitalist system by destroying the old division of production and exchange between the metropolitan countries, buyers of raw materials and producers of industrial goods, and the colonial countries, producers of raw materials and buyers of industrial goods.

On the other hand, the weakening of the imperialist grip upon these countries, in the form of direct domination, raises the colonial revolution to higher plane since it throws the worker and peasant masses into direct struggle against the native bourgeoisie. The mechanics of the permanent revolution are at present developing in full force throughout these countries and only a policy inspired by a theoretical understanding of the permanent revolution can assure the definitive victory to the colonial masses.

14. Aided by its "left" turn, Stalinism has profited from the present colonial movements in order to extend its influence and increase its pressure upon imperialism with a view to a deal. Nowhere, however, neither in the Viet Nam nor in China, have the Stalinists broken with their opportunist policy toward imperialism and the native bourgeoisie. They do not place themselves at the head of the peasant and worker masses to struggle for the complete independence of these countries, nor to orient the class struggle toward the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the workers in alliance with the peasants.

Our sections have the duty of unmasking the incorrigible opportunist character of Stalinist policy and of demonstrating to the

masses, the colonial masses in particular, that Stalinism does not at all aim at liberation from the yoke of imperialism and of native reaction, but at exploiting their movements for the exclusive benefit of the Soviet bureaucracy and its world policy.

Our Tasks

15. Our policy in the immediate future must take into account the new economic situation unfolding in the capitalist world, the war preparations and the persistent tension between USSR and USA, amid the rising militancy of the colonial masses and particularly those of the Far East, as well as the evolution of the American proletariat.

Our fundamental task is to instill in the masses as deeply as possible the idea that war is inevitable unless they abolish the capitalist system. That peace depends upon their organized resistance, clearly oriented toward seizure of power. That in actuality the only effective struggle against war is the constant, daily struggle against capitalism and imperialism exclusively from the standpoint of the proletarian revolution, of its victory and extension. From this point of view, we denounce the theses put forward by reformists, centrists and Stalinists to justify their politics.

Reformism has with rare exceptions (Italian SP), once again chosen the camp of the bourgeoisie and of imperialism against the USSR. The "Third Force" has proven on every occasion to be aligned with imperialism and the bourgeoisie against the USSR and the Communist parties.

This policy has a twofold effect. It serves the bourgeoisie by permitting in the end an attack against the working class as a whole, and the preparation of a new war under the customary "ideological" camouflage of "democracy," along with the perpetration of their imperialist robber operations against the colonial people now in revolt in Indonesia, Viet Nam, Malaya, Burma. On the other hand, far from undermining the Stalinist positions among the proletarian and colonial masses, this policy actually ties the masses to Stalinism and wipes out in their eyes the Stalinist treacheries.

The whole gamut of centrists, relatively limited and not very important, containing such heterogeneous elements as the French RDR, the Spanish POUM, Shachtman in the U.S., etc., while denouncing the war preparations of the bourgeoisie, in practice tends to direct its principal fire against the USSR and the Communist parties and places imperialism and the USSR on the same level as regards the forces pushing towards war.

The postwar expansion of the USSR over part of Europe, made possible exclusively by the dislocation of the capitalist regime in these countries, by the upsurge of the masses and the entry of the Red Army, contains in their eyes the same imperialist content as the policy of expansion of the capitalist powers. Our movement rejects these confusionist inferences. Imperialism is irresistibly impelled toward war by its very economic functioning, its contradictions, the historic impasse in which it finds itself more and more entangled. The initiative in preparations for the new war rests with it and it

will inevitably push these preparations to the outbreak of a new conflict if the extension of the socialist revolution does not prevent it. The economy of the USSR and of the countries under its control can have an entirely different orientation than American economy and capitalist economy, in general, which in order to survive is oriented toward the expansion of armaments.

For imperialism the war will be nothing else but the means of temporarily escaping from the impasse in which it has been trapped by its contradictions. But for the USSR and for the countries under its control it will mean arresting their efforts at reconstruction and further development.

Not to explain to the masses the different social nature of the existing forces and the profound causes impelling them to war, means objectively to serve imperialism and reaction.

We denounce and shall continue to denounce Stalinist policy which (a) serves the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy and not those of the proletariat and of the colonial masses; (b) seeks to conjure away the threat of war by opportunist and confusionist means and hinder a genuine class orientation for the struggle of the masses.

Stalinism aids the preparation and the outbreak of war to the extent that its absolute police regime in the USSR and in the countries under its control sets the masses against the USSR, demoralizes, disorients them and permits imperialism and the bourgeoisie to use "ideological" justifications which they utilize for the war they are preparing against the USSR. Also, to the extent that its general policy, dictated by the narrow interests of the Soviet bureaucracy, exploits the mass movements not in order to orient them toward objectives of the world socialist revolution, but to exercise pressure upon imperialism and the bourgeoisie for a deal with the Kremlin, or, in places where the advanced disintegration of the capitalist regime and the mass movement held in rein by the Stalinists permit it, to establish the power of the bureaucracy and not that of the masses.

Stalinism is incapable of welding the masses into a single front against the war because its propaganda for the defense of the "socialist fatherland" of the USSR and of the countries of the "people's democracies" is based upon lies concerning the real regime in these countries and because its whole past and present policy does not give the masses a class orientation inspiring confidence and raising their political consciousness. Stalinism consists of right and left maneuvers corresponding to the development of relations between the Kremlin and imperialism. In the last analysis even today, despite the scope of its "left" turn, which is explainable only by the refusal up to now of imperialism and the bourgeoisie to make a deal with the Kremlin, its whole policy is subordinated not to the interests of a consistent struggle for the aims of the proletarian revolution, but to a demagogic, opportunist and occasionally adventurist exploitation of all possibilities to swell mass movements in order to exert maximum pressure on imperialism and the bourgeoisie. For example, there are the "peace offensives" launched from time to time by the Kremlin and supported by the "peace campaigns" of the Stalinist parties, which sow the illusion that "peace" can be guaranteed by reinforcing the UNO by an agreement between the "Big Two"

(USSR-USA), or by the application of the Potsdam agreement, or by the joint exploitation of Germany, or by "national sovereignty," -- all objectives for which they want to mobilize the masses to the detriment of their real struggle against capitalism, the only effective struggle against war.

Ultimately this policy leads to the demoralization and defeat of the masses, that is, to a situation in which the main obstacle to the capitalist drive toward war, the revolutionary resistance of the masses, will be eliminated and the outbreak of the conflict made possible.

16. The Fourth International delimits itself rigidly from all other tendencies in the labor movement in the struggle against war (a) by laying bare the contradictions of imperialism at its present stage, and of Yankee imperialism in particular, which is pushing toward the preparation and launching of the war; (b) by demonstrating that the general world policy of Stalinism, subordinated to the interests of the Kremlin, prevents a firm and consistent class orientation of the mass struggles and leads to their demoralization and defeat; (c) by demonstrating that the political regime of the Soviet bureaucracy and its agents in the "people's democracies" helps the anti-Soviet and anti-Communist campaign of imperialism and deprives these countries of the conscious support of the masses; (d) by demonstrating that the policy of the "Third Force" of reformism is camouflage for a permanent alignment with imperialism and the bourgeoisie; (e) by demonstrating that the policy of the centrists, in tending to identify the "imperialist" policy of the USSR with that of capitalism, objectively serves the war preparations of the latter; (f) by demonstrating that all "peace movements" of centrist inspiration (a la Gary Davis) or of Stalinist inspiration (Peace Congresses) which camouflage the real forces driving to war and which aim to gather "all men of good will" in a united front without a class program and to the detriment of a genuine struggle against capitalism and imperialism, are confusionist attempts, despite the progressive desires which may animate the masses they attract, and therefore oblige revolutionists to work in such movements for the purpose of penetrating them with their revolutionary line and orientation.

17. The Fourth International conceives of the struggle against war as organically linked with the daily and independent struggle of the masses against capitalism and imperialism, a struggle oriented toward the objectives of the socialist revolution and the assumption of power in the world.

Proceeding from the most elementary demands of the proletarian and colonial masses, the sections of the Fourth International have the task of extending and coordinating partial strike movements, of raising them to a higher level and of demonstrating in the course of these struggles that the genuine means of defeating the projected war is to maintain, extend and conduct to the very end the struggle against capitalism and imperialism in each country.

The organization of a powerful revolutionary movement opposed to reformism and Stalinism in Western Europe and in the United States, will be the main obstacle in the coming years to the unleashing of the

war, and will at the same time deal decisive blows to the Stalinist regime by accelerating the process of differentiation and of revolutionary reorientation in this camp as well.

On the other hand, the development of such a movement will find ever more powerful support in the successes of the liberating struggle of the colonial masses which are undermining decisively the metropolitan powers.

18. Our movement, in Western Europe in particular, will counterpose to the plans of American imperialism and its "ideologists," to the Marshall Plan, the Atlantic Pact, the Churchillian United States of Europe, etc. -- its own class solution, namely: Planned European economy, linking Western European economy organically with the Eastern European economy and rejecting the untenable idea of an independent organization of Western Europe alone; demonstrating that this rational planning of European economy can be accomplished only within the framework of the Socialist United States of Europe; opposing to the planning exclusively for the profit of the Soviet bureaucracy and of the parties holding power in the "people's democracies" -- planning for the masses and by the masses effectively organized as a class controlling and managing state production; orienting the daily struggle of the masses in these countries, beginning with their most elementary demands, toward the assumption of power; arousing them ever more firmly against the war plans and preparations of the bourgeoisie, against the growth of armaments, against the military budgets, against the extension of military service, against every form and every movement preparing ideologically for the new war; and finally, thereby making impossible the effective mobilization of the masses by the bourgeoisie for this war.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE BUFFER COUNTRIES

1. Important changes have taken place in Eastern Europe during the year 1948. The nationalization of industry, of the banking system, of communications and transport, have been practically completed in Bulgaria, in Yugoslavia, and in Czechoslovakia; it is on the road to completion in Poland and in Hungary, and it has had a big start in Rumania. Wholesale trade is equally on the road to statification in most of these countries. Only retail trade and agriculture remain as yet largely in the hands of private proprietors. The development of the cooperative system in these two spheres has been more and more removed from the influence of bourgeois elements following increased state intervention, but it continues to operate within the framework of small capitalist production. Finally, foreign trade, which is carried on mostly by state firms, continues to depend largely on relations with the so-called Western countries, among which Great Britain tends to substitute for the United States as the most important supplier and customer. This applies particularly to the more advanced buffer countries (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary). The development of Finland and the Soviet-occupied zones of Germany and Austria, which are also part of the "strategic buffer" of the USSR, has nevertheless been profoundly different from that of the other buffer countries, and must be treated separately.

2. To the economic changes mentioned above correspond a whole series of political and ideological changes which are very significant. The last political opposition parties have been eliminated in all these countries (once more excepting Finland and the occupied zones of Germany and Austria, with their separate development). The liquidation of the independent Social Democracy has been concluded with the fusion of the PPS and the PPR in Poland. The last few months have been marked by an attack against all the churches independent of the state, the only remaining centers of a potential rallying of the political opposition. The totalitarianization of social life has been complete, depriving in the first place the proletariat, the only class which has retained a minimum of social cohesion in these countries in the process of transformation, of all possibility of expression for its cares and interests. At the same time the Stalinist party has made an ideological turn. While in the past the buffer countries were characterized as transitional between "capitalism" and "socialism" they now characterize the states as well as the economy of these countries as "socialist." This ideological turn has been consummated by the new thesis which identifies the regime of the "popular democracy" with the "dictatorship of the proletariat," in flagrant contradiction to all the past affirmations.

At the same time, the social contradictions, violently suppressed by the Stalinist dictatorship, have begun to express themselves even inside the Stalinist parties, thus creating the most serious dangers both for the monolithic system of international Stalinism (relations with the Kremlin) as well as for that of the different Stalinist parties in the buffer countries. The absolutist and bureaucratic methods, as well as the fundamental orientation of the Soviet bureaucracy, trampling upon the most immediate interests of

the masses and of the economy of the buffer zone to its own advantage, have provoked such a tension inside the Stalinist apparatus itself, that the Kremlin has been forced to resort to preventive action (Tito) or to terrorism against the leading elements of the buffer zone apparatus (Koce, Kostov).

This crisis of Stalinism must inevitably extend and deepen inasmuch as the economic, social and national contradictions in the buffer zone are sharpened and as the Kremlin attempts to impose everywhere its absolute and direct control over the Communist Parties.

1. The Stages in the Evolution of the Buffer Countries

3. As indicated in the theses on the USSR and Stalinism adopted by the Second World Congress of the Fourth International, the particular situation of the buffer countries resulted from a series of particular historical developments in these countries.

a. The enfeeblement (Finland, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria) or the virtual disappearance (Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia) of the former possessing classes and the collapse of their state apparatus during the war, the military defeats, the Nazi occupation, the guerrilla wars, the Russian occupation, etc.

b. The decisive economic, political and military weight attained by the USSR in these countries following its military victories.

c. The revolutionary upsurge which developed in some of these countries parallel with the conclusion of the war (Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria).

d. The canalization (Yugoslavia, Bulgaria) or the strangulation (Poland, Czechoslovakia) of this upsurge by the Russian army or by the native Stalinist parties or by a combination of the two.

The decisive factor which permitted the evolution of the buffer countries to be what it was, was the non-intervention of the imperialists in these countries, who practically abandoned their extremely weakened bourgeoisie to the crushing political and military superiority of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Only this non-intervention explains why the resistance of the dying propertied classes in these countries could up to now be liquidated step by step by the Stalinists through "cold" means, without any broad mobilization of the masses being required. But this non-intervention of the imperialists is in turn a result of a definite historical conjuncture:

a. From 1944 to 1946 it corresponded to the accords of Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam, and constituted the price which world imperialism paid Stalin for crushing the German proletariat and for his active aid in strangling the insurgent Greek and Italian movements as well as for his aid in the reconstruction of the capitalist states and economies of all the countries on the continent outside the buffer countries.

b. From 1947 to 1949, it corresponded to the relationship

of military and political forces in the "cold war" as it appeared on the European continent, that is, especially to the crushing superiority of the Russian army over all the other armed forces in Europe, to the permanent instability of the capitalist regime outside the buffer countries (strikes and constant disturbances, etc.), which made completely illusory and materially impossible any direct intervention in favor of the disappearing bourgeoisie of the buffer zone.

4. In the framework of this concrete historical conjuncture, the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy and of the Stalinist parties in the buffer countries likewise passes through two distinct stages:

a. The first stage which lasted up to the end of 1947, during which the Stalinist bureaucracy sought above all an empirical solution to the immediate problems. During this period, the accent of this policy was placed on the utilization of the resources of the buffer countries in order to attenuate as much as possible the effects of the reconversion crisis in the USSR itself. This is why, on the one hand, a whole series of measures were carried out for the exploitation of these countries for the profit of the Soviet bureaucracy (armistice agreements, treaties, reparations, seizure of the former German properties, mixed corporations, commercial treaties with preferential tariffs, etc.). And, on the other hand, each one of these countries was more or less left to itself as far as its own immediate problems of economic reconstruction are concerned. During this period, the bourgeoisie generally retained strong economic positions, if not predominant ones, in all these countries with the exception of Yugoslavia. The nationalizations were limited to enterprises seized by the workers at the end of the war, and which remained without legal proprietors. This stage can be characterized as an effort by the Stalinist bureaucracy and the native Stalinist parties, to utilize the capitalist production relations for their own profits.

b. The second stage commenced when the Stalinist ban on the participation of these countries in the Marshall Plan took form, but developed more fully only at the beginning of 1948. During this stage, which incidentally marked the solution of the most dangerous immediate problems for post-war Soviet economy, the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy in the buffer zone consisted essentially of consolidating its predominant position in these countries on a long-term basis, counteracting the efforts of American imperialism to push it back into its own orbit. Within the framework of this new orientation of the Soviet bureaucracy are included, above all: The liquidation of the strong positions of the native bourgeoisie in industry and commerce; the initiation of an effort for the economic development and industrialization of these countries in a "planned" manner; the limitation of the Kulaks' grip on agriculture. Nevertheless, this new orientation of the Soviet bureaucracy could not eliminate from the economies of the buffer countries the structural difficulties of planning, which resulted from the Stalinist policy in the previous stage: The existence of a Soviet mortgage on the economies of these countries; the narrow national limits in which they remain enclosed; the capitalist character of agriculture; the apathy and often the passive hostility of the proletariat towards the bureaucratic "planning" efforts, etc. This is why "planning" retains its hybrid character and differs as yet structurally, in a fundamental way, from Soviet planning, which is itself the bureaucratic deformation of real socialist planning.

These variations in the politics of the bureaucracy do not correspond only to changes in the objective situation. Bureaucratic empiricism reflects, under the mask of immediate worries, the absence of historical perspectives and the impossibility of adopting a fundamental orientation. This in turn corresponds to the concrete relationship between the bureaucracy, the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat. Because it wanted first of all to strangle all possibility of a proletarian revolution, it was led to conclude a temporary compromise with the bourgeoisie; because its privileges are historically incompatible with the maintenance of the capitalist regime, it had to take the course of gradual and bureaucratic "liquidation" of the capitalist forces in the buffer zone.

5. Just as in the first stage the Soviet bureaucracy was led to conclude empirically that a step-by-step integration of the buffer countries with its own economic system is impossible as long as a sizeable economic power of the native bourgeoisie remains, so the bureaucracy is now beginning to understand from its sad experiences every day, that this same kind of integration remains impossible without eliminating the structural barriers which the bureaucracy itself put up against all genuine planning in the economies of these countries.

The experience of the Tito split has served as an example of the danger of the Stalinist parties in power in the buffer countries becoming the transmission agents of the contradictory social forces which develop as a consequence of the growing economic difficulties. The danger of growing imperialist pressure with the conclusion of the first stage of the Marshall Plan, the relative recovery of Western German industry, American rearmament, etc., have had the same effect. Thus a third stage in the evolution of Stalinist policy towards the buffer countries takes form. This is characterized up to now by the following signs:

a. Measures of growing economic coordination between the different countries, measures which have culminated in the constitution of a Council of Mutual Aid and which appear to develop in the direction of a pool of available resources for exports and of a Customs Union.

b. The first measures to abolish or lighten the Russian mortgage on the economy of these countries (sale to Bulgaria of German goods seized by the USSR in 1944; reduction of Hungarian, Rumanian and Bulgarian reparations; granting of gold and currency credits to Poland and Czechoslovakia, etc.).

These measures only indicate the possibility of a new stage of Stalinist policy in relation to the buffer countries, however, and cannot by themselves, or by means of the plans outlined up to the present and which are scheduled up to 1952, modify fundamentally the structural obstacles to "planning" in the buffer zone, even within the limits of Soviet planning.

II. The Social Nature of the Buffer Countries

6. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the buffer countries -- aside from Finland and the Soviet-occupied zones in Germany

and Austria -- constitute today a unique type of hybrid transitional society in the process of transformation, with features that are as yet so fluid and lacking precision, that it is extremely difficult to summarize its fundamental nature in a concise formula.

The most exact definition that can be given of the social nature of these countries is a definition by description. These countries appear to have a society in which:

- a. The transition between capitalism and Soviet society has resulted not from a proletarian revolution, but from a military-political overturn which eliminated the big bourgeoisie and the bulk of the middle bourgeoisie;
- b. capitalist survival subsists only in small industry and in commerce;
- c. agriculture remains capitalist in property relations (no nationalization of land) as well as in the dominant mode of exploitation (small private property);
- d. foreign trade, a state monopoly in fact if not in law, cannot free itself from the pressure and the attractive force of the world capitalist market, as a consequence of an insufficient material base for even bureaucratic planning, in each one of these countries;
- e. beside the peasantry, a germinator of capitalist forces, there is a proletariat which has had no important part in the crystallization of the new social situation and which for this reason has no important subjective ties with the present state, except in Yugoslavia;
- f. the formation of a native bureaucratic layer around the PC bureaucracy in power, with some rare exceptions, is only in the initial stage;
- g. the Bonapartist and extreme police form of the state reflects both its historic origins and the present prostration of the fundamental classes in society;
- h. nevertheless, this Bonapartist form of the state differs from classical Bonapartism (in the last analysis, the instrument of the bourgeoisie) and at the same time from Soviet Bonapartism (the instrument of a workers' bureaucracy in a post-capitalist society), and constitutes above all else an instrument of domination by the Soviet bureaucracy, the expression of an international relationship of forces which is superimposed on the given class relationships and which distorts their normal expression.

7. What are the factors determining the social difference between the buffer countries and the USSR?

- a. On the economic plane: The nationalization of big industry, the banks, the means of communication and of wholesale trade, has created necessary but insufficient conditions for planning, even in a degenerated bureaucratic form as in the USSR. The narrow national framework within which each one of the buffer countries is enclosed;

their lack of sufficient material resources to develop the productive forces; the mortgage the Soviet bureaucracy has imposed on the economy of these countries; the predominantly agricultural character of these countries which, without nationalization of the soil and under the predominant regime of small private exploitation, reproduce capitalism from day to day on a village scale; the dependence of these countries on the world capitalist market, for the material means of their industrialization -- the sum of all these factors creates a situation in which the major part of the production of these countries is still destined for a capitalist market -- whether it is internal or external. For this very reason it is subject to the influences of all the oscillations of the world capitalist conjuncture and to the process of equalization of the average rate of profit. The conditions of fusion between the petty-bourgeois peasant market, state industry and the world capitalist market, which Lenin and Trotsky designated as a danger for the USSR in the period of the NEP, is today the determining situation in the buffer countries. This is expressed by the fact that in the advanced buffer countries (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary) foreign trade embraces approximately half of the national revenue and that not only today, but even in 1952 (according to the present plans), more than half of this trade will be with the Western countries, from which the decisive elements for the industrialization of these countries must come. This is likewise expressed by the fact that these countries were obliged in almost all cases to reimburse foreign capital for its property nationalized in the buffer countries and to recognize the old debts, thus imposing an additional weight on their economy, already strained to the extreme.

b. On the social plane: The fact that the present situation did not come about as a result of a victorious proletarian revolution, but as a result of the military-political successes achieved by the Soviet bureaucracy against the bourgeoisie as well as against the proletariat; the fact also that the formation of a bureaucratic caste is as yet only in the initial stage -- both lead to the conclusion that, with the exception of Yugoslavia, it is very unlikely, if not excluded, that a civil war would be necessary to reverse the present orientation of these countries towards a structural assimilation with the USSR. The same applies also to the state structure. With the exception of Yugoslavia, the state apparatus of the buffer zone did not result from violent destruction of the old bourgeois state apparatus, but from its "conquest" by the Stalinist parties, with the aid of Russian pressure and a series of successive purges. It follows that this apparatus is even today saturated with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements, especially in the army cadres, in diplomacy and in the management of the economy. In the period which followed the October Revolution, proletarian control over the bourgeois cadres in the service of the workers' state, as well as the democracy in the Bolshevik party, acted as a brake on the detrimental influence of these elements on the conduct of the state and the economy. At the present stage in the buffer zone, which came about not as a result of a proletarian revolution but of bureaucratic maneuvers, such control is completely absent, strengthening thereby the weight of the bourgeois elements in the apparatus, which likewise reflects the structural differences between the economy of the buffer countries and that of the USSR. It may also be said that the return of the buffer countries into the capitalist orbit would not necessitate the

destruction of the present state apparatus, but a "purge" in a reverse sense.

o. On the political plane: The fate of the buffer countries has not yet been decided, not alone in the historical sense as in the case of the USSR, but in a much more immediate sense. The totality of the present world political currents: The Marshall Plan, the relative "reconstruction" of Western Germany, American rearmament, the economic perspectives of American imperialism and of the Soviet Five-Year-Plan, the development of the proletarian struggles and those of the colonial peoples -- all these factors will decide in the coming months the immediate fate of the buffer countries. As indicated by the political and strategic plans of imperialism and of the Stalinist bureaucracy, it is very improbable if not excluded that it is necessary to have a war in order to lead back some of these countries of the buffer zone into the imperialist orbit. This reason, added to those indicated above, makes it appear erroneous to modify as of today our evaluation of the social nature of these countries, except to indicate clearly the processes of their structural assimilation with the USSR and the stages already realized in this assimilation. This is why the tasks of the Fourth International in these countries remain, in a general way, those enumerated by the Second World Congress. Only in the eventuality described in Point 9 would a revision become necessary.

8. This whole description leads to the conclusion that the buffer zone, except for Finland and the Russian-occupied zones in Austria and Germany, are on the road toward structural assimilation with the USSR, but that this assimilation has not yet been accomplished. The social difference between the USSR and the buffer zone, enumerated above, are of a qualitative nature even though from the quantitative point of view society in the buffer zone approaches more closely Soviet society rather than that of the "normal" capitalist countries, in the same sense in which the USSR itself is quantitatively closer to capitalism than to socialism. Only in this sense can we continue to define the buffer countries as capitalist countries on the road toward structural assimilation with the USSR. This definition, necessarily awkward and too concise to embrace the different aspects of the buffer zone, thus signifies essentially that in the course of the process of the structural assimilation of these countries the dialectical leap has not yet been produced. It stresses both the historic origins of the present situation, as well as the social physiognomy which is as yet undecided. But it does not at all imply that the bourgeoisie is in power as the dominant class in these countries. This definition implies that the situation in the buffer countries likewise differs from the situation in a "normal" and "classic" capitalist society. It serves exclusively to denote the place of these countries in relation both to capitalism and the USSR, since Marxist sociology excludes the existence of economies and states that are neither capitalist nor Soviet (workers' or degenerated workers').

9. To what extent can this structural assimilation be completed, so that it will be necessary to modify our appreciation of the social nature of the buffer zone? The factors enumerated above indicate at the same time the concrete obstacles to the completion of this assimilation and the conditions under which this assimilation would be effectively completed. All these can be reduced to one factor: The

achievement of effective coordination and planning applied to the combined economics of these countries linked organically to the economy of the USSR. Such an achievement could reverse the present predominant tendency of these countries to depend upon capitalist economy. This could happen, for instance, in the case of the abolition of national frontiers between the various buffer countries.

The existence of these frontiers, in effect, greatly limits the material base on which planned economy can be constructed and requires, at the same time, the maintenance of a series of state apparatuses which, as a result of their origins, cannot but be saturated with bourgeois elements. At the same time, the abolition of national frontiers would give a real impulsion to the development of the productive forces and would constitute a progressive act of great historical importance, even if it was brought about by the conservative Stalinist bureaucracy. It would really be comparable, in Trotsky's words, to the unification of Germany by Bismarck and the House of Hohenzollern. Such an abolition of the frontiers, whether it is accomplished by the incorporation of some or all these countries in the USSR, or by the constitution of a Balkan-Danube Federation formally independent from the USSR, provided it forms a genuine unified framework for economic planning, could be defined as the decisive point, in the process of structural assimilation of these countries with the USSR, at which the social nature of these countries becomes qualitatively transformed.

On the plane of the state that would require the disappearance of the present hybrid state apparatus and the constitution of a state apparatus of a new type, copied no doubt from that of the USSR. In relation to this achievement, other modifications in the situation will have to be evaluated in the same sense: Eventual nationalization of the soil, incipient collectivization of the land, establishment of a plan for the joint economic development of all the buffer countries, reversal of the economic and commercial relations with the West, etc.

All the preceding constitutes a probable variant of an objective historical process and not at all a desirable goal for action by the revolutionary proletariat. In setting forth the conditions under which assimilation of the buffer zone to Russian society could be achieved by Stalinist action, the Fourth International -- while modifying its attitude towards the buffer zone in case of war, should such a change come about -- does not in the least relent in its struggle against the police oppression of the buffer zone masses by the Soviet bureaucracy and its agents. Precisely under the conditions of the development indicated above, the struggle of the Fourth International for independent Polish, Czech, Hungarian, etc., Soviet Republics, will take on its full significance linked to a merciless denunciation of all the elements of national oppression that the bureaucracy introduces and will introduce in the buffer zone. As against the Stalinist perspective of the bureaucratic integration of the buffer zone within, the USSR, the Fourth International develops before the buffer zone masses the revolutionary perspective of the integration of independent socialist Soviet republics within an independent Balkan-Danube Federation and within the Socialist United States of Europe.

III. The Special Cases

10. In the case of those countries which are part of the USSR's

"strategic buffer" but have at the same time undergone a separate economic and political evolution, the contradictory, combined, uneven character of the entire buffer zone development is most striking. The case of these countries indicates likewise how necessary it is to guard against hasty generalizations, how important it is to follow step by step the actual evolution of the situation in each particular country. In the case of Yugoslavia we have one extremity of the spectrum composed of all the nuances differentiating the situation in each one of the buffer countries. Yugoslavia, of all the buffer countries, was the only one in which the liquidation of the bulk of the possessing classes, as well as the destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus, took place by means of mass action, that is, the guerrilla warfare which in this country took on the character of a genuine civil war. From this fundamental difference between Yugoslavia and the other buffer countries flow specific differences on a number of planes: The CP has a real base among the masses; the masses have a fundamentally different attitude to the new state; the Yugoslav CP has different relations toward the Soviet bureaucracy; there is the possibility of a real differentiation in the workers' movement following the Tito crisis, despite the undeniable existence of a police regime in this country. Even though the sum of these factors does not eliminate any of the structural obstacles to real planning and for this reason leaves Yugoslav economy as yet qualitatively different from the Russian economy, it undoubtedly brings this country closer, on the social and political plane, to the Soviet structure. The defense of Yugoslavia against the campaign of calumny, the economic blockade, etc., on the part of the Soviet bureaucracy must be considered within the framework of our evaluation of the workers' movement of this country, the origins of its state, and the revolutionary possibilities opened up as a consequence of this workers' movement and the origins of this state, which take precedence over purely economic considerations.

11. Finland lies at the other end of the spectrum of the buffer zone. There we have a bourgeoisie which has hardly been shaken by the war and which formally retains control of its economic and state positions. There we have a proletariat which is much more developed and, as a consequence of a number of historical developments, less susceptible to Stalinist maneuvers. There also we find more resolute imperialist support for the Finnish bourgeoisie than for any other bourgeoisie in the buffer zone. Consequently, the Stalinist bureaucracy limits itself in Finland to the imposition of economic tribute and to the occupation of certain strategic positions, leaving the rest of the country to evolve within the framework of a quasi-normal bourgeois economy. This has had its political reflection in a consolidation of the conservative forces, culminating after the inevitable transition period in the expulsion of the Stalinists from the coalition government and, in the elimination of the erstwhile positions they had conquered in the state apparatus following the military victory of the USSR. The evolution of Finland cannot, of course, be considered any more definitive than that of the rest of the buffer zone. The international situation can compel the bureaucracy to increase its pressure on this country and can lead to a new desperate effort at military resistance. The Finnish case is important, however, above all because it shows that the bureaucracy did not attempt to impose, or succeed in imposing, on all of the buffer zone a unified scheme of development and because it illustrates the fact that a certain internal

conjuncture, a certain prostration of the fundamental social classes, was one of the necessary conditions for even the temporary success of the Stalinist maneuvers in the buffer zone.

12. The Austrian zone of occupation approximates Finland very closely. The Soviet bureaucracy was obliged to limit itself to the seizure of several economic stakes (former German property) and the occupation of important strategic positions. But it was in no position to influence the general economic orientation of Austria which evolved within the framework of a normal capitalist economy included within the Marshall Plan. Nor could it influence the social and political developments, which led to elimination from power, and culminated in a normalization and a strengthening of bourgeois power. As in the Finnish case, the international relationship of forces was the decisive factor in this evolution. But the concrete relationship between the classes was likewise the major obstacle to the Stalinist maneuvers.

Finally, the German zone of occupation constitutes another special case, situated midway between that of the buffer zone in general and that of Austria. The decisive characteristic of the situation in Eastern Germany lies in the fact that the most important industrial sector has been seized by the USSR and has been transformed into Soviet property. Parallel with this, there has been large scale dismantlement. Nationalizations have affected, aside from the Russian sector of the economy, an important part but not all of big industry and wholesale trade. There has remained a middle bourgeoisie, which drains a considerable part of the national income. Finally, the formation of a bureaucratic layer rising over the proletariat, and acting as the extended arm of the Russian bureaucracy, is in that country much more advanced than in the other buffer countries. If the situation in Eastern Germany remains indecisive, it is because more than any other country of the buffer zone, it depends in the first place on the international situation. That is, on the eventual solution of the German problem in its entirety and the specific orientation of the USA and the USSR in relation to this problem. It still cannot be said whether the Soviet bureaucracy has decided to retain its positions in Eastern Germany at all costs or whether it will be ready to consider them as bargaining points in order to retain the rest of the buffer zone and in order to obtain a certain influence on the entirety of German affairs (the slogan of unification, etc.). Under these conditions, the status of this zone of occupation as well as the direction of its development remain more fluid than is the case in the rest of the buffer zone, and the tendency to structural assimilation with the USSR is less pronounced there.

From the point of view of our tasks, the Fourth International continues to defend there the theses of the World Congress and considers that all measures of the Soviet bureaucracy, including eventual incorporation of Eastern Germany within a Balkan-Danube Federation -- which is very doubtful -- must be combatted and regarded as reactionary in relation to the destruction of German unity and the paralysis of the German proletariat that would result therefrom.

IV. The Theoretical Significance of the Buffer Zone Development

13. The appearance of new transitional regimes, as in the case of the buffer countries, regimes of transition between capitalism and the USSR, is not the result of chance nor the effect of negligible historical accidents. Only incurable pedants can conceive of capitalism and socialism as fixed entities, established once and for all, to which a living historic process must conform, a process contradictory and rich in the crystallization of ever new combined forms. In reality, the appearance of mixed transitional regimes and their combined character is the clearest expression of our historic epoch, which is defined by:

- a. an ever more advanced disintegration of capitalism;
- b. the conditions of extended delay of the world revolution, essentially the result of the counter-revolutionary Stalinist leadership of the world labor movement;
- c. the existence of the USSR not only as a power continuing to polarize the revolutionary aspirations of an important part of the world proletariat, but also as a state power having a military-political weight of its own, and with a logic of expansion of its own.

Only in the light of these three factors can the appearance and the development of a new and combined phenomenon like that of the Soviet buffer zone be understood and the limits of its real historic import be defined.

14. Ascertaining the existence of such transitional regimes does not at all upset our evaluation of the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism nor our evaluation of Stalinism as a disintegrating force in the USSR and as a force organizing defeats of the world proletariat:

a. An evaluation of Stalinism cannot be made on the basis of localized results of its policy but must proceed from the entirety of its action on a world scale. When we consider the state of decay which capitalism presents even today, four years after the end of the war, and when we consider the concrete situation of 1943-1945, there can be no doubt that Stalinism, on a world scale, appeared as the decisive factor in preventing a sudden and simultaneous crash of the capitalist order in Europe and in Asia. In this sense, the "successes" achieved by the bureaucracy in the buffer zone constitute, at most, the price which imperialism paid for services rendered on the world arena -- a price which is moreover constantly called into question at the following stage.

b. From the world point of view, the reforms realized by the Soviet bureaucracy in the sense of an assimilation of the buffer zone to the USSR weigh incomparably less in the balance than the blows dealt by the Soviet bureaucracy, especially through its actions in the buffer zone, against the consciousness of the world proletariat, which it demoralizes, disorients and paralyzes by all of its politics and thus renders it susceptible to some extent to the imperialist campaign of war preparations. Even from the point of view of the USSR itself, the defeats and the demoralization of the world proletariat caused by Stalinism constitute an incomparably greater

danger than the consolidation of the buffer zone constitutes a reinforcement.

c. In the buffer zone itself, where objective as well as subjective conditions were ripe for an immediate overthrow of capitalism in 1943-1944, Stalinist policy has led to the temporary strengthening of the anti-proletarian forces, created a thousand new obstacles on the way to the abolition of capitalism and thus caused the whole painful and jerky process of assimilation, dragging this process out over a number of years and rendering the proletariat in the main apathetic and even hostile, whereas the revolutionary movement of the proletariat could have achieved the liquidation of capitalism in these countries in a much shorter time and with a minimum of overhead charges. X

d. As a result of the very expansion of the Soviet bureaucracy under the concrete conditions noted above, the objective contradictions in the situation of the buffer zone tend to penetrate into the very heart of the bureaucracy and of Soviet economy, multiplying the tensions and antagonisms which already exist within them abundantly, and to prepare the ground for the development of manifold centrifugal tendencies (Tito tendency on the one hand, Gomulka-Akerman tendency on the other).

15. Historically, the above-mentioned conditions not only indicate the reasons for the appearance of transitional regimes but also circumscribe the limits of the viability of the Soviet bureaucracy:

a. On the social plane, the overthrow of the Soviet bureaucracy remains certain within the framework of a world decision in the class struggle, which is inevitable one way or another in the long run.

b. On the military-political plane, this overthrow remains equally inevitable if the world proletariat does not succeed in crushing imperialism in time, with such an eventuality also entailing the downfall of the bureaucracy.

The appearance of transitional regimes of the buffer zone type thus merely gives expression to the interlude character of the historic period proceeding from 1943 up to the present: an interlude between the low point of the world-wide decline of the proletarian revolution and the new world revolutionary upsurge, which has only been seen in its rough outlines up to the present; an interlude between the Second World War and the final clash between imperialism and the USSR. Only within the framework of this limited interlude, do the buffer zone and all the phenomena associated with it appear in their true light as provisional and temporary. And in this framework, the real nature of Stalinism appears more pronounced than ever in the sense indicated by the Fourth International.

RESOLUTION ON "THE THIRD CHINESE REVOLUTION"

"But being crushed in the vise of world contradictions, upon the solution of which in one way or another its fate depends, the Chinese peasantry is even less capable of playing a leading role than the Russian.

". . . Despite the great backwardness of China, or more correctly, because of this great backwardness as compared with Russia, (the third Chinese revolution) will not have a 'democratic' period, not even such a six-month period as the October Revolution had (November 1917 to July 1918); but it will be compelled from the very outset to effect the most decisive shake-up and the abolition of bourgeois property in city and village. . .

". . . The unification and emancipation of China today is an international task, no less so than the existence of the USSR. This task can be solved only by means of a desperate struggle on the part of the downtrodden, hungry, and persecuted masses under the direct leadership of the proletarian vanguard -- a struggle not only against world imperialism, but also against its economic and political agency in China, against the bourgeoisie, including the 'national' bourgeoisie and all its democratic flunkeys. And this is nothing else than the road toward the dictatorship of the proletariat."

L. Trotsky, Third International After Lenin, pp. 184, 185, 191.

1. The developments of the economic, political and social situation in the Far East are more and more important and even decisive for the future of the world revolution, as was stated by the Second World Congress (resolution on the Colonial Question). In particular, the development of the situation in China, which directly affects about a quarter of the human race, is of the very greatest importance. The collapse of Chiang Kai-shek closes the chapter which began with the defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution (1925 to 1927); it constitutes a grave defeat for world imperialism and opens a new chapter which will have important effects upon:

- a. The class struggle in China itself, laying out the road to the Third Chinese Revolution.
- b. The situation and the revolutionary developments in the entire Far East.
- c. The position of American capitalism, and international relations.
- d. Stalinism.

In setting forth the principal problems raised by the new situation in China, as the present resolution proposes to do, we must not forget that the tempo of developments in the Far East is relatively slower than in Europe, and that entirely conjunctural situations may frequently arise.

The Third Chinese Revolution

2. The tragic experience of the Second Chinese Revolution proved that:

a. The agrarian problem, which constitutes the motive force in the Chinese revolution, cannot be solved by the peasantry alone, even the very poor peasantry which makes up the overwhelming majority of the country's population. The agrarian revolution cannot triumph unless the poor peasantry finds for its guide an urban class, interested in the victory of the poor peasants.

b. The question of national unification is of decisive importance in assuring the development of the productive forces and making it possible for China to free herself from the yoke of imperialism. Without complete national unification, without total repudiation of what remains of the inequitable treaties, without customs autonomy, China is doomed to remain in a state of chaos, a state of provincial rivalries and divisions, oppression by military leaders, and dependence upon imperialism.

c. The Chinese bourgeoisie, tied on the one hand to imperialism and on the other to the vestiges of feudalism in China, is incapable of solving a single one of the fundamental problems of the bourgeois revolution (agrarian revolution, unification of China and independence from imperialism). On the contrary, its class interests and its fear of movements of the masses make it play a highly reactionary role against the demands of the workers and the aspirations of the poor peasants.

d. The Chinese proletariat, despite its small numerical weight, is the only urban class capable of taking leadership of the movement of the oppressed masses in the cities and the country in order to satisfy their demands.

e. The Menshevik theory of the development of the revolution "by stages" has been condemned by experience. For in the last analysis it serves the bourgeoisie by confining and then strangling the revolutionary movement, and it offers favorable opportunities, during the course of the revolution, for the building of reactionary outposts which make it possible to crush the masses at the first chance.

f. The Third Chinese Revolution can triumph only as a permanent revolution, combining, under the leadership of the proletariat, the bourgeois tasks and the socialist tasks, combining the struggle against the remains of feudalism with the struggle against the native bourgeoisie and against imperialism, and uniting the struggle of the oppressed masses in China with the struggle of the masses of the Far East, of the USSR and of the imperialist countries.

The Third Chinese Revolution can triumph only with the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the poor peasants.

It is along these main directing lines that the program of action of the Bolshevik-Leninists of China must be worked out; and it is along these lines that we must estimate all the events unfolding in China and all the currents which, in China as throughout the world, will affect the struggle of the Chinese workers and peasants during the course of the Third Chinese Revolution.

The Collapse of Chiang Kai-shek and the Military Victory of the Mao Tse-tung Armies

3. After more than 20 years of the most hateful military and police dictatorship, Chiang Kai-shek collapsed, as a result of the war against Japanese imperialism, the disorganization and total corruption of the administration, the inflation, and under the blows of the armies of Mao Tse-tung. The military clique grouped around Chiang Kai-shek found itself more and more isolated, even from decisive layers of the Chinese bourgeoisie. The Kuomintang broke up into a Chiang Kai-shek faction, refusing any compromise with Mao Tse-tung, and numerous other factions whose aim was, by achieving a compromise, to gain time and make preparations for recapturing the initiative at a later but still undetermined stage. Upon the victory of Mao Tse-tung's armies, American imperialism again clearly expressed -- through Hoffman's statements -- its refusal to support the Chiang Kai-shek clique any longer; nor did it hide its desire for a compromise, which the Marshall mission had not succeeded in winning at the end of the war.

4. The Chinese working-class movement, violently crushed in 1927 and 1928, did not experience a revival until after the defeat of the Japanese in 1945. Since then, however, the strikes and demonstrations in China have not at any time reached a level comparable, for example, to the movements in Japan. At present, moreover, it is not under the blows of the masses of the great working-class centers that the Chiang Kai-shek regime is collapsing. Up to now, the panic in the ranks of the bourgeoisie in Shanghai, Nanking, etc., has not been produced by movements of the working-class masses, but by the perspective of such movements arising on the basis of the collapse of the Kuomintang regime.

Actually, the fall of the Kuomintang regime -- whatever the transitional forms in which this is consummated (with the complicity and agreement of the imperialists on the one hand and the Stalinists on the other) -- cannot fail to open up a period of revolutionary crisis, to place on the order of the day the fundamental problems of the Chinese revolution, and to put to the test all classes and all organizations of Chinese society; and thus, to speed up greatly the political development of the Chinese proletariat.

The Fundamental Tasks of the Chinese Revolution

5. The agrarian upheaval constitutes the most explosive force in the Chinese revolution. In the North, it is more particularly a question of doing away with the remnants of feudalism; in the South, the primary question is one of freeing the peasants from the scourge of usurious interest payments and debts. Now the usurers are an integral section of the urban capitalists, who derive a very large portion of

their profits precisely from the indebtedness of the peasantry. The agrarian upheaval therefore presupposes total cancellation of all the debts of the peasants. But it likewise presupposes establishment of a regime that will not bring back the cycle which the peasantry of China has been accustomed to for thousands of years, under numerous regimes and numerous dynasties.

The countryside is an ever-present breeding ground of capitalism. The maintenance of native and imperialist capitalist property in China would inevitably bring about a new crystallization of bourgeois elements in the countryside, and the peasantry would relapse into the conditions from which it is trying to emerge.

The struggle of the peasants for their liberation is thus intimately tied to the struggle of the urban workers, because of the fact that they have in the first instance the same enemy, the city bourgeoisie, and that if the elimination of the conditions producing the peasant indebtedness is to be definitively assured, it must be accompanied by expropriation of the capitalist enterprises by the workers.

6. Moreover, the development of the productive forces, both in the cities and in the country, cannot be the work of a bourgeoisie whose principal function is that of a bourgeoisie of compradors in the service of world imperialism. Under such conditions the establishment of a state which could unify China is excluded. Under the regime of a bourgeoisie of compradors, the only possible state apparatus is one -- as was the case after Chiang Kai-shek's victory -- which has to live at the expense of the peasants; inevitably it takes on the form of a bureaucracy and military cliques, which can do nothing but maintain China in a condition of chaos and disjunction.

The only centralizing apparatus possible in such a vast country is one of the masses themselves, organized in democratically elected committees.

7. The imperialist powers (and primarily American imperialism) look to China both for her resources in raw materials and for the market which she can provide as an outlet for their own products. Whatever immediate interest imperialism might have in encouraging a certain improvement in the conditions of the Chinese peasant masses -- notably, in order to delay the outbreak of an economic crisis ("point 4" of the Truman program) -- it cannot go far along this road, for the social equilibrium of the imperialist countries depends largely on maintaining the colonial and semi-colonial peoples in a backward state; and American imperialism will certainly not invest over-large amounts of capital in a country where the social instability is so great as in China.

Thus imperialism, like the native bourgeoisie, is an obstacle to the progression of China out of a regime from which it has already tried to liberate itself in the course of two revolutions.

8. The agrarian upheaval, national unification, and liberation from the yoke of imperialism, are three tasks intimately linked together. "The agrarian revolution without national unity and without

customs autonomy (essentially the monopoly of foreign trade) would not provide any way out or any perspective for China." (L. Trotsky -- see Third International after Lenin, page 183).

The accomplishment of these tasks is possible only within the framework of the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the poor peasants. The peasants movement, which has brought victories from a military point of view, has no way of triumphing politically other than by allying itself to the urban proletariat, accepting its leadership and bringing to it the great power of the peasantry, in order to establish a government of workers and poor peasants which, basing itself on the masses, would accomplish profound agrarian upheavals, free China from the bondage of the imperialists and turn the country on to the road of building socialism.

The backwardness of China and its huge peasant mass, the scope of the problems that are posed, far from dismissing the question of dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with the poor peasants, make it a more imperious necessity than anywhere else, and precisely the sole means of counteracting all the centrifugal tendencies and all those tendencies toward turning Chinese society back to the anarchy, chaos and disjunction in which it is stagnating.

The Armies and the Party of Mao Tse-tung

9. The armies of Mao Tse-tung have their origin in the peasant organizations which arose during the decline and after the defeat of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-1927.

During the last years the Mao Tse-tung movement has remained what it was at its origin, a peasant movement led by the Stalinists. Until the last few months the armies of Mao Tse-tung fought only as guerrillas, avoided the cities and were careful not to establish a front against the nationalist armies of the Kuomintang. Even now, at the moment of victory over the completely disintegrated nationalist armies, the armies of Mao Tse-tung display extreme caution in approaching the large cities. Instead of calling upon the masses of South China and the Yangtse River valley to rise up, the Mao Tse-tung government is bent upon achieving a compromise with certain bourgeois politicians and organizations. The victory of Mao Tse-tung over Chiang Kai-shek is a military victory of peasant uprisings over a regime in complete disintegration.

China has already had numerous examples of victories of peasant movements, but the fact that today these movements are under Stalinist leadership gives an entirely new character to the future of these movements and to the perspectives in China.

10. The Chinese Communist Party, which animates the armies and the administration under control of these armies, is characterized -- like most of the Stalinist parties in the Far East -- on the one hand by its tie with Moscow, and on the other hand, by the overwhelming preponderance of peasant elements in the party. Socially, the Chinese Communist Party is a typical realization of the bi-partite party which Bukharin and Stalin called for at the time of the Second Chinese Revolution - a bi-partite party which even to this day has only an insignificant base in the urban proletariat, whereas in the purely

peasant regions it controls a large armed force. The leadership of this party like that of any other Stalinist Party is characterized by a very elastic use of program and slogans which it changes from day to day to be able to maintain its control of the mass movement.

11. Despite profound modification since 1925, the policy of the Chinese CP (and of Moscow) has remained based on a conception of the revolution by stages. According to the Stalinists, the revolution should begin with a first phase of bourgeois development, where the essential accomplishment would be liquidation of feudalism in the interest of developing the capitalist elements in the country and the cities; thereupon would follow the development of a proletariat which later would pose the question of the socialist society. But whereas in 1925 the Chinese CP put itself in tow to the Kuomintang and renounced all independent activity, today the Stalinists, in order to carry out essentially the same policy, call for the formation of a "popular" state led by a coalition government with representatives of bourgeois political organizations but with the representatives of the Stalinist party predominating. This policy is the result of a conjuncture of various factors: the Soviet bureaucracy is organically hostile to any development of mass movements which might get out of its control; it cannot provide China with the industrial products and the capital she needs; it does not want to collide head-on with American imperialism at such a sensitive point, but on the contrary tries to take advantage of the victory of the Mao Tse-tung armies for more successfully reaching a compromise with American imperialism. Despite a relationship of forces much more favorable to the Stalinist bureaucracy than during the Second Chinese Revolution, this policy is doomed to failure as complete as that of the Comintern leadership in 1925-1927; and the Third Chinese Revolution will be doomed to failure unless the working class succeeds in freeing itself from the shackles of Stalinism and finding a new revolutionary leadership, which, through all the vicissitudes of the struggle, will place its confidence solely in the forces of the working class and the poor peasants.

12. Up to now the Chinese Communist Party has based itself and its strength among the poor peasants, the middle peasants and in some cases the rich peasants, for the purpose of proceeding toward certain agrarian reforms.

The development of the peasant war compelled Mao Tse-tung to give a more and more radical character to his program, even in the field of the peasant struggle: from a lowering of land rents and usurious interest rates, he went on to abolition of interest on debts and division of the land through peasant committees. All these measured to not exceed the framework of timid agrarian reforms.

Military victory and the formation of a government now confront the Chinese Communist Party with a number of problems whose solution, as we have indicated above, is decisive for the triumph of the revolution: the struggle for expropriation of the bourgeoisie, the appeal to the masses to establish through committees the only "apparatus" genuinely capable of unifying China and freeing her from the yoke of imperialism.

Now the Stalinist policy of setting up a "bourgeois democracy" -- the policy, in fact, of respect for capitalist property (native and international) even though with restrictions -- will simply guarantee to the bourgeois elements which inevitably develop in the countryside a point of crystallization in the cities. What was seen as a threat during the years of the NEP in the Soviet Union, and as a grave danger in the first two years of the "popular democracies" in Eastern Europe would be repeated, to an even greater degree, in China.

The realization of a "new capitalism" and a "new democracy" for "several decades" (Mao Tse-tung) can actually lead to no other results than those of the preceding regime: maintenance of China in a backward state of anarchy and chaos; establishment of a military apparatus which would break up into cliques and live at the expense of the peasantry; return of usury.

13. In the present state of disintegration of the regime in China, it is by no means excluded that certain factions of the Chinese bourgeoisie may endeavor, with the agreement of American imperialism, to reach agreements with the Chinese Stalinist party which is clearly in search of bourgeois "allies," offering them in its program some advantages. In such a case, it would not be a question of basic agreements on a program aimed at establishing a truly democratic regime and assuring the development of the productive forces of the country. What would be involved for the bourgeoisie, in the service of imperialism, would be to gain time, to regroup their forces around new axes and to attempt to disassociate themselves from the movement that has just triumphed, while waiting for a period more favorable to the progress of imperialism in Asia.

14. But may not the Chinese Stalinists "succeed" in China in the way of the Stalinists in the European buffer countries? That is to say, may they not for various reasons be led to shift their objectives, to attack their bourgeois allies of today, and to proceed with a structural assimilation through a series of bureaucratic measures in which the worker and peasant masses would be mobilized, when necessary, simply as an element of support? To pose the question in this way is to forget all the differences between China and the buffer countries.

The essential instruments of the Stalinists in the buffer countries have been the presence of the Red Army, the direct pressure of the Soviet Union, the action of the GPU; this apparatus has wielded a tremendous power, but at the same time has been entirely controllable. The Chinese CP, however, does not have either the direct or nearby support of the Soviet armies, except in Manchuria over which the Kremlin seeks exclusive control without Chinese participation. In any case, the Soviet Union lacks the necessary means for controlling so vast a territory as China. Nor can it provide China with what she needs. In the economic field, the problems confronting the Chinese Stalinists and the means which they have at their disposal are greatly disproportionate to the problems and the means of the Stalinists in Eastern Europe. The profound instability of the buffer countries of Eastern Europe is only with difficulty checked by the numerous turns of the Stalinist apparatus, which exercises police control over life in the cities and the country. But in China the enormity

of the problems that are posed, and the limited means of the apparatus, all indicate that the period which opened with the fall of Chiang Kai-shek will be a long period of social instability and crisis. Feeling their inability to form a central government controlling bureaucratically the whole country, the Stalinists seem to be oriented toward the creation of provincial governments in agreement with sections of the bourgeoisie. Such a policy would perpetuate the state of division and would be one of the chief obstacles in China's historical development.

The Third Chinese Revolution and the Far East

15. The collapse of the Kuomintang government and the development of the Third Chinese Revolution will have enormous consequences for the revolutionary developments in all the colonies and the entire Far East.

This was verified most recently in the last elections in Japan, which witnessed a considerable growth of the Communist Party.

The slowness of political developments in China after the Second World War left isolated the revolutionary movements in Burma, the Viet Nam and Indonesia, and made it possible for the imperialists to take the offensive and win back part of their former privileges. But the drive of the Mao Tse-tung armies cannot fail to strengthen the resistance of the peoples of the Viet Nam against French imperialism and the peoples of Indonesia against Dutch imperialism.

The revolutionary movements in India, Siam, Burma, and Malaya will likewise be stimulated by the drive of the worker and peasant masses of China.

The collapse of the Kuomintang government is not only a defeat for the Chinese bourgeoisie and for American imperialism, which is directly interested in China, but a defeat which leads to a considerable weakening of the general positions of imperialism in the colonial world. It is certainly the heaviest blow against imperialism in many years.

From this point of view also, the Chinese revolution will reveal its character as permanent revolution, passing beyond the boundaries of China and becoming an integral part of a movement of the entire colonial world against imperialism; and this will have its repercussions on the revolutionary struggle in the imperialist countries. Conscious of this danger, the Indian bourgeoisie has just attempted, through the Pan-Asiatic Conference against Dutch intervention in Java, to establish the bases for an anti-Communist defense bloc in the Far East.

The Chinese Events and International Relationships

16. As for the relationship between the United States and the USSR, the events in China have led to an improvement in the positions of the USSR at the expense of those of the United States. Already the American inclination to abandon China as an anti-Soviet outpost -- expressed at the time of the return of the Marshall mission, whose

objective had been to bring about an agreement between Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tse-tung -- is growing. The United States and Great Britain are falling back upon Japan and India. A section of the leading circles in American policy even doubts the possibility of being able to hold Japan in case of war (statements, denied, of Kenneth Royall).

But however important this shift in the relationship of forces in the Far East may be, it is far from decisive insofar as the unfolding developments in Europe are concerned. Despite the decline of Europe, it is still there that the main game is being played at present. For this reason, although the cold war continues in Europe and may even be intensified, it is by no means excluded that in China we may witness agreements between the USSR and the United States -- the former finding in China a field for political operations, the latter finding it a field for profitable commercial operations. But this field of contingent agreement would be altogether limited and temporary.

The Stalinist bureaucracy in China, as in the other countries, is only concerned with using the mass struggles in order to obtain the most favorable compromise.

The Chinese Events and Stalinism

17. The victories of the armies of Mao Tse-tung cannot fail to have for an immediate consequence a raising of the prestige of the Stalinists in the eyes of the masses of China and most of the countries in the Far East. Since the betrayal of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-1927, new generations have grown up who are ignorant of this past; they will begin by putting their confidence in the Stalinists -- despite their moderate bourgeois-democratic program -- to achieve their aspirations. The masses will begin by identifying the fall of Chiang Kai-shek -- the first step on the revolutionary road with the victory of the revolution itself.

But the problems posed by national and international conditions in China will confront the Chinese Stalinists with insurmountable difficulties within the framework of Stalinist policy, that is, within the framework of a national bourgeois transformation bureaucratically led and controlled from on top.

Developments of recent years, and particularly the example of Yugoslavia, have demonstrated that the expansion of Stalinism brings into the Stalinist movement new contradictions. These contradictions produce hidden conflicts within the bureaucracy itself, as well as potential and germinating oppositions against the Kremlin bureaucracy -- oppositions which tend toward open breaks even where the Stalinist parties hold the reins of government, for although they apparently exert absolute power over the state and the economy of a country, they become subject, once in the governmental seats, to the class forces which are in such strong opposition to the interests of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

From this point of view, the developments of the Stalinist movement in China must be followed especially closely. On the one hand, the Mao Tse-tung leadership bases itself on a very powerful mass movement (peasant), which is difficult to confine bureaucratically, on the other hand, Moscow control over the Chinese CP cannot be easily assured; finally, the class forces which will press upon the Chinese

CP wherever it exercises power will be incomparably stronger than the class forces pressing upon the Communist Parties of the buffer countries.

The Fourth International and the Chinese Revolution

18. The task of the Chinese Trotskyists -- who have to protect their organization also against Stalinist repression -- will be to formulate, under the new conditions in China, a program of intransigent struggle against imperialism and the native bourgeoisie -- a program which is, therefore, one of irreconcilable struggle against opportunism and the Stalinist bureaucracy. Just as during the war against Japan and during the struggle of the peasant armies against Chiang Kai-shek, the Chinese Trotskyists will fight side by side with the Chinese peasants and workers to complete the defeat of the Kuomintang or its remnants, and the defeat of the regime's imperialist protectors. They will place themselves in the front ranks of every class action, they will support every political or economic measure which is taken against reaction (both bourgeois and feudal), and they will endeavor to impel every movement in the direction of asserting the power of the masses.

They will emphasize particularly that the social changes in the countryside be made in the interests of the poor peasants and of them alone. They will support every demand of the workers for protection of their living standards and their liberties, and will lead every struggle of the masses against attack on these rights. They will call upon the workers, the poor peasants and the soldiers to set up elected committees (soviets) to assure the victorious march of the Third Chinese Revolution. And they will unite the struggles of the masses by advancing the slogan of a Constituent Assembly giving the broadest representation to the Chinese masses.

They will denounce any government of coalition with no matter what wing of the bourgeoisie, as well as any Stalinist dictatorship, and will demand that the power pass into the hands of democratically elected committees of workers, poor peasants and soldiers, as the sole guarantee for the development and victory of the Chinese revolution.

They will denounce all the unequal treaties with capitalist countries (Hong Kong, Macao) as well as with the Soviet Government (Outer Mongolia, Dairen).

They will denounce as an historically absurd and politically reactionary limitation the development of the revolution "by stages," beginning with a "bourgeois-democratic" stage. They will oppose to this the conception of the permanent revolution, with the objective of the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the poor peasants, a dictatorship which will accomplish the bourgeois-democratic tasks and will at the same time take up the socialist demands of the working class at the expense of the native bourgeoisie and imperialism.

19. On an international scale, the Fourth International will endeavor to assure the coordination between the revolutionary movements of the peoples of the Far East. It will oppose every action of imperialism against the worker and peasant masses of China and the countries

of the Far East. The struggle against the military actions in the Viet Nam, Malaya and Indonesia constitutes one of the most important tasks of the Trotskyists at the present moment.

At the same time, the Fourth International will denounce the opportunist policy of the Stalinists, will recall the grave responsibilities of the Stalinist leadership for the crushing of the Second Chinese Revolution, and will show that if the struggle is conducted on the program of the Stalinists and under their leadership, the outcome will be defeat of the Third Chinese Revolution.