

EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

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Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part 4

Struggle in the Fourth International

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT DOCUMENTS 1951-1954

Volume 2 of 4 volumes

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INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT DOCUMENTS,
1951-1954

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Introductory Note

In 1953, sharp differences over Stalinism and organizational matters divided the Fourth International into two public factions, the International Committee of the Fourth International and the International Secretariat of the Fourth International. This division lasted until the Re-unification Congress of the Fourth International held in 1963.

The articles, documents, correspondence, and circulars published in these *Education for Socialists* bulletins are presented as an aid in tracing the evolution of this dispute. The material is divided into two parts. The first (Part Three of *Towards a History of the Fourth International*) is composed of four bulletins and contains materials from the International Committee. The second (Part Four of *Towards a History of the Fourth International*) consists of four bulletins containing material from the International Secretariat faction.

Both sets of bulletins begin with the discussion prior to the Third World Congress of the Fourth International held in 1951. They are divided into sections dealing with key stages in the development of the dispute. Each section opens with a brief introductory note. To the extent that these notes include historical interpretations or conclusions, the views expressed are my own.

The documents, correspondence, articles, and circulars have been subjected to minimal editing. In general the style, grammar, etc., have been retained as in the originals. Additions to the text for explanatory purposes appear in brackets.

The term "section" appears frequently in these documents. This word was used in two different senses within the world Trotskyist movement. On the one hand, it refers to those groups which are affiliated to the Fourth International. Secondly, it is used in reference to organizations that are barred from membership in the Fourth International by reactionary legislation, such as the SWP, but are in full political solidarity with the world Trotskyist movement and represent the continuity of Trotskyism in their countries.

The faction struggle in the world Trotskyist movement

occurred when the McCarthyite witch-hunt was at its height in the United States. Similar manifestations of political repression appeared in other capitalist countries, as the ruling class sought to whip up anticommunist hysteria. In view of these sharp attacks on democratic rights, many radicals found it necessary to use pseudonyms or pen-names in carrying out their political activity. This was true of the Trotskyist movement as well. In line with a policy of printing this material as it originally appeared, these have generally not been changed. Instead, a glossary of these pen-names is included in each volume. Note that some individuals used more than one pen-name on occasion.

The 1953-54 dispute was worldwide in its scope and repercussions. Many parts of the Trotskyist movement that participated in the struggle are not represented in this collection. An instance of this is the lack of documentation from Latin America. Material from the dispute in the Latin American Trotskyist organizations is now being translated and will appear in a future volume.

This selection is based on the documents and correspondence presently available to the National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party. Because of the speed with which the dispute developed, once the differences had become apparent to both sides, many aspects of the struggle are not fully dealt with in official documents. Therefore, it was necessary to include a considerable amount of correspondence to allow maximum clarity for the reader.

Hopefully, the publication of these bulletins will inspire others who were involved in the dispute to make available the relevant materials in their possession. Special thanks are owed to James P. Cannon, National Chairman Emeritus of the Socialist Workers Party, and Tom Kerry and Karolyn Kerry for making their personal archives available for this project.

Fred Feldman
February 1974

Glossary of Pseudonyms and Pen Names Used by Key Figures

The individuals' names appear on the left, with the pseudonyms following in italics.

Harry Braverman: *Harry Frankel*
James P. Cannon: *Walter, Martin*
George Clarke: *Campbell, Livingstone, Livingston*
Colvin R. DaSilva: *Roy*
Farrell Dobbs: *Smith, Barr*
Ross Dowson: *Kane*
Leslie Goonewardene: *Tilak*

Sam Gordon: *Tom, Harry, Burton, Joe*
Joseph Hansen: *Herrick*
Gerry Healy: *Burns, Mason, Jerry*
John Lawrence: *Collins*
Ernest Mandel: *Ernest Germain, Albert, Jeb*
Sherry Mangan: *Patrice, Terrence Phelan, Patrick O'Daniel*
George Novack: *Manuel, William F. Warde*
Michel Raptis: *Michel Pablo, Gabe*
David Weiss: *Stevens*
Milton Zaslow: *Mike Bartell*

SECTION III: THE SPLIT IN THE FRENCH SECTION

[The majority of the Parti Communiste Internationaliste, the French section of the Fourth International resisted the instruction that they make "entryism sui generis" into the French Communist Party the central axis of all party work. They proposed a more modest entry tactic.

[The International Secretariat responded by suspending the leadership of the French section from their posts for "indiscipline." This move was opposed at the time by Ernest Germain, Livio Maitan, Peng Shu-tse, and others. As a result of this opposition, Pablo agreed to a compromise in which the two factions of the PCI would have parity on a new political bureau. Germain (under the pseudonym of Albert) was to represent the International Secretariat on this body with a deciding vote. However, Pablo maneuvered to force the French majority out of the Fourth International, using their opposition to his

tactical proposals as a pretext.

[Many of the forces which later supported the International Committee faction still had considerable confidence in Pablo. Since these forces (such as the fraternal sympathizers of the Fourth International in the leadership of the SWP, and Gerry Healy) were not convinced that Pablo was on a revisionist course, they thought the French refusal to carry out the "deep entry" tactic reflected a sectarian bent. Therefore, they made no objection at the time to Pablo's moves and even supported them. The SWP leadership, however, was disturbed by the supercentralist implications of Pablo's actions.

[The materials in this section are reprinted from "Documents on the Crisis in the PCI (French Section of the Fourth International)," SWP *International Information Bulletin*, November 1952.]

1. Resolution Adopted by the Tenth Plenum of the IEC on the French Section

The Tenth Plenum of the IEC takes cognizance of the declaration of the representatives of the majority of the French section according to which they are ready to apply the decisions of this plenum regarding the tactical application of the line of the Third World Congress for France.

The IEC decides the following in order to resolve the organizational crisis of the French Section:

1. Until the next congress of the PCI the Political Bureau will be composed of the following comrades: Bleibtreu, Lambert, Renard, Garrive, for the majority; Frank, Privas, Michele Mestre for the minority, Albert representative of the IS designated by the IEC. The IS representative will have a decisive vote in case of a tie and will remain responsible for the work in France to the IS and the IEC during the three months following the congress of the PCI.

2. The congress of the party will take place toward the end of May 1952.

3. Preparatory discussion for this congress is based on the decisions of the Tenth Plenum of the IEC so far as the application of the line of the Third World Congress in France is concerned. The framework of the discussion will be fixed by a document emanating from the Political Bureau at the conclusion of the session of the IEC. The Political Bureau will contribute to the discussion, besides the documents of the World Congress and of the IEC, one or several documents of concrete application of this line in the essential spheres of party activity.

4. Within the framework of preparation for the congress, every member of the party—including every member of the Political Bureau—will have the right to express himself on all questions in discussion for this congress and to write whatever he believes necessary to defend his position, without prejudice to the capacity of the representative of the IS designated by the IEC to express the line of the IEC. The discussion will be carried on in an organized form and under the control of the Political Bureau.

5. The Secretariat of the party will be composed of four members: Comrades Bleibtreu and Lambert for the majority, Frank for the minority, Albert as representative for the IS with a decisive vote. Comrade Frank will be the political secretary; Comrade Lambert organization secretary, a comrade of the minority will be responsible for work in Stalinist front organizations; the other functions of leadership (the paper, trade union work, youth work) will continue to be carried on by comrades who are now in charge of it.

6. The members of the Central Committee who have been suspended will resume their positions with full rights. The Central Committee may be convened before the Congress if the Political Bureau deems it necessary.

7. Both tendencies on the central committee will make declarations relating to their acceptance of the present agreement. They will be brought to the attention of the International simultaneously with this agreement. Adopted unanimously.

2. *Resolution of the Political Bureau on the Framework of the Preparatory Discussion for the Congress (March 31, 1952)*

The Tenth Plenum of the IEC has opened the discussion in the PCI for its May 1952 congress. According to the statutes of the International and the meaning of democratic centralism on an international scale which is at the foundation of our world party this discussion in its essence should be based on the application for France of the decisions of the World Congress. The general meaning of this application is set forth by the political report adopted by the Tenth Plenum of the IEC.

In the following resolution the Political Bureau wants to set forth to all members of the party those problems which it deems necessary to consider resolved by the Third World Congress and the Tenth Plenum of the IEC and those problems which are now posed at the center of the discussion.

The Third World Congress and the Tenth Plenum of the IEC have set forth the following questions which are no longer in the realm of discussions for the party congress:

7. The orientation of the PCI should be entirely determined by the will to fuse shoulder to shoulder with the explosive revolutionary forces which are gathering within the Stal-

inist organizations with the aim of participating in organic fashion tied to these forces in the revolutionary risings of tomorrow which will allow the breaking of the hold of the Kremlin on the workers' movement. Therein is the profound meaning of the formula: To orient toward the communist workers. The concrete form of this orientation can only be a combination of independent work and of entrism work within the Stalinist organizations or organizations in the control of the Stalinists. (CGT, UJRF, UFF, Henry Martin Committee, Peace Committee, United Trade Union Federations, United Trade Union Local, CPF, etc.) There is no question whatever of liquidating Trotskyism as an independent tendency in the workers political movement; on the contrary, a correct understanding of the situation can permit us to play an important role in the months to come. But what is involved is to understand that the independent organization should above all aid the entrism work by speaking in a language addressed essentially to the communist workers, and that the entrism work will broaden in scope as the war approaches.

3. *Declaration of the Bleibtreu-Lambert Tendency on the Agreements Concluded at the International Executive Committee*

Ever since the Central Committee meeting of January 19 and 20, the Central Committee majority has affirmed its readiness to apply the tactical turn defined by the IS Bureau. It thus demonstrated once again its will for discipline, discipline which has been under all circumstances, total and impeccable in respect to the decisions of the World Congress and the French Commission of the World Congress, despite the strange accusation of "an undisciplined attitude" formulated by the IS Bureau.

But the Central Committee on January 20 refused to submit to the administrative measures taken by the IS Bureau in violation of the statutes of the International, because these measures were aimed to prevent a serious discussion of the problems posed by an entrism tactic, and to oppose the holding of its special Congress, and to destroy all guarantees of democracy in the party.

We unreservedly condemn the administrative methods employed by the IS Bureau, methods which the IEC could not approve but which it could only *understand*, methods which are the direct opposite of what a leadership should do when it has confidence in the correctness of its positions. Such methods are the price of political confusion and they express the logic of a revisionist tendency inside the International leadership which threatens the programmatic position of Trotskyism.

* * *

The political document adopted by the IEC is, in this respect, not free of confusion and contradictions, especially as it relates to the problem of Stalinism. Despite the con-

fusion and the dangers of this document, the Central Committee majority will accept the discipline of the IEC because it is convinced that this discipline remains compatible with the defense, the safeguard and the reaffirmation of the programmatic ideas of Trotsky and his Transition Program; because it is sure that the Fourth International will in its entirety inevitably react against the threat of revisionism, as is normal in an organization which represents the only programmatic and political capital of the proletarian revolution. In such an organization, temporary faults and deviations cannot find favorable objective roots.

* * *

The organizational resolution of the IEC on the French Question contains in itself a partial confirmation of this opinion. On a number of points it represents an implicit condemnation of the ultimatum of the IS Bureau. It represents a formal disavowal of the Bureau by its decision to the effect that a special Congress be held which will discuss the problems posed by entrism without slapping on in advance a censorship on the members of the leadership.

It does not call into question the need of the party's being led in practice by the members in whom the party has political confidence.

But on several points serious sacrifices have been imposed on us:

The first and most serious one is the denial to the Central Committee elected by the Seventh Congress of the right to designate its Political Bureau. A Political Bureau

has been imposed which gives to a member of the IS, designated by the IEC for six months, and responsible to the IEC, a deciding voice which places him in the position of an arbiter in all disputed questions.

The same applies to the composition of the Secretariat.

Furthermore, the designation of Pierre Frank as Political Secretary was imposed on us against our will and we continue to consider this wrong for a number of reasons.

These measures were taken because the IEC, which could hear only two of the sixteen suspended comrades, was not sufficiently informed as to the reality hidden behind the accusation of an "undisciplined attitude" and has placed credence on the thesis of the IS which invoked "exceptional circumstances" as its justification.

* * *

Our acceptance of the decisions of the IEC demonstrates how erroneous and tendentious is the charge of being "undisciplined." How can one seriously affirm that a leadership representing the essential, living forces of the party, its big proletarian majority, seriously threatens the policy and the discipline of the International in January and in February accepts the decisions which were no different from the demands of the IS except for the guarantee of a discussion in a democratic congress which they include.

One cannot take seriously this story of a "menace" except if one thinks henceforth that democratic discussion of turns is a danger for the International leadership.

The majority of the Central Committee of the PCI has shown once again its unshakable will to preserve the unity of the party inside the International and to oppose splits even at the cost of heavy concessions.

As to its political discipline it had no need of making such a demonstration for no exact charge could be made against it! It nevertheless affirmed that even if the IEC, by taking measures of expulsion and split, formally placed it outside the International, it would continue to apply the political line of the Third World Congress and of the organs elected by it.

The crisis terminated at the Tenth IEC Plenum is not an internal crisis of the PCI but a conflict which sprang up between a disciplined section of the International on the one hand and *Pabloism* on the other, which utilizes the confusions and contradictions of the World Congress—where it could not impose itself—in order to assert itself after the World Congress. The responsibility for the conflict is entirely the fault of those who on the occasion of a tactical turn call into question the programmatic basis of the International, launch attacks against the Transition Program and against the fundamental tenets of Trotskyism on the nature and on the role of the Soviet bureaucracy.

We remain, as we shall continue to remain, on the side of the International. We will continue to fight for the defense of the program and principles which are the foundation of our International, the world party of revolution.

4. Letter from Ernest Germain to the Bleibtreu-Lambert Tendency

Comrades:

Having been refused the right by your leaders to speak to you, I am writing you my opinion on some of the important question which you have been led to debate.

First of all, there is the question of your declaration on the question of the organizational agreement arrived at at the last Plenum of the IEC which is still pending. You must make a decision rapidly on this question. The IS will see whether it then has the need of sending the Organizational Resolution on the French Question to the sections alone or accompanied by the declaration of the minority, or accompanied by your first declaration. The latter will not fail to arouse a vehement reaction from the members of the IEC. In effect, it puts the decision taken by the IEC and the spirit in which that decision was taken in an absolutely false light. I do not think that it is in the interests of the French section to see a polemic started against it on the part of most of the members of the IEC which a declaration of the type of your first draft would inevitably provoke. No one asks you to remain silent on your opinions of the IEC agreement or to repudiate any of your political ideas. Say so briefly and simply, but without any useless and misplaced polemics on this occasion. If not, you will obtain not only from the IS but from myself as well, I am sure as well as from other members of the IEC a response which such a polemic would deserve.

Then there is the question of your attitude toward the draft of the Political Resolution presented by Comrade Frank, a draft which is clarified by the resolutions of Comrades Michele Mestre (on trade union work) and by Privas (on entrism work). Even in the opinion of one of your representatives on the Political Bureau, Comrade Garrive, these documents represent the elaboration and the coherent application of the line of the 10th Plenum—called "Entrism *Sui Generis*" (of its own type). We are naturally aware that that you are in disagreement with this line, and consequently in disagreement with its application. However, the essential function of the 8th Congress of the party is not to listen to the expression of agreement or disagreement with this line but to apply the line. That is the way democratic centralism is applied on an international scale. After your national congress, the function of district meetings and unit meetings is not to discuss how well-founded are the decisions of your congress, but to discuss their application. After an international congress, the national conventions do not discuss in the first place how well-founded is its line, but rather its application.

In any case, your representatives at the 10th Plenum have taken the solemn engagement, by the resolution of agreement which they have accepted, to apply the line of the 10th Plenum. You know this very well, just as you know that there is no other way for you to be disciplined

in the International after the party congress than to apply this line.

Consequently what is involved for you is to decide now what place the 8th Congress of the PCI will occupy on the road of the application of the line of the 10th Plenum, which means an important turn for the French section.

Either you will begin now to fight at the Congress "the coherent application of the line of the 10th Plenum" and thus, whether you wish or not, the whole of its line. In this case, the time remaining before the Congress of the party will in large part be devoted to a polemic which will not advance the party in its understanding of this line of "entrism *sui generis*," which will not make the party more capable of applying this line, which will increase its confusion, which will lower its cohesion, which will make the application of this line *more dangerous* in your opinion. You will thus not delay by a single day the application of this line, of which the great majority of the leadership of the International is convinced represents the only road to salvation for the party. You will only succeed in creating all the conditions under which the application of the line will occur with the maximum of havoc to the party. Is this really your aim? I still persist in not wanting to believe it.

Or on the other hand you can make known your different point of view from that of the minority on a certain number of questions of analysis of the situation, of political and social or economic evaluations, as well as on a certain number of proposals of concrete application of the line of the 10th Plenum made by the documents of the minority in this or that field of party activity, *without placing in question the whole of the application of the orientation of the 10th Plenum*, which, in the opinion of the great majority of the International leadership, is also the application of the line of the World Congress for France.

In the first case, there will be no real discussion, but only a futile polemic which will convince no one. This polemic will be all the more futile in that it will be carried on, I hope, on the other hand with the conviction that the line of orientation which you counterpose to the line contained in the documents of the minority, *will not in any case be applied after the 8th Congress of the party*, which, to remain disciplined in the International, will have to apply the orientation of the 10th Plenum in a coherent way. This would be an academic exercise unworthy of a revolutionary party, which would moreover cause enormous injury to the party by obliging it to effectuate a turn without cohesion or effective preparation. This would mean at the same time that it would be impossible for you to continue your role as leaders of the party after the Congress, whatever the results of the Congress. It would in effect be absurd for you to pretend to apply an orientation that you have violently fought on the very eve of its application and for which you have created an atmosphere of incomprehension or even of hostility within the party.

In the second case, there would be a really constructive discussion on each question you would raise, with the possibility of effective modification of the present documents, not only as to their letter but especially as to the orientation which will flow from that after the 8th Congress. There would then be the possibility of making a common effort within the party to better prepare to effectuate its

difficult task. There would be the certainty that you would continue to play your role as leaders and that the organizational crisis which has raged in the party for more than a year would gradually disappear.

The first road which is not really to the interests of the party is the road that you will inevitably take if you adopt a "counter-document" to the documents presented by the comrades of the minority, which represent "the coherent application of the line of the 10th Plenum," even in the opinion of one of your leaders.

The second road, which represents the interests of the party, is the road you will take if you elaborate amendments, if need be numerous amendments, to the documents of the minority.

Once again, no one asks you to abandon your ideas. You are asked only to act as responsible leaders, recognizing in practice democratic centralism on the international scale: before International Congresses, discussions within the sections are centered around the determination of line; after International Congresses, the leaderships of all the sections have to make an effort to apply the adopted line in a coherent way whether they are in agreement with the line or not.

Whatever the decisions of the 8th Congress of the party, the line to be applied after the Congress will be that of "entrism *sui generis*": the division of the party into three sectors, one sector immediately realizing the entry, a second modifying its activity to be able to activate the entrism turn within the near future, a third continuing independent work. This regroupment of the party requires the revision of all sectors of activity, which is set forth by the documents of the minority. At the same time, it guarantees the continuation of independent work, with *La Verite* and other organs, with its trade union activity and its own youth work, with its recruitment and the satisfying of all its inherent needs. To discuss anything else from now to the Congress is in fact to have a Congress for nothing, to demoralize and disintegrate the party. Do not take decisions which will put such responsibilities upon you.

In discussing the agreement which took place at the 10th Plenum with your leaders, I have not left with them the slightest doubt that *above all* this agreement means the application of the line of the 10th Plenum, and the preparation of the party through an ample and constructive discussion for the best application of this line. At the time your leaders gave the impression of having understood that fundamentally and of not having any illusion about the possibility of elaborating "an intermediary line" of compromise between yours, as a minority in the International, and ours, that of the overwhelming majority of the International. They repeated that the only thing they desired from the agreement were organizational guarantees of such a discussion, as well as guarantees as to the existing regime within the party from the point of view of democratic centralism. However unjustified were such fears and suspicions which hide behind such demands for "guarantees," I never hesitated to give them sincerely. What has happened in the party since the conclusion of the agreement should confirm to you the complete loyalty and sincerity with which they have been applied on my part. It is not I who have fled political discussion. It is not I who have proposed or encouraged the slightest organizational measure tending to limit what is in fact the exercise of the daily leadership of the party by your

tendency. Remove all unreasonable fears on this score from your mind. Our desire is to be able to collaborate with you in the leadership of the party. That this collaboration should base itself on the line of the 10th Plenum. It is not "capitulation" which is demanded of you, but the

accomplishment of a duty which every Communist should consider it an honor to carry out.

With fraternal greetings,
Albert

5. Resolution of the Political Bureau of the PCI

May 3, 1952

(4 for—Frank, Privas, Albert, M. Mestre; 3 against—Bleibtreu, Gernier, Lambert)

In rejecting the document submitted as a draft of a Political Resolution by Comrades Bleibtreu, Lambert, Renard and Garrive, the Political Bureau is obliged to state the following to the entire party:

In form as in essence this document is a flagrant violation of the agreement concluded at the 10th Plenum by the representatives of the majority of the party, and of the guide-text adopted by them at the Political Bureau at the time of the opening of the preparatory discussion for the 8th Plenum of the party.

The line of the 10th Plenum, is that of entrism *sui generis*, the independent party adapting its evolution and its tasks to the primary needs of the entrism sector which should be progressively extended. The draft of the Political Resolution, which has been rejected, defines as the line the refusal of entrism, and substitutes for it a limited "fraction work" only for comrades who are not rooted in the working class.

Far from trying to apply the line of the 10th Plenum in France, to which however the comrades of the majority of the party on several occasions and in a solemn way committed themselves, their document fights this line fundamentally. It does so moreover in a veiled and dissembling way without daring to clearly counterpose a different orientation to it, feigning to ignore the decisions taken at the 10th Plenum and thus sowing the worst confusion in the party. The maneuverist character of the proposals of the majority of the party appear more clearly in their offer to adopt—with amendments—the document on entrism presented by Comrade Privas, while their draft of the Political Resolution implicitly and explicitly rejects the orientation put forward by Comrade Privas. That is why the majority of the Political Bureau has decided to incorporate this document in the Political Resolution adopted at the Political Bureau meeting of March 20, and to present both documents which form a single whole before the Congress of the party.

The party is placed before the need of an important and difficult turn in all spheres of its activity. This turn, made necessary by changing events in the objective situation has in any case been decided by the responsible organisms of the International. The draft of the Political Resolution presented by the majority of the 7th Congress of the party constitutes both a refusal to execute a turn, an attempt to do everything to prevent this turn from being effectuated rapidly, freely and with enthusiasm by the party, and an inability to counterpose an alternative

to the path of party-building decided upon by the International leadership. The new Political Bureau cannot otherwise characterize such a document except as an undertaking of demoralization, division and disintegration of the party. The document presented by Comrades Bleibtreu, Lambert, Renard and Garrive was elaborated outside of the Political Bureau and blocking all activity of the political committee for four weeks, without any discussion with Comrade Albert, who is responsible for the French section to the IEC, all the above mentioned comrades agreeing that he is quite capable of correctly interpreting the line of the Tenth Plenum. This document is the fruit of their refusal of correctly interpreting the line of the Tenth Plenum. This document is the fruit of their refusal for such a preliminary discussion which has been repeated in spite of repeated efforts by Comrade Albert in that direction. Under these conditions the very manner in which the document has been drawn up cannot otherwise be characterized by the Political Bureau than as a premeditated act of hostility to the line of the International, which is incompatible with commitments made at the Tenth Plenum. This document has no other aim than to perpetuate the crisis and the paralysis of the party.

At the same time it confirms the intention of the leaders of the majority tendency to continue an uninterrupted and violent factional struggle for the whole period of application of the line decided upon by the International, a period during which, according to the statutes of the International such a struggle should be removed completely to the background. On the part of the responsible leaders of the majority tendency in the party this represents a real rupture with the elementary organizational principles of Bolshevism. The Political Bureau consequently will be obliged to address itself to the next IEC meeting and to demand of it that for a long period the comrades responsible for such actions which are prejudicial to the party be considered disqualified as a tendency to exercise any post of leadership in the party.

The majority of the Political Bureau, designated by the Tenth Plenum, has sedulously abstained from manifesting itself as such in any way whatever despite the open and repeated actions of hostility toward the International on the part of representatives of the Political Bureau of the majority of the party (a campaign against the publication of the report on the Tenth Plenum in *Quatrieme Internationale*, the draft of the political resolution now presented, the maintenance of the declaration on the agreement of the Tenth Plenum which distorts the meaning of this agreement, etc. . . .). It is only after these acts have accumulated that it is now firmly decided to act collectively to execute the mandate which it has received from the Tenth

Plenum: to defend the International and its political orientation in the French section.

The draft of the political resolution rejected by the Political Bureau runs the risk of diverting the discussion before the Eighth Congress and at the Congress itself in the meanderings of an academic futile polemic which is without any practical interest to the party. *After the congress of the party it is the whole of the party which will have to apply, and to apply immediately, the line of the Tenth Plenum to remain disciplined to the International, to utilize possibilities which are open now more than ever in France.* The Political Bureau calls upon the entire party to ignore the sterile polemic begun by the representatives of the majority and to pose for itself one

single aim in the discussion before the congress: how to arm the party to the maximum for the most effective, the most fruitful possible application of the line already decided upon. Only this line permits the integration of Trotskyism in the revolutionary struggles which are coming. Only this line permits the building of a genuine revolutionary leadership. For all districts and all units of the party there is only one slogan from now to the congress: Study and work to apply the line of the Tenth Plenum.

The Political Bureau decides that the present declaration, together with Comrade Albert's letter to the majority tendency on April 22, be made known immediately to the entire party. It demands of the IS to also make them known to all members of the IEC.

6. Resolution Adopted by the Conference of the Majority of the PCI

Meeting on June 3, 1952, the national conference of cadres of the majority tendency has examined the situation in the party and its relations with the International Secretariat.

Having heard the report of Comrade Albert, characterized by the reporter himself as an *ultimatum* and which signifies the prohibition of all political expression of the majority of the party in the discussion for the Eighth Congress and in the Congress itself, the conference has to draw the conclusion that this is a violation of the agreements arrived at the Tenth Plenum.

These agreements were based on the following points:

1. The majority accepted the constitution of the Political Bureau controlled by the minority, by virtue of the deciding vote accorded to the member of the IS designated by the IEC for a period covering the preparation of the Congress and for three months thereafter.

2. The IEC decided on the holding of a democratic congress which would guarantee the democratic expression of tendencies, of the submission of documents to a vote of the congress before treating of the problems defined in the guiding-document, total freedom of expression on all questions being moreover recognized for all members of the party, including members of the Political Bureau.

In order to remain in the International the majority accepted a minority leadership on the one condition that the Eighth Congress be democratically prepared.

To claim that the utilization of this right recognized by the IEC shows a lack of discipline, on the pretext that the minority expresses "the line of the IEC" and that the majority has disagreements with it, and to threaten the majority with sanctions for not having rallied purely and simply to the resolutions of the minority is to directly violate the agreement and to unmask a crude ruse perpetrated on the IEC and to the French Section.

Thus are explained the reasons because of which obstacles were created, first by ruse for several months, then by veto, to the publication of the declaration of the majority on the meaning of its acceptance of the agreement of the Tenth Plenum.

In his letter of May 23, and more clearly in his intervention of that day, and more clearly in his speech of

that day, Comrade Albert eliminates all possibility of tendency expression in the discussion for the congress; according to him, the presentation of any kind of a political document by the majority is declared proscribed. The only out that he offers for the majority, is to draft in common with the minority a technical document of application and to withdraw all political documents under penalty of sanctions and its declarations on the agreements of the 10th Plenum.

The duplicity of such a proposal appears clearly in the refusal of Comrade Albert and the minority to accept the motion and a joint vote on the document on the practical problems of entrism, which is acceptable insofar as it is based completely in the sphere of underground activity. On such a basis, the numerical proportion between the entrism sector and the independent sector appeared as a secondary problem on which an agreement was possible.

The rejection of this possibility by Comrade Albert and the minority clearly demonstrates that their aim is not the realization of some kind of strategy by the party as a whole, but the political hara-kiri of the majority and its destruction.

This organizational attitude confirms our worst premonitions on the Political Resolution of the minority, in the form of a hypocritical exegesis of the documents of the 10th Plenum, which affirmed: "The independent sector maintains all present essential activities in the factories, the trade unions, the youth, and continues to recruit, from among the best elements within the ranks of the Stalinist movement on the part of our militants who carry on entrism work." They now take the obverse of this position and piece by piece destroy all the necessary activities for the existence of the independent organization.

It confirms the uneasiness caused among all members of the party by the publication in *Quatrieme Internationale* of the report of the 10th Plenum, an act whose significance has been correctly defined by the resolution presented by the majority members of the Political Bureau.

It clarifies the meaning of the opposition of the minority leaders to all criticism of the policy of the CP manifested among other things at the time of the publication of an article in *La Verite* on the Billoux report, an article which

was reproached for not being content with emphasizing only the positive aspects of the turn, when the report of the 10th Plenum declared: "*Our organs have the duty to fully develop our entire policy, in all its themes, to make a clear, unequivocal, concrete criticism of Stalinist policy, etc. . . . without any limitations other than that of the language and the form which should be thought out in a manner to find a growing echo from the Stalinist workers and militants.*"

* * *

It appears evident today that the political differences have deepened, leading to incompatibility of the reciprocal paralysis of the tendencies.

Such a situation cannot be perpetuated without serious harm to the existence of the party and for its activities either in the entrism sector or in the independent sector.

In recent months, the struggle of the tendencies has only accentuated, causing a growing paralysis of the party. This could not be otherwise because of the fact that the minority, after the 10th Plenum and although it had obtained control of the Political Bureau, organized itself as a faction with a weekly meeting of all its members in a permanent headquarters. This unjustifiable factional activity has had only negative expressions such as the organized abstention of participation in the campaign for the circulation and the defense of *La Verite*.

In all spheres the minority had adopted a factional attitude of undermining the independent sector.

It has placed the party in the worst situation. In the sphere of organization and of activity as well as on the political plane, on the very problem of the existence of the party, such an incompatibility has been manifested between the tendencies as to neutralize and nullify the capacity of the French section for action.

Because of this fact, to attempt to maintain the status quo would be to court disaster. It is necessary to get out of it, to create the condition of genuine cooperation preserving the achievements of Trotskyism in France.

This in no case can be achieved by means of ultimatum, threats, sanctions, suspensions or expulsions.

The only road open, consistent with the need of com-

bining the two forms of work, entrism and independent, is the adoption of a solution comparable to the one which exists in Austria; *the recognition by the IEC of two organizations of the Fourth International in France.*

In this way only the organizational and human conquests of Trotskyism can be safeguarded in France. In this very way only can the correctness of this or that orientation be verified in experience. If it has confidence in its orientation, the IS should make itself the defender of such a solution, for the confirmation of its views through experience alone can eradicate all suspicions.

The recognition of the independent organization provides guarantees of discipline and expression on public political actions of the independent organization, which no one can deny, is based entirely on the programmatic foundations of Trotskyism.

* * *

The national conference of the majority unanimously rejects the ultimatum of Comrade Albert and addresses itself to the IEC to request it to adopt the position which will permit a positive settlement of an impasse which can no longer continue.

In places confidence in the IEC to reject any ultimatum and destructive positions.

It warns unequivocally that any measure of suspension, of sanctions, even veiled or deferred, against representatives of the tendency in the leadership, that any veto of a democratic discussion for the Congress will be considered as a splitting measure, of exclusion and of destruction of the PCI.

Such a measure will automatically be a splitting measure for which the International leadership will bear full responsibility.

The proletarian majority of the party is certain that the IEC will act with discernment, with a will to preserve the unity of the International and all its achievements, and will adopt the proposal for the recognition of two organizations in France.

(Adopted unanimously)

7. Resolution of the 11th Plenum of the IEC on the French PCI

June 1952

Having heard and approved the general line of the report of its responsible representatives to the French section, the 11th Plenum of the IEC approves the general line of the report and:

Notes that the documents prepared for the 8th Congress of the PCI by the majority tendency of the 7th Congress are in contradiction with the line of orientation decided for France by the 10th Plenum of the IEC, and that despite the agreement made by the leaders of this tendency to apply the line of the 10th Plenum and to maintain the preparatory discussions of the 8th Congress within

the framework of the application of this line;

Notes that the documents for the 8th Congress of the PCI adopted by the Political Bureau in their general lines conform to the decisions of the 10th Plenum;

Therefore *decides*:

1. From now to the 8th Congress of the PCI, no change will take place in the composition of the leading organisms of the party. The preparatory discussion will take place without any restrictions on the right of any member to freely express political conceptions.

2. After the Eighth Congress, the PCI as a whole should, in order to remain disciplined to the International, carry out the decisions in the documents proposed to the congress

by the present Political Bureau.

3. After repeated violations of promises made before the International, and obvious obstructions placed in the application and preparation of the line of the Tenth Plenum on the part of the leaders of the majority tendency, they can no longer be considered either as inclined or as capable of leading the party on the road of an adequate application of this line.

4. For this reason the Central Committee and the Political Bureau designated by the Eighth Congress of the party will be composed of a majority of comrades who, in advance of the congress, will have defended the line of the Eleventh Plenum within the party.

5. All those who, after the Eighth Congress, refuse to apply the decisions in the documents adopted by the present Political Bureau, or refuse to recognize the leadership constituted conforming to point four of the present resolution, will automatically place themselves outside of the International and of its French section.

The Eleventh Plenum of the IEC reaffirms that it does not ask of any member of the PCI to abandon his poli-

tical opinions or does it seek the suppression of his rights to participate or to organize a faction. It demands only that the necessary guarantees be given for the application in disciplined action of a political line which the overwhelming majority of the International considers as the only line which will reform the French organization, will restore its growth and will lay the basis for the construction of the future revolutionary leadership of the French proletariat.

That is why it calls upon all members, cadres and leaders of the majority tendency to join in advance of the Eighth Congress in the elaboration of practical measures of application of the line of the Tenth Plenum. The maximum of comrades ready to do that should be integrated in the organisms of leadership designated by the Eighth Congress within the framework of point four of the present resolution.

The IEC instructs the IS to address a letter to the PCI explaining and motivating the adoption of the present resolution and the rejection of the proposal of the PCI for a division into two distinct organizations each having its own leadership.

8. "For A Decisive Turn in France," by Michel Pablo

(Speech of Comrade M. Pablo at the 8th Congress of the PCI— French Section of the Fourth International.)

It is naturally disagreeable to have to speak to you again only a few years after the departure of the right-wingers on the need of some kind of a new beginning for our movement here in France.

In effect, the desertion of an important part of our organization which has just occurred unquestionably places us in a difficult situation and obliges us to begin again in large part the task which we started so many years ago: *to build a genuinely Marxist revolutionary organization which has real ties with the real movements of the masses of the country.*

In view of the very numerous setbacks we have suffered up to now in carrying out this task, some people will have a tendency to yield to discouragement or to skepticism as to the correctness of our ideas, or as to the objective possibility of accomplishing such a task.

In reality, if we have failed up to now in the accomplishment of this task it is not due to the fault of our ideas, which have passed the victorious test in so many historical events and in the practical success realized in several other countries, nor to the fault of a so-called national reality which is irremediably hostile to the construction of a Marxist revolutionary organization. I do not propose today to go into details in what I consider to be the principal reasons for this defeat. I will content myself with emphasizing the principal elements which have contributed to perpetuating the crisis of French Trotskyism and which have prevented it from resolving this crisis up to now in a progressive manner: *the inability of crystallizing the nucleus of a stable leadership and of infiltrating the genuine revolutionary forces into the masses of the country in order to find a stable social basis among them.* There is naturally an interaction between these two ele-

ments. The unstable social climate of the country whose economic potential corresponds neither to its political role as the head of an Empire which it can no longer maintain nor to its situation in Europe and in the world as a great power; the great shifts which this unstable international position creates in public opinion, dominated by sentiments, traditions, and reactions which are greatly influenced politically by the urban petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry, as well as the existence of a relatively very strong Stalinist movement, reacted as so many objective obstacles to the crystallization of a stable leadership and the establishment of a stable proletarian base.

On the other hand, such a result in any case could not have been obtained without a long experience of the movement itself which would have permitted the natural selection of a group of leaders and a concrete understanding of the manner of approaching the living forces of the working class and of acquiring a solid base there.

And such in reality is the general direction of the evolution of our movement in France.

Comparing our post-war movement, with all its still crying inadequacies, despite the crisis, despite the desertions we have known, with what it was before the war, progress is manifest and important. However, it has not been sufficiently ample to counter-balance the influence of centrifugal forces and disturbing pressures from the outside so that the organization could attain genuine stability in its leadership and in its ranks.

As I have said, there is an interaction between a stable leadership and a stable proletarian base. But in reality what has been especially lacking up to recently in our French movement has been the *crystallization of a group of revolutionary Marxist leaders, who could work patiently without sensational shifts and turns, and this for a whole period of years, so as to create a solid proletarian base.*

It was not absolutely excluded that such a leadership would arise after an already very long experience of our national and international movement. And if it has not been created up to recently, the fault resides not only in objective conditions but in ourselves in the inadequacy of a profound comprehension by our cadres and our active members in France in what are the necessary subjective conditions to develop and to consolidate a revolutionary Marxist movement, not abstractly in any country whatever, but in a given concrete country, France, having this and that concrete characteristic.

That is to say there was an inability to capitalize sufficiently on the concrete experience of the movement in France and to give it conscious expression through a team of cadres.

When we speak of the primary need of a stable group in the leadership, which has been lacking up to recently in our French movement, we do not only mean by that merely a group which is stable in its composition, but even more, a group which is stable in its profound convictions, in its Bolshevik line, in its real and profound loyalty to the International.

The other present danger in the country was of seeing the leadership being conquered by a kind of activism following in the train of events, of submitting to the influence of the sharp inherent changes in the international situation as well as to the pressure of a fickle public opinion, of losing its head every time, of going from enthusiasm to pessimism, of drowning itself in the accidental, the secondary, the ephemeral, and of never remaining patient and firm for a long period on a principled Marxist revolutionary line, while knowing how to adapt itself tactically to the turns imposed by objective evolution.

In the absence of such maturity and of such political stability several opportunities were lost since the war and far from profiting from them the organization, on the contrary, has constantly declined so far as the extension of its influence is concerned.

The supposition is that with such a mature and stable team, had it fortuitously been the leadership of the French organization since the war—there is no doubt that objective conditions allowed for it as they still do—we could have had here in France one of the strongest sections of the International, counting in large numbers, hundreds of revolutionary Marxist workers.

In the desertion of the right-wingers, subjected at the time to the dominant influence of the Stalinists and in the present desertion subjected to the pressure of the new-anti Stalinist climate which prevails in the public opinion of the country, the common petty-bourgeois class character of both tendencies is evident. What is involved in the case of both tendencies, one opportunist, the other sectarian, which had superficially assimilated the program and the revolutionary Marxist policy of the International, are impressionist tendencies influenced by the dominant pressure of public opinion.

Both the right-wingers and the present deserters had the characteristic in common of completely turning their backs on the principled analysis made from an international point of view of the situation in order therefore to plunge into an activism which was euphemistically called broad mass work, of distrusting the International, to which they wanted to belong as a distinct national

entity but without ever totally and unreservedly fusing with it.

The activist impatience of the right-wingers and their fundamental lack of faith in the correctness of a principled line made the party lose all the real possibilities which existed between 1944-1948 to polarize around itself a high number of elements discontented with the policy of the Stalinist and the Socialist parties. Similarly the political failure of the present deserters in understanding the changes which occurred in the situation since the Korean war, and the extreme irresponsibility of their conduct in the internal struggle in the party and against the International, has caused the party to lose real possibilities of successfully adapting itself to the new situation and of losing a year of work, of patient penetration into the Stalinist movement which would already have transformed the entire physiognomy of our movement here in France, as was the case with our movement in England.

It appears to me that to give primary importance as the cause of our difficulties and the lack of our successes here in France to the lack of a team of stable leadership is the first decisive step in understanding the past as well as in preparing a better future.

Such a leadership will reinforce its stability by basing itself on the one hand on the International, and on the other hand, on the broadening of its proletarian base.

It is possible, admitted and even inevitable, that the national cadres of a given country, despite all their good will, may not succeed in outlining a correct political line through all stages, in easily adjusting themselves to the different turns of the situation, etc. But their intimate, confident and loyal collaboration with the International can enormously facilitate their tasks and save their section from the malignant-type crises which we have known here and which arise above all from the injurious, unsettling role which was played by the confusion and irresponsibility of the leading elements.

Loyal collaboration with the International, confidence in it, is not limited to loyal collaboration or to confidence in this or that comrade of the International. None of us is exempt from political or organizational errors. But fortunately the International is not restricted to this or that person. Through its line, the International expresses the reflection and the collective experience of our International movement which have been proved not once, not twice, but over a long period of years as more correct, more just, more mature, more valid than the line of any section taken by itself.

It is infinitely more probable that this or that section can be wrong than the International as a whole, and this is all the more the case when it involves not secondary questions but important questions, on which all the cadres of the International turn to it with seriousness and responsibility.

Such for example is the meaning of the line of the Third World Congress and the Plenums which have followed—a line which has been approved, after reflection, almost unanimously by the international Trotskyist movement. Whoever doubts that must doubt the reality and the seriousness of the International as a whole.

The first reaction of a leadership is not to oppose the International but to desire very seriously to understand its line and to apply it. If a leadership has not yet reach-

ed that understanding of this necessary condition for its own functioning and for the health of its own section, it shows its own immaturity and all the dangers that can develop as a consequence of such a situation.

The stability of the leadership cannot be assured on the other hand in the long run if it does not succeed in penetrating the living forces of the proletariat of its country and of acquiring a solid base there as a result of patient work over a period of several years.

The very orientation toward such a field of work already shows the political maturity, the really Bolshevik character of the group which leads the organization.

Here in France, the living forces of the proletariat, not only now but for a long time have been constituted by the industrial proletariat of the factories, the mines, and the transportation system which follows the CPF. This is the concrete, indisputable, fundamental reality of the French workers' movement.

A revolutionary Marxist organization which does not want to be converted into a club of infantile agitators, sustained by the illusion of revolutionary activity, has to do the impossible to penetrate this nucleus and to establish a base there even if at the beginning this includes only several dozen real adult proletarian elements, well known in their field of work, and emotionally and mentally stable and serious.

The winning of such a base will soon reflect itself throughout the organization, in its internal atmosphere, in its procedure, in its policy, in its practical conduct.

Theoretically we have always been convinced of this fact. In practice, between 1944-1950 up to the Korean war, we have attempted to penetrate into the genuinely revolutionary forces of the French working class influenced by the Stalinist party, through a preliminary conquest of peripheral elements and currents.

I will not examine here to what degree the routine of this work caused us to deviate in practice from our strategic aim. But since the Korean war, which marks a decisive turn in the international situation, it became more and more evident that the manner of carrying through this absolutely necessary penetration had to radically change.

If the crisis we have gone through since this time in our French organization is not to have merely negative effects, but also a positive balance sheet—as every important struggle in our revolutionary movement against ideas and forces, which, under the pressure of events, try to shake our program and to make it deviate from our revolutionary road—then this should show itself in the concrete comprehension realized for the first time here in France by important numbers of cadres of militants, by the manner of working in the real movement of the masses in the country who have been summoned by the developments of the objective situation to rise to the level of proletarian revolution in the near future.

I am convinced that it is through this present struggle that all the experience acquired up to now by our movement in France will finally crystallize and is now in the process of consolidating a group of leadership as well as a revolutionary Marxist group which is determined to place itself firmly on the terrain of political realities and real revolutionary perspectives, both conditioned by the real evolution of the objective situation.

We will not cease to repeat again and again that the

entire tactic set forth by the Third World Congress of the International in the different categories of countries is now conditioned by our fundamental estimation that the international situation is evolving irreversibly within a relatively brief period toward a world war of a given character and within a given relationship of forces.

This evaluation which we were the first to make not only within the ranks of the workers' movement, but even to a certain extent of all political movements no one dares to attack directly any longer.

It is not only our deserters who, despite their desire to the contrary who have found nothing to oppose to this analysis, but more and more this inevitable evolution of the situation becomes clear in the consciousness of all serious political movements and all serious political thought.

The difference between us and all others, including our deserters, is that we do not passively make this observation, we do not dream in the depths of our souls for another possible, more agreeable, easier evolution. But not wanting to lull ourselves with illusions, we attempt to act as of now in *consequence of this position and in practice*.

That is how we differ from all the centrists in particular who, frightened by the scope and the decisive character of the final struggle which is on its way, are caressing the sweet hopes of another evolution in the bottom of their soul, one which is theoretically possible but denied in practice by the real march of the situation.

Our deserters have raised a veritable hue and cry when the International in advance of the confirmation of events, but basing itself on the evolution of the situation toward war, set forth the general line of the policy which the Soviet bureaucracy and the mass CP's would be obliged to follow. This general line, which is not toward the right but a zig-zag, determines the dynamics and the perspective of the Stalinist movement in the countries where it has acquired a mass base.

To try to shake up the leadership of this movement from the outside between now and the outbreak of the war becomes impossible in the new conjuncture, and that is the primary reason which conditions the entrism tactic *sui generis* (of its own kind) within the ranks of this movement.

The second reason is provided by the observation that this movement will develop revolutionary tendencies, not through the conscious will of its leadership but through the pressure of the situation evolving toward war.

It is in these conditions that we have to seriously, responsibly reflect on the best way to influence the revolutionary process of the working class in all countries, where, today, on the eve of the final struggle, it is encased in large organizations which it will not want to leave before the test.

The question of entrism is posed in life.

The difficulties which we have encountered with this tactic arise from the training of some of our cadres in the previous period of independent struggle to attract and to organize workers around another pole of attraction.

There were among the most intransigent anti-entrists in England and in France workers who had been the banner-bearers of this tactic, correct in a given period, sectarian in another.

As your discussion comes to a close on the entrism tactic which you will henceforth have to apply in France, it appears necessary for me to once again insist on the following points:

A. Entrism neither destroys nor dissolves the Trotskyist organization, *but transforms the terrain and the method of its work.*

B. The publicity and propaganda field of our ideas (papers, magazines, pamphlets) as well as that of the revolutionary Marxist education of our members, does not disappear, *on the contrary it should be extended.*

Wherever we employ the entrism tactic we conceive of it with a parallel effort of still further disseminating the whole of our program, and our ideas, of making them live through various organs, papers, magazines, republication of the works of L. Trotsky, publication of pamphlets, etc. On the other hand, the Marxist revolutionary education of our members becomes more than ever a permanent, essential task. That is what we have been doing for some time in England, and that is what we should do on the same if not a larger scale, in countries where we apply an entrism tactic into the Stalinist movement. It is the task of the independent sectors to assure, to guide and to animate this essential activity.

C. We do not become propagandists of Stalinist ideas and methods, but skillful propagandists of ideas and methods of revolutionary Marxist struggle which, employed without the Trotskyist label, but concentrating upon one principal idea each time with the aim of activating the revolutionary maturing of the class without however being isolated from the movement and without being thrown out of it.

I would have this to say on the perspective of this tactic:

Before too long it will *qualitatively* transform our movement here in France and will give effectiveness to the active, conscious Marxist wing of the mass movement now influenced by the Stalinist leadership. Those of our members who for a certain time were in danger of degenerating because of the absence of an adequate milieu of work to fully

develop their capacities, can now, as in England, become a leading cadre of a given sector of this movement.

Those of our comrades who have already begun to act in the spirit of the new tactic in the CGT trade unions, have been able to witness the qualitative change in their work, its effects on their own development when they act under the cover of being militants and cadres of the CGT (and not as militants of a third tendency labeled Trotskyist).

The same possibilities and the same effects for their own development will be concretized for our youth who will act as members of the UJRF (Stalinist youth organization), developing multiple initiatives (for example, organizing this organization themselves wherever it does not exist) and in reality little by little all our members (with a few notable exceptions) will find here and there some form of activity in the movement influenced by the Stalinist leadership.

Thus, after a relatively brief period of putting this tactic into practice, we will see as in England that the turn which we are realizing today, far from signifying a retreat—by the fact that a certain number of our forces in France have for the moment preferred to follow the splitting leaders—will on the contrary *mark the most decisive step forward realized up to now by our movement in France.*

Before us, in the several years to come, there will open the perspective of the European Socialist Revolution, of the socialist revolution in Germany, in France, in Italy, in England.

This is now the next most probable stage of the development of the proletarian revolution in our time.

It is for this now relatively brief perspective, comrades, that you should prepare yourself *as seriously as possible*, that is to say, by integrating yourself firmly, with enthusiasm, with confidence in the indestructible force of the program and of the ideas which we defend, within the real movement of the masses of your country, the movement which will be the force to evolve toward this revolution.

July 12, 1952

SECTION IV: THE POSITION OF THE SWP MINORITY ON STALINISM IN THE COCHRAN FIGHT

["The New World Reality and the New Confusion—What Hansen's Document Has Revealed," by Harry Frankel (the pen name used by Harry Braverman) was a reply to Joseph Hansen's "What the New York Discussion Has Revealed," which appears in part three of this series.

[Frankel's polemic is reprinted from *SWP Internal Bulletin*

Volume 15, No. 10, published in April 1951.

[Although many adherents of the Cochran-Clarke-Bartell faction went much further privately in revising the Trotskyist position on Stalinism, the Frankel document gave a clear indication of the direction in which they were moving.]

"The New World Reality and the New Confusion—What Hansen's Document Has Revealed," by Harry Frankel

1. Reality and Marxist Thought

During the past decade, the process of world struggle

has proved to be far more complex, far more *realistic*, we might say, than our mental view of it before the fact. This should not be surprising to us. Throughout the

entire history of Marxism, mental norms and advance programmatic conceptions have been enriched, modified, concretized, spelled out, complexified by the actual reality as it came to pass. "Theory is gray but the tree of life is eternally green." It is with good reason that Marxists have attached themselves to Goethe's maxim.

The first great modification of Marxist perspective came during the half-century after the publication of the Communist Manifesto. Capitalism, instead of plunging into deeper depressions on the order of the crisis which produced the revolutions of 1848, entered instead upon a period of expansion which restored stability to the system up to the outbreak of World War I. Contrary to the sneers of anti-Marxists, Marx and Engels did not fail to alter their perspective in accordance with the changed reality. Their battles with the emigres who favored the adventurist perspective of continuing as though nothing had happened demonstrate this. Further, Engels and Lenin as well as Rosa Luxemburg, far from ignoring the fact, have left us profound theoretical analyses of the re-stabilization of capitalism in the second half of the 19th century.

The Russian Revolution, which we have come to regard as a norm, was itself a departure from the "normal" in a double sense. Firstly, it clashed with the general Marxist perspective that revolutions would come first in the advanced capitalist countries. Unforeseen and tortuous complexities, including the rise of Stalinism, in turn resulted from the "unnormative" Russian development. Secondly, the development of a proletarian revolution in Russia clashed with the programmatic and strategic concepts of the party which was to lead it. Lenin met the problem of reorientation with his April struggle for a sharp turn, a struggle in which he displayed scorn for the "old Bolsheviks" and their "museum relic ideas."

In *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky offers a valuable generalization: "Theory is not a note which you can present at any moment to reality for payment. If a theory proves mistaken we must revise it or fill out the gaps."

There are those who, over the centuries, have gone running to the graves of Marx and Engels waving this "note" and demanding payment. If the founders of our movement could reply, I am sure they would tell these insistent creditors: "we never pretended to be seers; only scientific socialists. We learned from reality. Go thou and do likewise!"

Our world movement has been confronted by a similar problem during the past decade. The complexity of world development, the originality and unexpectedness of the actual course of events, imposes upon us the necessity to rearm our minds so that our movement remains a real one, connected with the actual problems of the world revolution. The ineluctable punishment for a failure to do this would be, as always in such cases, degeneration into a sect.

Sectarian movements develop not through an abandonment of basic program, but through a failure to connect that program with the ever-fresh problems of life and struggle. They thus live on the fringes of reality, everlastingly buttonholing people in order to try to interest them in the debates and problems of yesterday. Genuine Marxist parties, by contrast, know how to take the lessons of yesterday and plunge with them into the struggles of today. This difference may seem elusive to some, but it represents the real basis on which sects arise. Those to

whom the difference is elusive are the victims upon which sects prey and base themselves.

2. What Happened to Our Perspective?

The problem of norm and reality is, to use Hegelian terminology, the problem of essence and phenomenal form. World development has never abrogated the essence of Marxism; on the contrary Marxism has shown itself to be the essence of world development. But this essence has been presented in many twisted, distorted, complex and original phenomenal forms. In all cases the problem of Marxists has been twofold: to discover the essence of Marxism in the peculiar forms and to adjust their thinking to the new forms. *A movement neglects this twofold approach only at the peril of its demise as a viable revolutionary tendency.*

With regard to Stalinism, our perspective as we entered World War II was this: Stalinism will be destroyed in the war, either through an upsurge of the revolutionary movement or by a crushing of the revolutionary movement and the Soviet Union together with it. In *The USSR In War*, Trotsky wrote:

"If this war provokes, as we firmly believe, a proletarian revolution, it must inevitably lead to the overthrow of the bureaucracy in the USSR and the regeneration of Soviet democracy. . . . If however, it is conceded that the present war will provoke not revolution but a decline of the proletariat, then there remains another alternative: the further decay of monopoly capitalism, its further fusion with the state and the replacement of democracy wherever it still remained by a totalitarian regime. . . . This would be, according to all indications, a regime of decline, signaling the eclipse of civilization." (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 8-9.)

This perspective was not validated in the course of the war. Neither, however, was it invalidated. History thus often finds a crevice in the most solid-appearing logical structure, and wriggles through in a peculiar and original way of its own. The revolution did not destroy imperialism, but it cut the ground out from under imperialism's feet in most of Europe and Asia, placing it in its present near-hopeless situation. Similarly, the revolutionary wave did not prove strong enough to destroy Stalinism which emerged seemingly more powerful than ever. Instead, the revolution moved into the Kremlin household, where it now paces like an enraged tiger, keeping the inhabitants in constant panic that it will turn on them and rend them to bits.

Thus while the war did not realize our perspective, it *did fulfill its essence* by demonstrating that the tendencies we foresaw in 1940 were actually present and were not figments of our imagination. Further, by preparing the circumstances of an inevitable war in which the relationship of forces will be heavily to the disadvantage of imperialism, history has laid the groundwork for the full realization of this perspective of the destruction of capitalism and the doom of Stalinist labor bureaucratism in the process. It would be wrong to conclude, however, that our perspective has been modified only in terms of its postponement. The *forms of its realization*, particularly as concerns the relation between Stalinism and the revolution, have become far more complex than we had any right to expect before the last war.

Meanwhile, we were left with our incomplete and as yet historically undefined prognosis. Sure enough, as in all other turns of the historic road, there were those who came running to us with their due bill. From all sides we saw people waving the page out of the *The USSR In War*. The demand for payment on our perspective took various forms.

Some said "Trotskyism is bankrupt." (The bank is busted; it can't pay our note.) Felix Morrow is a good example. You have to say this much for him: he tried to act like a decent creditor. He waited until the very end of the war. He gave us every minute he could afford until he became convinced that we weren't going to pay up. Someone ran into him on the subway a year ago, and the first thing he did was pull out Trotsky's prediction and wave it under her nose. "Trotskyism," he explained, "would have been all right if Stalinism were destroyed during the war." This is the classic epitaph on a conjunctural revolutionist who didn't understand that Marxism builds, not for a day or for a single set of circumstances, but for every eventuality of the struggle, no matter how protracted, complex or difficult it may be.

Others thought they could take payment on their note despite the fact that history had not supplied it. Since Trotsky had promised that without the victory of the proletarian revolution the workers' state would be destroyed, they concluded that the workers' state *had been destroyed*. Such was the case, sadder for us than any other, of Natalia Trotsky. These theoreticians don't want the Soviet Union in the picture to confuse matters, so they destroy it by . . . terminology. The defects in history are filled out with violent language. In the process of dealing harshly with history, they fail to notice that, far from being destroyed, the deformed workers' state added to former complexities by having been joined by other states of a similar kind and by revolutions of a "deformed" type. This has increased the theoretical difficulties confronting us, but in return it has added far more to the difficulties of imperialism. That, for revolutionists, is more than adequate compensation.

Others have reacted in still another way: by refusing to see and understand the changed world reality. They have suffered, together with all of us, from a sharp blow in the form of a break, a deviation in the process. History has dealt harshly with our too-simple perspective. Therefore these comrades have decided to punish history by getting along without a perspective and by retreating to the world of half-comprehended and unimplemented "basic ideas." It is to this problem that we must now address ourselves.

3. What is New? The Work of the Third World Congress

Comrade Hansen's article, *What the New York Discussion Has Revealed*, behind the shield of the valid assertion that our fundamental theoretical concepts have not changed, tries to shape the thought of the party in the notion that *nothing has changed*. Concessions which this document makes at its outset to the analysis of the changed world situation made at the Third World Congress are rapidly nullified and reversed as the document proceeds to its own analysis. It is an article which, if I may predict, will be used as a cover by every enemy of the Congress not only within this party but in the

world movement, and moreover outside of it. The Bleibtreu-Lambert grouping, which crippled the development of our French co-thinkers up to the moment of its split, will greet the Hansen article as a validation of its views. It is because of this fact that I emphatically reject the chiding which Hansen's supporters have directed to me because I compared Hansen's political thinking to that of the splitters in France. They have said I would give "comfort" to Bleibtreu-Lambert by my words. This is not so. It is Hansen who gives them comfort by bringing back into the world movement defeated and cast-out views.

Hansen's article is very insistent, as though against some unnamed opponent, upon the idea that the Third Congress did not violate any of Trotsky's basic views. This is quite correct. What is new is not in the doctrine but in the world. The world demands a fresh application of the doctrine.

Marxist doctrine is not in itself an *analysis*, but a *tool and a guide to action*. The doctrine is comprehensive, and represents the essence of world development, while reality is many-sided and changing. Not every possibility, not every variant which may be abstractly drawn from the doctrine is dominant in the world at any given moment. The world may be compelled to yield to Marxist analysis, but it can be compelled to do so only if the analysis lays hold of the essential features of reality and grasps them in their complexity, their development and their future possibilities. That is why the work of the great Marxist masters has always been at one and the same time basically consistent with the lines of our theory and also fresh, vivid, realistic, concrete.

In a period of great change, the thought of the party suffers from being bound by past notions, conclusions and perspectives. Moreover, in this present period we are in addition, particularly in this country, subject to an enormous weight of imperialist and Stalinophobe pressures. That is why we must lay such heavy stress upon the Third Congress idea of a *rearmament* and a *reorientation*.

The importance of the rearmament cannot be overestimated. Prior to the Congress, our movement was haunted by a growing fear of Stalinist world domination. Wrong attempts to deal with this fear fell under two main heads. There were those who tried to deny either the reality or the progressive character of the big Stalinist-led movements. And there were those who, seeing the reality but bowing to pressure, began to draw revisionist conclusions. The Congress dispelled fears about Stalinism along the correct lines by providing a full theoretical demonstration that the doom of Stalinism is to be expected precisely from its extension and from the revolutionary movements which it now tries to dominate.

Hansen devotes much of his document to sneering at the "thinking" now going on in New York, which I might say is not at all confined to New York or even to the United States. This sneering is out of place. What that thinking consists of is an attempt to grasp world reality and our tasks in the light of the work of the Congress. It is true that we may find thoughts which are not clear or fully thought out or precisely expressed. That is to be expected in a case where comrades do not, and have not for some years, receive the assistance they should get from the majority of the leadership. The reorientation

requires cooperation from the *entire* leadership of the party.

Hansen opens his document with a program which he imputes to a section of the party. I have already pointed out in a previous brief article that this "program" is a false concoction, and that moreover it is precisely the same as that which every skeptic and enemy of the Congress has imputed to the Congress and to its leading participants. In addition, such an alleged "line" has been used by concealed opponents of the Congress in order to provide a platform for a fight against the Congress reorientation in an indirect manner.

In a reply to such a maneuver by Bleibtreu, Comrade Germain wrote:

"The 'essential difference' discovered by Comrade Favre Bleibtreu relates to 'the revisionist estimation of the nature of the bureaucracy in the USSR.' To prove this absurd thesis he unfolds a vast work of exegesis, never discussing concrete documents, but only polemicizing with their possible—and it must be said slanderous!—interpretations. The aim he seems to be pursuing is to make the French section believe that because of softness and a spirit of compromise, the entire IS and Comrade Pablo personally and more or less consciously (for unspecified reasons) is beginning to capitulate to Stalinism.

"Such a thesis must immediately strike anyone acquainted with the history of our movement as monstrous. All our sections, all our cadres and primarily our leading cadres have been trained over many years in the struggle against Stalinism and against tendencies toward 'capitulation to Stalinism' in our movement. To prove the existence of a tendency toward 'capitulation to Stalinism' it would be necessary to adduce a mass of proofs or of indications from quotations or of analysis from documents. Now Comrade Bleibtreu is incapable of producing *one solitary proof* for his terrible accusation." (From "Subterfuges and Confusion, or The Art of Covering One's Retreat" by E. Germain, June 25, 1951. Germain's emphasis.)

Nor has Hansen produced one solitary proof for his terrible accusation either. On the contrary, he has not even tried, as did Bleibtreu, to deal with articles, speeches, documents, but has talked entirely from gossip. There is no tendency towards capitulation to Stalinism in our ranks! If Comrade Hansen can show me, by means of serious proofs, that such a tendency exists, then I for one will join with him to help crush it. But he is not able and will not be able to do so. Gripped by confusion and unrealism he has created a lifeless dummy in order to use it as a shield behind which to push forward an opposition to the needed rearmament.

Since the discussion we face in the party will not be based upon clear programmatic differences but, very often, upon questions of "emphasis," etc., the party will do well to examine the weighting and slant of the Hansen document. Comrade Germain, in a reply to Bleibtreu called *Subterfuges and Confusion*, made the following important point: "All his (Bleibtreu's) documents strangely insist on the still very great counter-revolutionary *proclivities* of the bureaucracy, while ours insist on the *limits of the counter-revolutionary capacities* of this bureaucracy in the event of a vast revolutionary upsurge." (Germain's emphasis.) Is Hansen's emphasis that of the Congress, or that of its opponents? Is his the emphasis we need,

or do we need a Congress-type reorientation? Should Hansen reply that he is merely using this emphasis because there is a "need" for it at present due to an "exaggerated" emphasis on the other side, he would merely be repeating the lame excuse of the Bleibtreu tendency.

Hansen's document may not be successful in picturing the thinking of his opponents, but it is eminently successful in revealing his own thinking. With his article at our disposal, we are now in a position to consider some views which he expresses and which are widespread in the party. We have no new revelations, nothing that cannot be found in the Congress documents. We will try to explain these ideas, and to show the form taken by resistance to them.

4. What is Stalinism?

Hansen begins with a good question: "What is Stalinism?" He sets the following Marxist framework for the analysis: "To discover what it is from the qualitative side, we must find out what its social base is, for it is classes that set the characteristics of the political superstructure." So far so good. Hansen then proceeds to the following:

"The base of Stalinism consists of a peasant and labor aristocracy on which rests an enormous state bureaucratic apparatus. This is topped by the Bonapartist oligarchy. The social base of Stalinism is the *petty-bourgeois* formation which has arisen in the Soviet Union." (Hansen's emphasis.)

This, as a *class* starting point, is one-sided and inadequate. It is true that the specific class pressures, class ideologies, and even class base upon which Stalinism arose are those of the petty-bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie inside and outside the Soviet Union. In that sense the Soviet bureaucracy reflects and bases itself upon these alien classes. But none of this alters the fact that the Soviet oligarchy represents, in the last analysis, a *labor bureaucracy* both in its fundamental social base in the property forms created by the October Revolution and in its place in historic evolution.

This can perhaps be made clearer by reference to a more familiar case, that of a trade union. The union bureaucracy represents the pressure and ideology of alien classes within the labor movement. In that sense it would be correct to call the union officialdom a *petty-bourgeois*, even a *bourgeois* bureaucracy. This does not alter the fact that it is at the same time a *labor bureaucracy*; i.e., a parasitic crystallization upon the working class. This is what DeLeon did not understand, leading to his sectarian abstentionism.

This contradictory fact simply reflects the nature of any labor bureaucracy. Reflecting alien classes, it is in profound contradiction with its own social base. This is the fact that Hansen omits as he sets forth the class starting point for his analysis. The significance of this omission is this: If we over-simplify the matter as Hansen does, and note only that the bureaucracy is based upon the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois classes, then we over-simplify everything about Stalinism; its social role, its historic position, its politics. Hansen, as we shall see, construes Stalinist politics as the direct extension of the one-sided "social base" which he has set forth. But if we were to accept this view, then in what way would the Soviet regime differ from a regime which is *not* in conflict

with its own social foundations? In no respect, obviously. And, as we shall see, that is precisely Hansen's error.

Hansen shows us the results of his false start when he coolly compares the bureaucratic caste to the U.S. capitalist class in the following symmetrical formula:

"Just as Eisenhower's politics is bound by the frame of the narrow interests of the American capitalist class, so Stalin's politics cannot pass beyond the frame of the narrow interests of the Soviet parasitic caste." (P. 25)

It becomes clear that Hansen's mistaken one-sidedness in defining the nature of the Soviet caste was not simply an accidental error of formulation, but an error which is necessary to his analysis. If the Kremlin, arbitrarily wrenched by Hansen from its social foundation and left hanging in bureaucratic mid-air, can determine Soviet policy solely in accordance with the needs of its petty-bourgeois and bourgeois social base, then we have here a new and historically independent ruling class, "just as" the American capitalist class. In fact, events have shown that Stalinist politics have been often compelled, in a most fundamental way, to transgress the interests of the caste and to express the interests of the social foundation. Or perhaps Hansen will maintain that, in nationalizing industry in one-third of Europe, Stalin's politics did not "pass beyond the frame of the narrow interests of the Soviet parasitic caste"? His hasty generalizations are not even in accord with the facts as we all accept them.

5. *The Nature of Stalinist Politics*

In his haste to track down "revisionism" in the party, Hansen does not notice that he himself has started with a revision of our past conception of the bureaucracy. Equipped with this wooden musket, he now starts out on the trail of Stalinist politics. He sets his view forth as follows:

"Let me summarize—the Kremlin's politics derive from the enormous caste of millions upon millions of privileged bureaucrats on which it rests and are in strict accord with the interests of that caste as a social formation. It is the parasitic caste that determines the objective course of Stalinism in relation to both world capitalism and the international working class. Marxist method, analyzing the social base of Stalinism, yields this as its first and main result. Further differentiation can reveal some modifications such as restraint by Stalin of the most unbridled bourgeois wing of the caste but nothing in the main 'law' will be changed essentially." (P. 15)

We see that, in Hansen's conception, Stalinist politics, like Stalinism in general, has a purely "caste" character. This, we are told, is "the first and main result" of Marxist method, even a "law," inexplicably in quotation marks, but a law nevertheless! Hansen's direction is becoming clearer as we proceed. He endows the Kremlin with an independent base because he is in haste to endow Kremlin politics with an independent character. The caste "determines the objective course of Stalinism in relation to both world capitalism and the international working class."

In reality, it would be more correct to say that the inter-relations between the major classes determine the course of the Kremlin, than to put it the other way around, as Hansen does. Kremlin politics do not and cannot have an independent and self-sustaining character precisely because of the very fact that Hansen takes

such pains to conceal in his earlier section, namely: *that the Kremlin is not a class but a parasitic growth upon a class which expresses the interests of its social foundation in a distorted way, and in a way which furthermore reflects through itself the interests of alien classes.* The Kremlin does not make independent class policy, but mirrors it in a crooked glass, showing us therein both its social foundation and the pressures of the major classes. This has always been our conception.

This same debate was conducted between Trotsky and Shachtman in 1940. On Page 124 of *In Defense of Marxism*, we find Trotsky's view as follows:

"'Politics is concentrated economics.' This proposition one should think applies to the Kremlin, too. Or, in exception to the general law, is the policy of the Moscow government not 'concentrated economics' but a manifestation of the bureaucracy's free will? Our attempt to reduce the politics of the Kremlin to nationalized economy, refracted through the interests of the bureaucracy, provokes frantic resistance from Shachtman. He takes his guidance in relation to the USSR not from conscious generalizations of economics but from 'observing the realities of living events'; i.e., from rule of thumb, improvisations, sympathies, antipathies. He counterposes this impressionistic policy to our sociologically grounded policy. . . ."

Hansen began his "frantic resistance" to "our attempt to reduce the politics of the Kremlin to nationalized economy refracted through the interests of the bureaucracy" even before we made that attempt, although we fully intended to do so.

The Third World Congress took Trotskyism as its starting point. Not only did it continue to view Stalinism as a labor bureaucracy in its fundamental social character, but it employed this view as the basic tool in the analysis of Stalinism and its politics. Even more, Comrade Pablo quite correctly *derived the proletarian character of the Chinese and other Stalinist parties from their allegiance to the Kremlin bureaucracy.* At the 11th Plenum of the IEC he spoke as follows: "Insofar as the Stalinist parties are concerned, what is decisive for characterizing them as working class parties is their allegiance to the Kremlin bureaucracy, that is to say, to the bureaucracy of a degenerated workers state." Would Hansen be in a position to draw this conclusion from his conception? Far from it. He and all who think like him have shown us how they reason from "improvisations, sympathies, antipathies" instead of from "a sociologically grounded policy."

The Soviet bureaucracy, since it is not itself a class but is an outgrowth upon a progressive class reflecting the pressure of alien class forces, cannot pursue any consistent or independent political line. Eisenhower's politics, while passing through occasional maneuvers, is essentially *independent* in character. Kremlin politics, while showing an occasional flash of proletarian independence (under unavoidable constraint; i.e., nationalizations in Eastern Europe, etc.) is essentially *opportunist* in character. Unlike the maneuvers of a proletarian vanguard which proceeds from class independence, Stalinist maneuvers represent an endless attempt on the part of the bureaucracy to escape from its class foundations.

Thus Marxism brings us to exactly the opposite conclusion to that which Hansen attempts to force upon us. Kremlin politics, unlike those of Eisenhower, undergo

considerable change and feverish switches in accordance with the play of class forces on an international scale. This is not only theoretically accurate but conforms with all our experience with Stalinist politics since 1923. The social base of Stalinism proved to be compatible both with the policy of aiding imperialism and the policy of destroying imperialism.

The key to this riddle is not so difficult as might seem at first glance. The bureaucracy has its own permanent and independent interests but it does not possess its own permanent and independent class forces corresponding to those interests. Thus it must try to give expression to its own interests by dependent and conjunctural policies, *by trying to adjust them to the interests of the two major social classes*. The interests of the bureaucracy drive it to pursue the will-of-the-wisp of bureaucratic self-preservation through unstable and shifting policies in accordance with the possibilities left open by the class struggle.

6. *The Contradiction of the Kremlin*

Comrades who see only one side of the contradiction upon which the Kremlin rests emphasize the following thought: Revolution will destroy the Kremlin; thus the Kremlin must fight against revolution. This is correct, but these comrades overlook another generalization: Imperialism will destroy the bureaucracy by destroying its social base; hence the Kremlin must fight imperialism. This is equally correct. In reality, however, both generalizations are very incomplete. Nor can we understand Kremlin policy by making a mechanical combination between the two. That is why we have always had to muster all our abilities for dialectical thinking to solve this anomaly.

For formal thinking the solution is impossible. If the Stalinist regime is threatened from both sides by ineluctable forces, it must rest in a state of complete paralysis. What can it do? Every move against imperialism aids the revolution and every move against the revolution opens the way for the other gravedigger, imperialism. Apparently in the world of strict logical categories Stalinism can only lie down and die. That would be very good, and we would certainly see to it that the keys to the kingdom were turned over to its rightful heirs, the Marxist-led Soviet working class which faces no such insoluble problem. It would be excellent for humanity if the Stalinist bureaucracy could be persuaded to recognize its hopeless position and commit suicide, but unfortunately history doesn't work that way. The bureaucracy retains power and will continue to do so until removed by superior power. In the meantime it continues to pursue policies and causes Comrade Hansen no end of trouble in comprehending them.

Its historically hopeless position forces the bureaucracy to flee from the plainly visible theoretical alternatives and take refuge in empirical thinking. It lives from day to day, trying to solve its gigantic problem for the moment and piecemeal, since it cannot solve the problem permanently and at one blow. The bureaucracy as a social grouping has no historical perspective. This is true both of its objective situation and of its thinking as well. It has instead only the extremely limited and temporary perspective of immediate survival. Like the caste as a whole, the individual Stalinist bureaucrat hopes to

find a way to cheat history long enough for personal survival. In this, as in much else, Stalin showed the way to his followers. Those who come after him will not be so fortunate.

Hansen writes on Page 28 of his document: "In its desperate efforts to survive, the privileged Soviet caste will use any means that do not conflict with its own interests." That is dead wrong. As a matter of fact, almost every means it uses conflicts with its interests. That resides in the nature of its position in the world. Despite the indubitable fact that the imperialist world prepares the destruction of the Soviet Union, the Kremlin sides with and aids imperialism in its search for a moment's breathing-time (Stalin-Hitler pact, etc.). Despite the equally indubitable fact that the revolution prepares doom for the bureaucrat, the bureaucrat has to grip his teeth and try to live with and utilize the revolution against imperialism (Korea, Indo-China, etc.) or is even compelled to give an impulse to the revolution (Eastern Europe) while hoping to find a way to strangle, subvert or limit it on the morrow. It is in this dialectic way that history maps out its course between rigid alternatives that seem to formal minds to dominate.

The dialectic of history is not suppressed by the empiricism of the bureaucracy; on the contrary, that empiricism, the effort to cheat the historic dialectic, merely gives expression to it. Thus the entire Kremlin planning apparatus can be said to be divided into two branches: "The Department for Stopping Imperialism" and "The Bureau for the Suppression of Revolutionary Dangers." These two departments carry on an incessant warfare—most of all against each other. Do we not see this every day?

The bureaucracy moves in response to the greatest threat. When imperialism gave the appearance in 1941-46 of arranging its affairs in such a way as to "co-exist" with the Soviet Union (a false appearance as we predicted at the time), the Kremlin collaborated with imperialism against the revolution. In the present period, from 1947 to now and into the indicated future, imperialism signifies by actions too plain to be ignored or misinterpreted its immediate intention of destroying the Soviet Union. The bureaucracy, again reacting to the great immediate danger, defends itself, and in so doing is compelled to countenance mass movements and even revolutionary property changes. It does this not because that *is* its nature, but for two reasons: because it is compelled to and because such actions are *not incompatible* with its basic class nature. Imperialist powers, in sharp contrast, have never been able, no matter how great the need, to warm their hands at the fires of revolution, even if limited or "controlled."

The ideal situation for the bureaucracy was the period between the two world wars. This was marked by the inconclusive stage of the world class struggle with the edge in the hands of imperialism, and the growth of inter-imperialist conflicts. This is the situation which the bureaucracy helped to maintain and to which it would like to return, but that world is gone for good. Thus, since 1946, the Kremlin has been trying to work out some new course, an effort that has been marked by bewilderment and stumbling. For the first time the bureaucracy finds itself giving orders to Communist parties that are not obeyed, and can do nothing about it. It ordered the Yugoslavs to collaborate with the bourgeoisie; it ordered the Chinese to

collaborate with Chiang Kai-shek, and in both cases precisely the opposite happened. Its next step, taken in Yugoslavia, was an attempt at the immediate Stalinization and subordination of the new revolutionary force. This met with rebellion, from which the Kremlin learned something in precisely the same way as a child learns when it gets a bump on the head. At the present we see the Kremlin trying to live with the Chinese revolution, biding its time in the hope of gaining the upper hand. This has produced an unprecedented situation in world Stalinism; one not seen since 1928: a sharing of power.

The course which has been forced upon the bureaucracy is one of living with the revolution in the hope of subverting it and dominating it bureaucratically. Wherever it cannot strangle the revolution, or dare not do so lest it open the way at once for imperialism, it must do this. Comrade Hansen is in a good position to instruct the bureaucracy that it can't continue this forever, because in the long run the revolution will emerge stronger than any bureaucracy. But this will prove of little value to Malenkov, Beria and Molotov unless he shows them some other way to operate. One can be sure they are aware of the eventual fatal consequences of the growth of the world revolution, but they must have some alternative course which will not be fatal. Anyone who can supply them with this will, we can be sure, have no difficulty in walking off with the next Stalin Peace Prize.

If comrades are now disappointed that we cannot present to the world working class the clear-cut alternatives of revolution on the one side against a Kremlin-imperialist coalition on the other as we could in the past, then we must say plainly that there is no balm for this disappointment other than the clear recognition of the truth and the reorientation of our thinking and propaganda in the changed situation. If we had our "rathers," I am sure that we could map out a clearer and more favorable world situation. One young comrade, after posing to me the fanciful possibility which she at once had to admit would not come to pass, could not resist saying to me the other day: "Yes, but it's nice to think about those things." I told her: "It's better to think about the real world." I hope I am still in company with the majority of the party in that sentiment.

We are now in a better position to return to Comrade Hansen's simplification: "Stalinism has not changed." On Page 11 he writes:

"All these decisions of the [Third World] Congress were important and far-reaching, but abstracting them from the concrete world events under analysis, and looking at the decisions in the light of our theoretical heritage, not a single change was made in the fundamental position laid down by Trotsky, particularly Trotsky's theoretical appraisal of the character of Stalinist *politics*."

My grandfather had a beard, but abstracting him from his concrete beard he was a clean-shaven man. Lenin altered the policy of the Bolsheviks sharply in April 1917, but abstracting his new policy from the concrete situation, there was no change at all. Abstraction is a sharp theoretical tool, but like a keen chisel it should be used carefully.

The nature of Stalinism has not changed, but as we have shown it is precisely because the nature of Stalinism remains the same that *its politics retain a changing charac-*

ter. Nor is this in conflict with Trotsky's analysis of Stalinist politics, which he explained as the erratic and self-contradictory course of a bureaucracy bent on retaining power in a world of exploding class struggles and imperialist threats. Had Stalinism changed its character to become a new exploiting class, then we could properly expect that this changed nature would result in relatively stable politics aimed at an attainable goal. We can examine the following supposition: Assume that, contrary to our appraisal, the counter-revolutionary tendency of the Kremlin had gone deep enough by 1946 to result in either capitalist restoration or a new exploiting class. This changed Stalinism would not have found it possible to meet the imperialist threat of 1947-53 with a leftward turn. A change in the nature of Stalinism would in that case have prevented its course from changing.

The Stalinist bureaucracy has not changed, but the world and the position of Stalinism in it have altered sharply. Only those who hold to the basic Trotskyist analysis of the nature of Stalinism can understand its changed role in the altered situation. Shachtman, Johnson, the POUM, etc., who think the nature of Stalinism has changed, cannot begin to understand this. They know there has been a change in the *position* of Stalinism in the world, but that doesn't help them to comprehend its present role because they have abandoned the fundamental views which alone can explain this role. Hansen, on the other hand, claiming to retain the Trotskyist view of the fundamental nature of Stalinism, doesn't have the means to understand its present role because he refuses to recognize the changed reality in the world and the changed position of Stalinism in it.

The renegades have a false basis in their fundamental views on Stalinism: they start from preconceived norms of the workers' state, etc. Hansen has a preconceived notion of reality into which he arbitrarily tries to jam all facts in an effort to make them fit the world of 1940. While the error of the renegades is far more fundamental, both types of errors can prevent an accurate picture of reality and a realistic approach to it.

7. Capitalist Restoration?

We have pictured a certain and merciless contradiction in which the Kremlin, by its lack of independent mission or place in the world, is caught. We now confront the question: Can the bureaucracy, by a willful act, fracture the jaws that grip it and escape into the capitalist world? I refer of course to the possibility of capitalist restoration in the coming period by the bureaucracy itself. Such a development would certainly alter the entire world picture, and if we were to conceive that it is an important alternative in the coming struggles then the perspectives mapped out by the Third World Congress would be considerably changed and possibly invalidated.

Hansen intrudes this theme into the discussion by repeated references to it which are never explained or followed up. On Page 14 he says: "The usurpation of power by this caste represents the first stage of the bourgeois restoration in the degenerated workers state." On the same page he says: "It [the "horde of rapacious gangster-minded bureaucrats constituting the caste"] is *still* [My emphasis — H.F.] forced to operate through property forms that are

socialist in principle. . . . It has progressively undermined these property forms inherited from the October Revolution until today they are extremely weakened and from the viewpoint of socialist content scarcely recognizable." On Page 19: "It [Stalinism] fosters the tendencies within the Soviet Union towards *bourgeois* relations." Again: "The parasitic cast that is devouring the remaining consequences of the October Revolution."

It is unmistakably true that the destruction of the Bolshevik Party and the seizure of power by a reactionary bureaucracy opened up the danger of capitalist restoration. Thermidor is thus a step on the road back to capitalism. In that sense, Hansen's scattered remarks are not wrong. But we are interested in examining the problem more fully, in order to see what relation it has to the present situation and to our discussion. A number of comrades have already rallied under this flag in an attempt to find some other perspective to counterpose to that of the Third Congress.

A union bureaucracy which destroys rank-and-file control carries with it the possibility of the destruction of the labor organization and its conversion into a company union. But is the union bureaucracy always and everywhere carrying on toward this end? Does this possibility come to the fore at such times as the bureaucracy is forced to defend the union in order to defend itself? When it is in the midst of strike struggles or organizing drives? Does this possibility *always* become a reality? Even more, does it *usually* become a reality?

Bureaucratization of unions has hardly ever led, except in cases where the entire class is crushed by a bourgeois offensive, to conversion of those unions into company unions. Similarly, historic instances of Thermidor do not show it to be at all common that the Thermidoreans manage to reconvert the revolutionary nation back to its pre-revolutionary social condition. We should weigh this lesson of history carefully, particularly in view of the fact that the Soviet bureaucracy has, from all evidence, been lashed by events to the nationalized economy since 1941 more completely than ever before. In the Thirties Trotsky pointed to the existence of a restorationist wing within the bureaucracy, which he emphasized was the smallest of all its tendencies. Has this trend enlarged, or grown stronger? On the contrary side we see the prodigious efforts in the recent period to enlarge and fortify the nationalized economy.

We must take into account the trends and developments in the decade-and-a-half since the start of World War II. In *The USSR In War*, Trotsky wrote:

"Let us for a moment conceive that in accordance with the treaty with Hitler, the Moscow government leaves untouched the rights of private property in the occupied areas and limits itself to 'control' after the fascist pattern. Such a concession would have a deep-going principled character and might become a starting point for a new chapter in the history of the Soviet regime; and consequently a starting point for a new appraisal on our part of the nature of the Soviet state."

Since that time, many such possible starting points have been missed by the bureaucracy. As a matter of fact, far from a tendency towards restoration (beginning in the occupied areas) setting in, the tendency has been for the introduction of the nationalized economy and Soviet state patterns into one-third of Europe by bureaucratic-military

means. Considered in the light of Trotsky's absolutely correct projection on this matter, these facts have an enormous weight in any discussion of capitalist restoration.

We must also take into consideration the fact that the bureaucracy has recently come through a war in which support of the people was mobilized for defense of the nationalized economy. It is now mobilizing for another war on that same basis. Further, great toil has been extracted from the people in the work of rebuilding and extending the nationalized economy. We would have to be blind not to see that the bureaucracy would be ringed with an enormous hostility if it gave any hint of such an action as restoration. Here again the possible decision on the part of the bureaucracy to convert itself into a capitalist class must be weighed, not in the scale of *desires*, but in the scale of the *possible*. Such a decision would bring the bureaucracy face to face with civil war against the people as a whole, a war for which the bureaucracy does not possess independent resources. It is even doubtful to what extent the bureaucracy could carry a unified regime into the struggle. If the bureaucracy possesses within itself those contradictions and tendencies to breakup to which we have often pointed, then such a struggle would certainly rupture the bureaucratic unity of today. How then is this course possible?

Far from offering an avenue of escape from their historic impasse, such an attempt might only seal the doom of the bureaucrats with the greatest rapidity. The flood gates of civil war would be opened by such a move. Of all the alternative roads to death which the bureaucracy may choose, this would in my opinion be the swiftest and surest, and moreover, this form of suicide would require the Soviet bureaucracy to thrust its neck into the noose of the enemy it hates and fears most—the Soviet proletariat. The day has certainly long since passed when the Thermidoreans could dream of opening the way to capitalism with impunity to themselves. Perhaps they could have done this before the war; perhaps there are those among them who are sorry they did not do so then. It appears to be too late now.

It is not totally excluded that in the last phase of a desperate struggle, the bureaucracy, reduced to its final shifts, will attempt fantastic adventures such as "offers" to imperialism. But if imperialism then has the upper hand it will pay even less attention to such offers than it does today. If on the other hand the proletariat has the upper hand, such offers will have no more significance to history than Hitler's Berchtesgaden death pact with Eva Braun. In any event, the possibility of a last-minute cry of desperation has nothing in common with the problem we must analyze seriously, which is that of a Kremlin course directed towards restoration in this present period, at such time as it could have some important effect upon the relationship of forces and the course of the struggle.

The fact that the bureaucracy has not taken the course of restoration does not in the least violate any of our basic conceptions. We only pointed to that as a *possibility* opened up by Thermidor. We always emphasized far more the attempts of the bureaucracy to defend the nationalized economy with its own means, in order to thereby defend itself.

Our documents on perspective are not schoolboy copy-books in which we sloppily record every random thought,

every theoretical possibility. Such remarks must have a purpose. Can we now set as a realistic variant for the coming period that Stalinism will attempt to solve its problems by a capitulation to world imperialism in the form of a bourgeois restoration? If not, the hasty phrases of Hansen's document and the arguments being advanced by some comrades can serve no purpose other than to so paralyze the thinking of some comrades with "variants" and "possibilities" that they can no longer reason scientifically about the main lines of world development.

8. Stalinism and the Post-war Revolutions

Comrade Hansen says he is in favor of the decisions of the Third World Congress, which he is defending against "inside-dope" artists. Good! Let us now see how Comrade Hansen continues the rearmament, so inauspiciously begun in his discussion of the nature of Stalinism and Stalinist politics, when he gets to other questions.

No sooner does he apply himself to the present world than he runs up against a formidable barrier in the form of facts which his theory of a "caste" state with "caste" politics cannot solve. He takes care of this by assigning these facts to his opponents—making them "factional facts"—and for the rest maintaining an air of noncommittal aloofness combined with a touch of skepticism; as much as to say: "I am not at all sure these things ever happened, but in any event they are not my problem. Let others explain them, and I'll sit around with a long stick ready to whack them on the shins if they make any mistakes." This is particularly marked where he deals with the post-war revolutions. I could cite many instances, I will confine myself to a few. On Page 4, where Hansen is busy "synthesizing a structure" for his opponents, he says:

"Certain comrades are already making far-reaching generalizations by combining their views about the revolutionary role of Stalinism with their conclusions about the sectarian impasse they think our party faces."

Then Hansen lists five "generalizations" made by "certain comrades." (What he really gives in these five points is the sectarian-Stalinophobe picture of the Third Congress. You can find those five "generalizations" attributed to the Fourth International in a score of articles in the Shachtman press, in Johnson's bulletin, and in the charges of the Bleibtreu-Lambert group as well as in many similar places.) Hansen gives as generalization No. 1, as the sole thought which proves that "certain comrades" attribute a "revolutionary role" to Stalinism, the following statement:

"1. Three revolutions have taken place in the post-war period—Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and China. But the Trotskyists did not lead them."

What is so heretical about that? So far as I can see, it is nothing more than a statement of fact, long accepted by our entire movement and not just by "certain comrades." Three revolutions have indeed taken place: a revolutionary transformation by military-bureaucratic means in one-third of Europe, a proletarian revolution in Yugoslavia, and the Chinese revolution which has produced a workers' and peasants' government on the road to proletarian dictatorship. Moreover, there are other revolutions in progress: Korea, Indochina, etc. None of these revolutions have had a Trotskyist leadership. Of all the revolutionary upheavals in any advanced state of development

in the world today, only the Bolivian shows a predominance at this time of Trotskyist leadership.

Comrade Hansen confines himself to attributing these revolutions to his opponents in the discussion! Can it be that there is anyone in our movement today who does not recognize these facts, or who is willing to make obscure references to them as "far-reaching-generalizations" made by "certain comrades" in the hope of thus painting to the party a picture of pessimism on our part, when in fact all that is involved here is the recognition of reality?

Hansen may reply: "This is an error. I put this down as the starting point of the thinking of certain comrades not because I deny it, but because I want to point to conclusions they draw from it." But Comrade Hansen's tale of "conclusions" can be of no interest to the party so long as he has nothing more than gossip and distortion to base himself upon. Our conclusions are very fully established in writings and speeches, and we shall make them still plainer by repetition if by nothing else. What is now of interest to the party are *Comrade Hansen's conclusions*. His document does not make it clear whether he recognizes the facts, or, if he does, what conclusions he draws from them. If Hansen points to his repeated "conclusion" that "Stalinism is counter-revolutionary in essence," then he will have to permit me to say that the party cannot take this seriously. We knew that long before the post-war revolutions. The Third World Congress certainly would have been a barren gathering had it assembled solely for the purpose of drawing this conclusion.

Does Hansen recognize the facts? Does he deny them? Does he ignore them altogether? Does he draw any conclusions at all? What conclusions? That Stalinism is counter-revolutionary? We knew that quite well before Yugoslavia, China, Eastern Europe, Korea, etc. *Our whole effort has been to supplement our thought, to make it more precise and adequate in relation to these matters and what they have revealed.* Is Comrade Hansen going to help the party in this reorientation or is he going to throw rocks at our feet?

There may be an inconclusive nature about the foregoing example. We all want to give Comrade Hansen the benefit of the doubt. But consider the following exchange from his document, which is fully conclusive. Hansen quotes Comrade Bartell on Page 8 as follows: "How do parties which are 'counter-revolutionary through and through' become transformed into parties which lead revolutions?" That is a good question posed by Bartell. It was basic in the deliberations of the Congress. Here is Hansen's treatment:

"These cautious questions do not help the discussion very much; least of all do they help Comrade Bartell . . . Don't they imply that a force which can 'lead revolutions' is not counter-revolutionary? Isn't the leadership the subjective factor in a revolution? Isn't Stalinism therefore *subjectively* revolutionary? . . . And if Stalinism is both objectively and subjectively revolutionary, isn't it *revolutionary* 'through and through'?"

When presented with similar logic, Trotsky wrote in reply to Shachtman: "The completeness of this argument cannot be denied; in the shape of a naked syllogism we are presented here with a rounded-out theory. . . . It is as simple as Columbus and the egg!"

This really is a rounded-out theory as simple as Colum-

bus and the egg. Stalinist parties have led revolutions; the leadership is the subjective factor in revolutions, hence Stalinism is subjectively as well as objectively revolutionary. Comrade Hansen can reply now by interjecting: "Hold on there. I never said that these parties led revolutions. I deny it." In that case he is impaled on the other, equally formidable horn of his dilemma: a complete refusal to recognize facts. For, insofar as these revolutions had a leadership, it took the form of Communist parties. Hansen may now belatedly assert this is very formal logic, to which we can only reply: It is Hansen's own logic, and therefore very formal, as usual.

Obviously, Comrade Hansen should have thought a great deal more about these problems before writing about them. It is becoming plain to him, we hope, that the Third World Congress did not address itself to such trifles as he tries to pretend. These are the most formidable problems in the history of Trotskyism.

9. *The Role of Some Stalinist Parties*

What conclusions must we draw from the fact that some Stalinist parties, even without formally breaking from the Kremlin, have served as the subjective factor in several revolutions? If this proves, as Hansen says, that Stalinism must be both "subjectively and objectively" revolutionary, then sarcasm heaped on Comrade Bartell's head will help us little. We would have to conclude that the political instrument for the revolutionary tasks is already formed in the main, and our contribution to this epoch would have to be confined to a fight against errors and hesitations on the part of this instrument, and to a defense of the proletariat against Stalinist bureaucratism. We must not fear to draw all our thoughts out to the end. If Hansen's reasoning is adequate, it leads inescapably to this conclusion.

In fact Hansen's reasoning is not at all adequate, but shallow and superficial in the extreme. It is here that his failure to learn from the Congress demonstrates itself in an inability to aid the party in comprehending the dynamic world process. We had better return to Comrade Bartell's serious and important question which Hansen unfortunately treats so flippantly: How do counter-revolutionary Stalinist parties become transformed into parties which lead revolutions?

The role of these parties has reflected a complex interaction between three main forces: the Soviet state power, the Stalinist parties and the powerful mass movements. Not any one, but all three of these considerations are essential to an understanding of this problem. The source and reservoir of the revolutionary course is the mood and actions of the mass. However, the greatest swelling of the mass movement would be, as we have seen many times, insufficient to compel *any* party to enter upon a revolutionary struggle for power. The *specific Stalinist nature* of these parties must be understood. They are not and have never been precisely the same as the traditional workers' reformist parties. Insofar as they have reformist ties with the bourgeoisie, it is not independently and directly, but through the needs and policies of the Kremlin bureaucracy. Further, these parties have built their base, in the main, among the most oppressed and rebellious sections of the population, in contrast with the traditional reformist parties which

develop their greatest support among privileged layers closest to the petty-bourgeoisie and hence most class-collaborationist in their mentality. Thus the Stalinist parties pursued collaborationist and counter-revolutionary policies in the past with this important difference: that these policies reflected the needs of the Kremlin far more than they reflected reformist tendencies in the class and also more than they reflected the pressure of the national bourgeoisie. This was proven in the failure of any serious tendencies to develop in these parties to go over to "their own" imperialism. They have remained with the Kremlin.

This is not to give any "credit" to the Kremlin. In general the Kremlin deserves no "credit" even for the anti-imperialist course which opens the way to individual Stalinist parties. Imperialism itself must get all the credit inasmuch as it *compels* the Kremlin to that course. Moreover, the Kremlin has done its best to close the revolutionary road to its parties; only its failure to do so redounds to its "credit."

The important thing to understand here is that mass pressure by itself is not adequate to explain the changes in Stalinist parties. They have known how to harden themselves against mass pressure. What must also be understood is the specific nature of these parties as tied to the bureaucratized workers' state, and the specific world situation in which the Kremlin finds itself. The great revolutionary mass movements would probably have developed a different, in all likelihood a genuine Bolshevik, leadership in the post-war period had the situation been such that the Kremlin could continue to use these parties for straight class-collaboration and counter-revolution. *But the mass movements coincide with a concerted imperialist drive against the USSR that cuts the Kremlin off from the possibility of deals with imperialism.* In the enforced left turn that follows, movements can slide through the crack left open by the Kremlin's equivocal position, pass beyond its control and evolve independently of its wishes.

What happened to these parties? Did they become fully revolutionary, that is conscious Bolshevik parties as Hansen hastily concludes must have been the case if they "led revolutions?" That would be an unwarranted conclusion, as further facts show. Rather they became receptacles for the revolutionary outpouring of the masses that, despite an inadequate program and consciousness, served as adequate in certain special situations for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. This was possible because of still another specific fact: the extreme weakness of the bourgeoisie, its state of advanced collapse and the consequent revolutionary possibilities. Thus Stalinist parties, transgressing the Kremlin limits and in the process assuming a centrist character, were able to overthrow bourgeois regimes. This is nothing more than a statement of fact which is not at all nullified by their mis-steps and hesitations, by their insufficient programmatic consciousness, and by their obvious inadequacy to the further tasks of the revolution, something which is most clearly evident in Yugoslavia.

How can "centrist consciousness" be enough to accomplish revolutionary tasks? Centrism always was understood by us to contain a measure of subjective revolutionary consciousness which was hedged and frustrated by the inability of centrist thought to draw its revolutionary feelings to the end and solidify them in a thoroughly Bolshevik outlook and party program. This measure of

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revolutionary consciousness, inadequate to the tasks of our epoch as history has shown and will show further, proved adequate for *specific and limited* revolutionary struggles against a collapsing ruling class.

If there are any comrades who disagree with this analysis, they are at perfect liberty to supply one of their own. It is not enough to throw up one's hands in horror at the complex and confusing facts, and it is far worse to point an accusing finger at every comrade who tries to supply a Marxist explanation of these facts.

We are satisfied that the Third World Congress has drawn all the necessary and justified conclusions from these events. But I must add that this work has been done almost entirely without the aid or participation of the majority of the United States Trotskyist cadre and this must temper our pride in the splendid work of our European co-thinkers. It is now time to call a halt to the retreat and confusion that have characterized our thinking! This refers not only to such lamentable obstruction to the rearmament as we find in the Hansen document, but also to the emptiness of our past thinking. The American cadre can yet make a significant contribution to the solution of the problems which the struggle has raised. This we will do, together with Hansen and his associates if possible, in polemic against them if necessary.

To return to Hansen for one concluding point on the problem of the role of these Stalinist parties. In his "summary statement about Stalinism" on Page 13, Hansen says *not one word* about the possibility that under exceptional circumstances Stalinist parties can sketch out a revolutionary orientation and enter upon a struggle for power. Instead he puts his thought as follows: "The mounting war danger tends to produce differentiations within the Communist parties and within the caste itself. It is not excluded that a part of the Stalinist structure will split and take the road toward a revolutionary orientation."

Now we must ask: is this really the problem? Is this the new development in Stalinism that requires our rearmament? Have we ever had any doubt about what to do in the case of a revolutionary *split* in a Stalinist party? Moreover, is this the trend which the Congress analyzes; which we see in the world today? Hansen misses the main problem which is *new*, and substitutes for it an old and familiar idea which, moreover, has no special application today. This in his "summary statement." Comrade Hansen gives us more of this when he takes up some quotations from the Congress documents.

10. "Sketch Out a Revolutionary Orientation"

Hansen quotes in his document the Congress conclusion about the possibility that Stalinist parties can enter upon a struggle for power as follows:

"Finally it [the Congress] visualized the possibility '*under certain exceptional circumstances*'— and this limitation is underlined in the original— of Stalinist parties under the impact of mass upsurges '*projecting a revolutionary orientation, i.e., of seeing themselves obliged to undertake a struggle for power.*'"

We have enough to do in dealing with big matters; it is harassing to have to take time out to deal with petty literary pranks, of which this document contains other examples. But this one is somewhat instructive. Hansen says "and this limitation is underlined in the original."

Not just the limitation, but the entire idea is underlined in the original. Hansen's object is obviously to make it appear that the idea of Stalinist parties undertaking a struggle for power is the unimportant one, while the new and important discovery of the Congress is that this can only be done under exceptional circumstances.

Hansen continues in the same way by pointing out on the next page that Trotsky, in the Transitional Program, foresaw this when he said that "the petty-bourgeois parties, including the Stalinists, may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie." This is a quotation cited by Pablo to show that we were not in absolute and direct conflict with our previous basic conceptions in making our new appraisal of events. Trotsky had the genius to foresee not the fact, but the "theoretical possibility" in his own words. He called it a "highly improbable variant." He did not build the Transitional Program around this possibility but around its opposite. Certainly it cannot be claimed that our thought in the past concentrated itself around this "highly improbable variant," this "theoretical possibility."

But now this subordinate and highly improbable variant has come to life in the cases of Yugoslavia and China, in a bureaucratized form in one-third of Europe and may take further shape in the world. Indeed there are certain Communist parties which are even now involved in armed struggles for power. From this unexpected elevation of the "highly improbable" to the realm of fact lies the need for rearmament.

Without this rearmament our movement will be totally unable to comprehend what has happened in the past, what is going on today, and what may happen in the future. The exceptional circumstances which are required for the development of this variant are not so impossible as Hansen tries to make it appear. An invasion from Mars is not required; we know the circumstances quite well and there is no need to be vague about them: attack on the Soviet Union, war, mass revolutionary upsurge, collapse of imperialist strength in the war, impending defeat, mass Communist parties, etc. These are exceptional circumstances, *but they form part of the immediate potential world reality today.* Those comrades who have not prepared their thinking, for example, against the possibility of a Stalinist-led struggle for power in France or Italy stand a good chance of being caught off guard. In that event they will flounder in a crisis deeper than that in which they have already been trapped.

It is also important to understand the connection between the foregoing analysis made by the Congress and the tactics worked out by it. Many comrades accept the idea of an entry of a special kind into the Stalinist parties of France and Italy entirely on the basis that they are mass parties. That is a completely one-sided view that misses the point. Both of these parties were bigger mass parties, far bigger, in 1945-46, but we did not propose entry then and it would have been wrong and anticipatory to do so. We built then on the other variant: that the revolutionary movement would take channels outside these parties, or in splits from these parties. It is the changed political situation as well as the mass character of these parties that dictates the tactic. It *would be* liquidationist to enter these parties if these conditions did not exist. It would have been fatal to enter those Communist par-

ties in 1945, and it would be fatal to stay out of them now.

We see in the invasion of the revolution into Stalinist parties not an historic mission for Stalinism but its downfall. However, we must also see the very important place that the revolutionary cadres assembled in the Stalinist parties have for us in our struggle to build Bolshevik parties. The struggle to fashion a Bolshevik leadership, which alone can guarantee both the victory of the world proletariat and the consequent destruction of bureaucratism, has turned out to be infinitely more complex than we had imagined, and may even in some cases have to be accomplished after the first stages of revolution have deposed the capitalist class from power. To those comrades who find this thought "shocking" we must point out that this is already the case in China, Yugoslavia, Korea, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, partly in Eastern Germany, and finally, in . . . the Soviet Union itself where this has been the case for many years! — although this case originated in a different way. In any event, Hansen's exhortations to "build Bolshevik parties" are hardly required. What we need now is more understanding of how this can be done, and on this score Hansen has added nothing but confusion to our discussion.

11. Korea — Hansen's Line in Practice

A section of Hansen's article called "Applied in Practice" is devoted to the Korean war. One's eyes blink with astonishment upon reading this most deplorable section of a deplorable tract. It is all wrong, in fact, in analysis, in method and in conclusions.

Hansen undertakes to reply to a question which he says was posed in the New York discussion: "What are you going to tell a North Korean worker — that his leadership is counter-revolutionary?" This question is both specific and general. It raises a certain point of propaganda and it also raises more general questions of tactics and strategy in the revolutionary situation in Korea, and in similar situations, such as Indochina, Malaya, Iran, and in the prototypes of all such situations, China.

Hansen replies by shifting over to a discussion of the *role of the Kremlin itself*, which we all know to be treacherous and limiting. But our problem in this instance is not the Kremlin. It is the Chinese-Korean Stalinist parties in Korea, parties which have been "pushed out of the strict orbit of imperialism" and have projected "a revolutionary orientation," that is, entered upon a struggle for power, in the terms used by the Third Congress. Do we label these parties and their role as "counter-revolutionary"? What estimates do we make, what tactics do we adopt toward those parties and in those situations? The Congress said in this regard that "the Fourth International cannot permit itself a repetition of the errors of evaluation committed in the past regarding Yugoslavia or China." It is significant that Hansen, in his treatment of this major problem, *has not one single word to say regarding these major errors of the past.*

Hansen's entire section on Korea draws only one lesson: Stalinism undermines the revolution. In order to restrict himself to this lesson, he leaves out of consideration entirely the *civil war character* which the Korean war assumed from the very beginning despite Stalinism

and against Stalinism, or even working through Stalinist parties against the wishes of the Kremlin. That fact is the starting point for revolutionary work in the colonial upsurges and elsewhere where Stalinism dominates. It is at one and the same time the true source of revolutionary optimism and confidence in the destruction of Stalinist bureaucratism.

Hansen tried to obscure this point not only by leaving it out entirely, but by comparison between Korea and . . . the Russian October! This method is no more valid in discovering the true character of the Korean events than previous attempts we have seen to work out the character of, let us say, the Yugoslav state by comparisons with Russia under Lenin and Trotsky. In general, our thought must work, not through "norms" but through the direct analysis of reality. But even for the moment accepting the comparison, Hansen is by no means correct in his discussion of this point.

He explains on Page 23 that in Russia of 1918-21, "the imperialist powers were compelled to withdraw *because on the political plane the Bolsheviks were more powerful than they were.*" He then tries to make it appear that in Korea, the situation is not only quantitatively, but *absolutely* different. That is not true. The North Korean regime and the Chinese ally have scored victories in Korea against overwhelming material odds, or have held their own against them "*because on the political plane they are and have been 'more powerful' than Syngman Rhee and U.S. imperialism!*" Their superiority in this respect is not equal to that of the Bolsheviks in their civil war, but it is of the same order, as it was also in the Chinese civil war. It is this fact that Hansen neglects to note in his discussion of Korea, despite the fact that the paper has hammered at this point from the beginning. For example, in the July 31, 1950 issue there is a statement by Comrade Cannon which points out:

"Whatever the wishes of the Kremlin, a class war has been unfolding in Korea. The North Korean regime, desiring to mobilize popular support, has decreed land reforms and taken nationalization measures in the territories it has won. The establishment of peoples' committees has been reported.

"These reforms, these promises of a better economic and social order have attracted the peasants and workers. This prospect of a new life is what has imbued a starving subject people with the will to fight to the death. This is the 'secret weapon' that has wrested two-thirds of South Korea from U.S. imperialism and its native agents and withstood the troop and bombing fleets of mighty Wall Street."

We have seen this spirit maintained to this day, even in the prison camps of the U.S. Army in one of the most remarkable displays of revolutionary ardor in the annals of the struggle of oppressed peoples. It is certainly true that the revolutionary regime and its ally have been stronger than its opponents on the political plane. That is just about the only plane on which it has been stronger. Not to see this is to see nothing about Korea. Nor does this detract from the far greater and more consciously planned achievements of the Bolsheviks in their civil war.

Hansen complains about elements of chauvinism against American troops that have been contained in Stalinist propaganda. If you want to see real chauvinism, examine

the treatment of German soldiers in the war against Hitler. There you had an almost unrelieved anti-German chauvinism by the Kremlin. The German soldiers were treated as beasts and their captured generals were elevated to "free Germany" committees. In Korea the civil war character breaks through in the fact that the captured U.S. soldiers are given good treatment (which they testify to and no one disputes) and instruction in "communism," while the Korean PW's themselves capture American generals and squeeze them for concessions!

The real comparison that must be made if our party is to learn from the Korean events is not between Korea and October but between Korea and Spain. In Spain GPU gunmen shot down revolutionists who wanted to give a civil war character to the struggle against Franco. In Korea the Communist parties unleashed a civil war and the Kremlin was forced to go along. The difference is in the fact that the revolution here is proving stronger than the Kremlin. Hansen points to the fact that the Kremlin withheld arms from Korea during the first stages of the struggle. But in Spain they withheld arms too, and then doled out inferior arms for money. In Korea, the difference has been that side by side with the Kremlin there now lives the Chinese revolution which came to the aid of Korea with arms, planes, tanks, guns which it itself had squeezed out of the Kremlin, and with great armies in addition!

The events in Korea are not novel in that they demonstrate counter-revolutionary proclivities on the part of the Kremlin, but in the fact that they show the tendencies of October breaking through once again in the world despite Stalinism. This reinforces our movement as against all others, none of which foresaw this or built upon it. It also gives our movement a new starting point in the colonial world in the existence of great revolutionary movements. The strategy which follows from this is penetration of those movements, which first and above all means participation and self-establishment through becoming the best fighters in the existing struggles. Without that all talk of "strategy" and "tactics" and "pointing things out" is nothing but empty verbiage. It is this that is required to put ourselves in the position to take advantage of dissatisfaction with Stalinist policies or with bureaucratic domination and come to the fore as leaders on our own program.

Along these lines we can approach the tactical and strategic problems of our work. Within this framework, we are in a position to return to the question which Comrade Hansen says was advanced in New York: Do we tell a North Korean worker that his leadership is counter-revolutionary? It would seem to me that this question should be easy to reply to, particularly in view of the fact that the Third World Congress has described this leadership not as "counter-revolutionary" but as outside the orbit of imperialism and as having projected a revolutionary orientation. But Hansen does not answer this question in that way. Instead he strongly hints that, were we in a position to do so, we should indeed tell North Korean workers that their leadership is counter-revolutionary, in Hansen's words "according to time and place and with due regard for his own safety and the sensibilities of those he hopes to win to his views."

What is my answer to the New York comrade? It is

this: that such a line would be the purest sectarian wind-bagism, having nothing in common with a Bolshevik course. I would not advise him to do this any more than I advised miner-comrades during the wartime and post-war coal strikes, either in their unions or in personal discussion with miners, to peddle the line that John L. Lewis is a strikebreaker. I would not be governed here by considerations of "his own safety" or "the sensibilities of others" only. I would consider such a line wrong in fact in this situation and criminal in practice. Such a line would represent a mis-construction of the role that the Korean and Chinese CPs are playing in this struggle, and would close the road to progress for us. This would be true if our comrades carried this line into action and speech, *but it would be just as true if they only carried it in their heads.* With such an attitude it would be impossible to make a future for Bolshevism in the East, whether in China, in Korea or anywhere else in those struggles. This must be understood very clearly, because we have already had too many sectarian disasters.

The task of building a rival leadership, of building a nucleus for Bolshevism within these Stalinist-led revolutionary movements, is a necessary and indispensable task. In all probability sections of the present CP membership and even leadership will play a role in this process as rifts within Stalinism arise. The Bolshevik will aid in this process by opposing false policies or bureaucratic rigidity and suppression of proletarian initiative as they arise in the process of the struggle itself. Those who think that this process can be forced faster than the masses themselves are willing to go are making a big mistake. It is necessary above all in such a struggle to guide our tactics by the view which the masses take towards their own leadership. We cannot impose our view upon them from the outside, but must help them to learn from their own experiences. In this process, nothing could be a worse handicap than a sectarian and ultraleft evaluation of the Chinese-Korean Stalinist parties as "counter-revolutionary."

12. Bolivia Turned Upside Down

Hansen's misunderstandings about Korea find their complement in his discussion of Stalinism in a Trotskyist-led mass upsurge. Hansen writes of Bolivia on Page 19 as follows:

"You might think that of all places the Kremlin would be especially concerned here to give an active revolution a push—at least a bit of nominal aid. After all Bolivia can prove to be the Achilles heel of U.S. imperialism—it is only necessary to visualize the consequences of that revolution catching on in other Latin American provinces of Wall Street's empire. Yet the Bolivian Stalinists are in the camp of President Paz who is now receiving aid from the State Department which obviously hopes to utilize him to contain the revolution and later liberate the tin mines."

There are many misunderstandings in this paragraph. In the first place no one has said that the Kremlin has become revolutionary or even that the *Kremlin* projects a revolutionary orientation under exceptional circumstances. All of this is Hansen's invention. The Kremlin does not project any such struggles for power on the part of its parties; on the contrary it does its best to prevent

this. Stalinist parties have done this only against the will of the Kremlin and only under exceptional circumstances. In Bolivia the exceptional circumstances are not only missing but one exceptional circumstance, Trotskyist pre-dominance, makes it extremely improbable that any but an absolutely exceptional Stalinist party, ready to break at once with the Kremlin, could join in the movement which we dominate.

This attempt to use Bolivia as a shield against the problems raised by Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, China, Korea, Indo-China, Malaya, etc., calls to mind the manner in which Shachtman tried to use the Baltic countries as a shield behind which to hide from the reality of Poland, etc. Trotsky replied:

"Seeking to get around reality, namely that nothing else but the social foundations of the USSR forced a social revolutionary program upon the Kremlin, Shachtman refers to Lithuania, Esthonia and Latvia where everything has remained as of old. An incredible argument! No one has said that the Soviet bureaucracy *always* and *everywhere* either wishes or is able to accomplish the expropriation of the bourgeoisie." (*In Defense of Marxism*, Page 131.)

Nor has anyone said that Stalinist parties *always* and *everywhere* either can or will take the road of a struggle for power.

Exactly the case of Bolivia, where the Trotskyist movement is strong and plays a leading role, where a revolutionary upsurge is entirely out of the control of the Kremlin, is a case where the Kremlin, redoubling its usual efforts, would do everything to prevent a revolutionary orientation on the part of a Stalinist party. Hansen's estimate, that "You might think that of all places the Kremlin would be especially concerned" to push the Bolivian revolution, is not at all what I think. I think that in Bolivia of all places the Kremlin would be concerned to keep the Trotskyist-led movement out of power.

Whether in Latin America in the future any movements will develop under Stalinist leadership which will go over to a revolutionary offensive under the impetus of the masses and thus lay the groundwork for a break with the Kremlin or for a semi-independent status in the Chinese manner is something that remains to be seen. Secretary of State Dulles recently took a good look at Latin America and said that it looks to him about like China looked in the Thirties. The Guatemalan CP today appears to hold the balance of power in that country and has been the motive force behind the continuation of the revolution into the present stage of agrarian reform. We do not have too much information about this party, and have no way of determining whether it will be possible for this party to divest itself of the bourgeois-coalition policy which it today follows and of Kremlin limitations and strike out for independent power.

The analysis of Stalinist parties, the forces that work upon them and the course they may be compelled to take cannot, in any event, be decided by mechanically fixed abstractions. Unfortunately, that is what Hansen tries to do, both in Korea and Bolivia. He operates with the rigid abstraction: "counter-revolutionary," and tries to attribute to his opponents the opposite category as their working tool: "revolutionary." The Stalinist parties, particularly where they lead mass movements, are profoundly contradictory, and analyses of any of these parties must,

besides starting from correct theoretical premises, be quite concrete and related to the relationships and pressures within the specific country, the nature of the other forces, the international situation, etc. The abstraction "Stalinism" used to serve us quite well when Stalinism was relatively homogeneous; the process of differentiation makes this too-general term far less useful today. It must give way to a more concrete examination of the particular phenomenal forms taken by Stalinism: the Kremlin, Chinese CP, British CP, etc. But Hansen continues to try to operate with rigid concepts and we have seen how he runs up against extreme difficulties.

13. *The "Credit" of the Soviet Union*

On Page 17, Hansen discusses the attitude of the workers outside the Soviet Union to the Soviet state:

"What have been the consequences since the end of World War II of the repeated purges inside the Soviet Union and the GPU's encirclement of the Soviet workers *against* the workers abroad? The renewed credit won by the victory of the Soviet Union in the struggle against German imperialism was dissipated in a few short years."

There is another important mis-estimate here, and one which moreover can have serious consequences in the form of a misunderstanding of the crisis in the Stalinist movements which lies beneath the surface. Although there are millions of workers who have been repelled by Stalinist dictatorship, and in Europe this is especially true in West Germany, it is not correct to say that "the renewed credit" has been dissipated. In the first place, the credit was won not only by military victory but also by the enormous economic progress of the Soviet bloc, and also by revolutionary successes on the part of movements remaining within the Kremlin orbit and thus casting reflected glory on the Kremlin, which is not at all averse to taking credit for victories it tried to prevent. This credit has been gathered since the victory over Hitlerism and is *by no means* dissipated.

In the second place this is not only a question of credit but of *power*. The vast growth of Soviet power holds many millions in the Soviet orbit everywhere because this seems to them to be the force which can aid in the victory of socialism in Europe and Asia. Thus the present attractive power of the Soviet Union, which undeniably is very great, consists of a mixture of "credit" for victories and for economic growth, and of respect for and reliance upon Soviet power without which the revolutionary workers see U.S. imperialism dominating the world. This is not the same as the enormous moral and programmatic power wielded by the Bolsheviks in the days when they shook the world and founded a new international. But we must analyze it for what it is in order to see how things may proceed from here and how we may proceed with them.

With the growth of this form of "credit" and respect, a new element has been mixed into the alloy of world pro-Soviet movements. That is the element of suspicion, doubt, mistrust and outright antipathy directed against the bureaucracy. No longer does the Stalinist movement consist solely of docile and trusting blinded people. As the movement has grown larger to embrace substantial segments of the best elements of the class, and as these elements feel a showdown struggle approaching and the hope for victory grows, dissatisfactions with the bureau-

cracy assume a more prominent place in their thinking. The monolithism of the apparatus shows cracks under the strains thus produced. Muffled contests go on over line and leadership. Moods and feelings which reject the prospect of a totalitarianism on the Soviet style grow, perhaps with the added amendment: "That kind of stuff may be all right for *them*, but we don't want it."

We must never forget that by incorporating millions into its parties abroad, Stalinism has taken into the Kremlin camp a potentially explosive force in the form of large numbers of independent-minded workers who were not trained in the tight groups of the pre-war days, but in the World War II underground, and in the great swell of struggles of the post-war period. Monolithic discipline cannot control the minds and feelings of these workers.

However, and this is very important to understand, *their mood has not become one of rejecting either the struggle for socialism or the Soviet camp of which they are now a part.* Rather, the moods of dissatisfaction express themselves in grumbling and oppositional tendencies within the Stalinist parties. This is above all the lesson of the recent Marty-Tillon events in France. I asked a French Stalinist, a young wartime partisan commander (moreover not sympathetic to Marty-Tillon), how much support these two leaders had. He told me: "They have no organized support. But they have half the party. Half of every member is with them." This same Stalinist, for whom Thorez is the French Lenin, spoke in the most disparaging terms of the Russian and U.S. Communist parties. He knew, I might add, that he was talking to a Trotskyist. And he was ready to discuss and even criticize his own movement, but showed no present mood to leave that movement.

It is in this form, not in the form of "dissipated credit" that the crisis of mass Stalinist parties exists as a potential factor in Europe and Asia. And it is very important to understand this in order to comprehend the work that our small forces can do. Here again, Hansen's comments are nothing but a signpost pointing to confusion.

14. What Is the Danger?

Hansen has embarked upon a crusade to safeguard the political integrity of our movement. He even calls one section of his document by the pretentious title "In Defense of Trotskyism." But he never once stops to make a really serious analysis of the dangers threatening our movement and the class pressures at work upon it in the U.S. He does not see our Marxist line threatened by the hammer blows of American imperialism or the heavy weight of the dead hand of tradition that always holds a movement back when a new political situation comes into being, but he expresses great fears over the (relatively speaking) pin pricks of the U.S. Stalinist party and sees a threat of all kinds of disorientation from that side. He fails to notice which side persecutes us and robs us of members and possible recruits by its pressure. And finally, he fails to notice that we have fallen into a series of political errors in the last years, *all on one side and all of them in the direction of vulgar anti-Stalinism.* Hansen arms himself with the latest thing in the way of psychological tools and goes to work on the "moods" and "pessimism" of "a section of the party." Is this the materialist approach to be expected from a disciple of Trotsky?

One of the planks in the program set forth by Hansen in the closing pages of his document reads as follows: "We are prepared to take full advantage of the difficulties faced by Stalinism. This requires (a) opposition to Stalinophobia and (b) opposition to conciliation toward Stalinism." If all problems were as simple as Comrade Hansen makes them, life would certainly be a bowl of cherries.

We must first ask: If opposition to Stalinophobia is placed by Hansen on an equal level with opposition to Stalinism, why is it that his document centers all its fire against a "pro-Stalinist" tendency which does not exist in fact, which he cannot produce in corporeal documented form but only in the ghostly form of corridor gossip, slander and distortion? This doesn't look to me like equal-handed justice. Has Hansen failed to see the existence in the party of tendencies which to this very day refuse to recognize the overturn in Eastern Europe which created new workers' states? Has he failed to see a trend of thought which wants to pretend that nothing has changed, that there has been no left turn by the Stalinist movements, which believes that we can meet the Stalinist movement today in exactly the same way we met it in its past period? Does he not recognize that this trend of thinking has prevented many of our movements from comprehending reality, and has led to disaster in a number of important countries? He does not have so much as a single word to say about this matter!

We might be willing to compromise, in the present situation, for Comrade Hansen's golden mean. Let him give us at least as much education against Stalinophobia as he does in the opposite direction. In reality, however, the main danger in our party has for years been from the quarter opposite to that on which Hansen has trained his artillery. This is the pressure of U.S. imperialism and its Stalinophobe allies in the union movement. It is easy to furnish proof for this even without going into details, for all our members know the picture.

We have lost many hundreds of people to the imperialist camp and its pressure during the last 15 years. This has even taken the form of sizable Stalinophobe splits. Moreover, even among worker-recruits there were not a few who showed this pressure. Could it be otherwise in this country? I personally have heard good worker-militants, former members of our union fractions, explain that they are worried by "the menace of Stalinism" and that "we must defend ourselves against Moscow." I have never seen any workers leave us to go to the Communist Party.

Walk out into the streets of downtown New York and try to throw a rock in any direction without hitting some confirmed Stalinophobe ex-member who will explain how "terrible" Stalinism is and also add a few words for your edification about the "good sides" of American capitalism. You can hardly miss. Union staffs across the country, fancy Wall Street magazines, right-wing political groups, government bureaus—all of these exhibit in their show windows a few ex-Trotskyists who would satisfy our most demanding critics by their "hardness" against Stalinism.

But I don't know of a single person who has left our movement for the Communist Party since the spring of 1936 when Reich, Hallet and Arnold Johnson, at least two of whom were Stalinist agents, went to the CP. And I don't see any exodus in that direction right now, although I do see some here and there taking their bows

I will add a few observations of my own.

Hansen quotes the following remark made by Bartell: "Indeed, their movement, the C.P., could be said to be rife with 'Trotskyist conciliationism.'" He demands to know what I think about this remark. I must point out first that Comrade Hansen neglects, as usual, to give his own appraisal of the situation in the Stalinist ranks. He confines himself to pointing out what others say. But the party already knows what Bartell says about this. What does Hansen say? That nothing has changed in the relation between the Stalinist ranks and ourselves? Or that perhaps there has been a considerable change, but Bartell exaggerates? We may be able to arrange a compromise with Hansen if only we can get some idea of *his* estimate.

Permit me to quote a couple of paragraphs from the report of the organizer of the Seattle Branch, Comrade Clara Kaye, who is herself, if I understand her views, friendly to Hansen's viewpoint:

"The efforts of the Stalinists and Progressives to get across their class-collaborationist peace line, met with little success outside their own circles, a few ministers and pacifists excepted. This was due not only to the witch-hunt atmosphere, but to the fact that the Stalinists are thoroughly discredited in the eyes of most union militants and liberals. *Their line on peace and civil rights, or both, was rejected by more and more prominent individuals and sections in their periphery, who recognized that this line amounted to a betrayal of socialist principle, class-struggle methods and a united front policy.*" (page 8)

"We have thoroughly succeeded in *scandalizing Stalinist anti-united-front procedure*, and in putting them sorely on the spot before concerned people. *Their attacks on us have collapsed.* They have been forced to pretend that our assistance is welcome and that they support our civil rights; but this 'turn' was made necessary by considerations of tactical expediency rather than any fundamental conciliationism in their leadership towards Trotskyism. *They have temporarily conceded to their ranks and to public opinion, because of the tight spot they find themselves in, but we cannot afford to relax our vigilance towards them and we must be prepared for further villification. Their probable attempt to send an agent into the branch availed them nothing that they could use. Some of their prominent front men are currently friendly and will discuss with us; this is all to the good.*

"We continue pounding them or offering our help, or both, as the case may be, keeping in mind possible tactical penetration. *Our offers of support to the Rosenberg case were received in silence, with no attacks forthcoming. Their ranks are more than ever inclined to welcome our aid and to resist slander attacks against us.* However, many are still cautious about discussing with us, especially those Stalinists in the unions who are under strong orders not to do so, and these unions are our best bet of reaching their proletarian elements, slowly breaking down their personal barriers against us, and persuading them into discussion, as we have successfully done in the past." (pages 11-12. All emphasis mine — H. F.)

If "their attacks on us have collapsed," if "they have temporarily conceded to their ranks" on questions of Trotskyism, if "their ranks are more than ever inclined to welcome our aid and to resist slander attacks against us," how are we to characterize this absolutely new situa-

tion, one which we have never had before in this country. We have excellent grounds to suppose that the CP leaders, their hands tied so far as moving against us is concerned by pressure from their ranks and periphery, are worried about "Trotskyist conciliationism." This must at least be the case in Seattle, and appears to be the same in New York.

How do we meet this opportunity? Comrade Hansen is all for "hardness" and accuses Bartell of "softness" in approach. Let us see. Some comrades think that vituperation is the best weapon to use on Stalinists today. Others, having already tried vituperation and found that it does not work, conclude that if the "hardest" means are inadequate, nothing will do any good. But unmeasured vituperation is not the best weapon to use on Stalinists these days; actually it is the poorest. Comrades who have had occasion to deal with Stalinists and have met with some success will affirm this.

What is a "hard" approach? Do we walk into a Stalinist meeting and, first crack out of the box, throw a knife on the table, and demand war to the death. To hear Comrade Hansen shout about "hardness" one would think that this is what he wants. But we know that such a deed would end our work before it is begun. The Stalinist leaders would say to their people: "You see, it is just as we said. These people are impossible. We want to fight against the war, and they want to fight us and disrupt everything. They only pretend to be against the war in order to do this. They are agents of Wall Street, etc. etc."

We don't want to help Foster and Co. cut us off in that fashion, so we must work a little more carefully. We move a trifle slowly until we find clear opportunities to hit the Stalinists or until we can make such opportunities to hit the Stalinists or until we can make such opportunities. The recent anti-Semitic trials offered such a chance, and we took advantage of it in a New York Compass Club to secure an officially sponsored debate between Comrade Clarke and a Stalinist speaker. But we could never have gained that if not for some months of careful work by a Brooklyn comrade who, during this entire period, has been known as a Trotskyist.

There is nothing in this mode of work, traditional in our movement, to entitle anyone to shout about "conciliation to Stalinism." There is no other proper way, and we should so advise any comrade who undertook to do this work in a serious, and not in a playboy spirit.

A certain trepidation about the prospect of hand-to-hand combat with the Stalinists on a serious basis is evident in the remarks of Comrade Hansen. He says he is for the work, but fears that our "scouts and foragers" will be "absorbed," we will "end up in disaster," etc. I don't see any signs of such "disasters" occasioned by this kind of work. But if we have such a defect, it will never be cured by insulating our people from the Stalinists; on the contrary, that would only make it worse. *A cadre is best hardened in struggle*, and struggles of this kind, involving political debate and personal discussion with Stalinists, are the best hardeners. Comrade Hansen appears fearful that, instead of convincing the Stalinists, our people would be convinced by them. But that hasn't been happening up to now. The Stalinist leaders, moreover, have always been convinced that they would suffer more damage in political debate with us than we would, and that is why they have done their best to make political debate

impossible. Now that we have broken the fences a little, we should use our advantage, engage in debate and united front maneuvers where warranted, harden some of our cadres in this kind of political struggle, educate them further, and leave the worries as to who will come off second best to those who have always had them.

16. Marxist Optimism

Much is being said in the present discussion about "optimism" and "pessimism." Hansen gives Bartell and his supporters a good beating around the head and shoulders as being "pessimistic about the American workers," etc. Curiously enough, he then accuses the same people of being such incurable optimists as to feel absolutely certain of the coming world victory of socialism, which is an optimism that Hansen thinks is injurious to our work. Before dealing with the "pessimism" let us turn to the latter charge: that of over-optimism.

In his pamphlet *Capitalism or Socialism: The Coming World Showdown*, Comrade Pablo sketched the meaning and prospects of the present epoch as follows:

"The coming world-wide conflict by its class nature, by the given relation of forces in which it will break out, will be both a *War* and a *Revolution*, a *War-Revolution*, which will really be the road to the final struggles and the decisive victory of the World Socialist Revolution over world capitalism. Such is the significance and scope of the coming conflict. This historical process began with the Russian Revolution of 1917. The war of 1939-1945, which remained fundamentally an inter-imperialist war, was indecisive and incomplete. It halted halfway. However mutilated, capitalism was able to survive. This time, instead of there being only one as before (the Soviet Union), the non-capitalist states will be powerful and numerous. But, along with all the other forces of the Revolution, they will yet have to go through another furious assault from capitalism which is fighting desperately for its survival.

"This new conflict in preparation will decide once and for all which camp will *definitively wind up an entire historical epoch*. New half-way solutions are extremely unlikely. And what if imperialism manages to conquer in spite of everything? The whole analysis we have presented actually demonstrates that this hypothesis belongs in the domain of theoretical speculation, and not of practical possibilities." (page 42)

This is the prospect open before the world working class today, a century after the Communist Manifesto. Many struggles and difficulties lie between the working class and its goal, but the goal is definitely taking shape in a tangible and realizable form on a world scale. And since we, as Marxists, have no special interests of our own separate from our class to defend, we have every reason to feel buoyant about the world trend toward the victory of our class.

While we have great confidence in our world prospects, it goes without saying that we shall have to pass through many difficulties, repressions, ebbs in the struggle, etc. We are in a period of such difficulty in the U.S. right now.

There are those in our party who feel that morale can only be maintained by a bumptious gasconade intended to "cheer up" members in difficult times. The truth is some-

what different. Party morale derives from two things: a theory and a class; Marxist understanding and connections with the class struggle. While literary and oratorical effects can be used to put the best possible face on these sole solid grounds for optimism, they are not and cannot be the *source* of optimism. Any outlook that seeks to ground itself mainly in grandiloquence and fanfaronade is bound to produce either fake optimism or sectarian cocksureness. The one is as bad as the other. Both of these kinds of "optimists" live on the ragged edge of despair and desperation.

Lenin, who was the greatest party-builder in the history of the working class, was profoundly steeped in socialist optimism, but was at the same time the most businesslike and unpretentious of men. This is true of his personal characteristics, but it is even more true of his political methods. In the dark hours he addressed himself to the task at hand, that of finding some starting point for work, without canonical assurances or exhortations to faith. In the days of glory and victory, he hammered insistently at the party to purge it of all elements of self-satisfaction and complacency. He was particularly bitter against the "com-boasts," the communist boosters who were the Babbitts of the revolutionary era, and he shocked many members of his party repeatedly by raising the possibility of defeat in the civil war and of capitalist counter-revolution.

Lenin never preached optimism as a creed; nor did he ever make the fatal fool's error of trying to derive a political line from the word itself, as we see being done in our party today. *He did not preach optimism, but he did supply the grounds for it with his analytical work.* People who studied Lenin could come away with a more optimistic view, not because of any bombast, nor even because the perspective of the moment happened to be a good one (it could be dark) but simply because they came away better-equipped for their tasks. Leaders who do not do this cannot really give us optimism. They can give us something else, the contagion of personality, the emotion of the moment perhaps, but no more.

There are those who do not care for Lenin's method and prefer a different "tone" of work. That is their privilege. One thing to be said for Lenin's sobriety as an approach to problems of "optimism" and "pessimism" is that it worked quite brilliantly. We are not speaking here of variations in tone and approach. Different people are compelled by factors of background, temperament and training to work differently. But when we are asked to carry on a discussion in the midst of shouts of "optimism, optimism uber alles," then we must draw the line at such uncritical hoopla and at attempts to stampede a party discussion by roseate belligerency used as a substitute for analysis. We cannot derive a line and perspective from "optimism": rather, we can only begin to be optimistic if we have been able to work out a correct line and perspective.

Shouts about "optimism" and "pessimism" in the party discussion have concentrated around two main themes: prospects in the U.S., and world Stalinism. With regard to the first of the two, there is a clamor about our "defeatism" and "pessimism" about the American working class. In reality, we do not have any such pessimism in our ranks, but only a perfectly correct spirit of resistance against those who misread the mood of the working class *today* and who have fantastic illusions about "start-

ing to build the left wing in the unions now," about significant radical currents in the population, etc. Comrade Hansen enters this discussion with his usual half answer, half feint. He says on page 28:

"The same basic error is apparent in the unfounded pessimism (even cynicism) over the character of the mass movement in America. The defeatist mood, sluggish mentality, concern for privileges and reactionary politics of the trade union bureaucracy are identified with the ranks it heads. The American workers, in fact, preserve their full revolutionary potential and are even now gathering their forces in molecular fashion for great new steps forward that can place the whole question of the socialist revolution on the agenda in the not too distant future."

Comrade Hansen has the right, if he does not already do so, to pride himself as being a master of "slick" terminology, and on being able to throw in phrases that confuse and obscure more than they clarify and reveal. His first sentence makes an accusation (pessimism about the workers). His second sentence sets forth his interpretation of what comrades are saying about the *present* mood of the American workers. Then, as we wait for an opinion from Comrade Hansen about the mood of the American workers *right now*, he skips off and goes into a song and dance about *their future*. Again Hansen leaves us completely in the dark as to his whereabouts. That is the way a sniper operates; from ambush against a public target.

We base our program, even our very existence, upon the future of the American working class. But we do not base our tactics upon future events but upon *present conditions and possibilities*.

The process of mass upsurge in the world will continue and deepen until it includes the American proletariat. That is not determined by our course, but independently of our course, by forces over which we have no power. We can only determine the role we shall play in that revolt and our role may determine the success or failure of the movement. We have no guardian angel that assures us of our role, nor is there any automatism in history that does so. Since we are neither religionists nor fatalists, but dialectical materialists, we must understand this. It is true that history requires the creation of a revolutionary party, but unless we conduct ourselves as such a party should, we will not be that party.

To succeed in playing our role in history we must purge our movement of every trace of sectarian narrowness, of every element of thoughtless bluff and bluster, of every bit of false confidence that does not derive from objective fact and Marxist analysis. We must fight for our goal with tenacity and realism; we must not permit complacency to invade our ranks. We must not place all our hopes in being "clean" and "separate"; the workers are far less interested in the betrayals we *didn't* commit than they are in what we actually *have done and can do*. "Purity" and "independence," when they reduce themselves simply to not doing anything wrong or compromising, become purely negative qualities which can never build a mass party.

There are some comrades who think it the height of revolutionary optimism to preach the outbreak of a depression, mass radicalization and even revolution in this country *prior to* a war. This would of course be a fine variant, the best of all possible, but have we the right

to count on it? When Lenin in March 1918 was confronted by those who wanted to be "optimists," who wanted to count on the outbreak of a German and international revolution, he answered very sharply:

"Yes, we will see the international world revolution, but for the time being it is a very good fairy tale, a very beautiful fairy tale—I quite understand children liking beautiful fairy tales. But, I ask, is it becoming for a serious revolutionary to believe in fairy tales?" (Selected Works, Vol. VII, p. 297)

It is unfortunate that we have grown to shrink from the Leninist habit of characterizing leftist chatter in these forthright terms. And yet the prospect of a German and European revolution in 1918 was stronger than the present prospect of an American uprising *prior* to the developing war. What effect can such "fairy tales" as we hear circulated today in the party about "building a mass party" before the war, about "building the left wing in the unions now," etc., etc.; what effect can such tales have other than to disorient the vanguard and prepare for demoralization? This is done in the name of "optimism."

Marxists have no need for fairy tale optimism. We need a far more serious view of reality, and we need the fortitude that can develop only from such a view. That is our optimism, and that is the optimism that can build the party of victory in America.

With regard to pessimism about Stalinism and our world prospects, the situation in our party is somewhat different. *There is such a mood of pessimism in our ranks*. While there is no trend toward capitulation to Stalinism, there is a trend to capitulation *before* Stalinism. Increasingly, comrades tend to abandon that portion of the world and of the mass movement dominated by Stalinism. The theory appears to be taking hold: wherever the Stalinists are on top, all is lost. The conception of a world which can be redeemed from bondage *only in one specified way*, by our victory in other portions of the globe, is rapidly taking hold in our movement.

It cannot be denied that the chief immediate prospects of our movement are in those places where Stalinism does not predominate. But we abandon nothing to Stalinism. We do not surrender before the monolithism of the bureaucratic apparatus because we know that the class struggle is stronger than any such apparatus. The very victories of Stalinism prepare its doom.

Everything in this epoch which does not rest upon the forward march of the proletariat is mortal and will die. In this sense Stalinism is just as mortal as any other tendency within the labor movement which draws its strength from the existence of capitalism, the pressure of alien classes, and the immaturity of the working class.

We for our part do not retreat, do not become downhearted, do not take refuge in any one-shot "now or never" perspectives, which see a possibility for Marxism "only if" the revolutions in Western Europe are not led by Stalinist parties, "only if" we can manage to build mass parties before the war, "only if" rebellion breaks out in the Soviet Union, or any other "only if." There are no "only ifs" for us. Difficulties will not crush us. We have confidence in our analysis of our epoch. That analysis and the confidence which flows from it are twofold: The revolution will conquer, and the revolution will right itself! We cannot know what the precise forms and tempo of this process will be, and how its two facets will work out in relation

to one another. We do know the moving forces of this twofold process. Knowing this enables Marxists to live without illusions, without whining, without desperate hopes for "quick changes." Ill-founded hopes and last-ditch perspectives only sow the seeds of disillusionment, despair and desertion.

We base ourselves upon the objective forces in the world, and feel sure that these objective forces will in the long run remedy subjective defects. This gives us our confidence in the world triumph of the Marxist program. Beyond

that, we have a guarantee of our future role only in our own comprehension, skill and energy; our loyalty to our doctrine and our class and our ability to apply that doctrine within that class. These are the only guarantees of the growth of our ideas and forces, and these are the only guarantees Marxists need.

New York, N.Y.
April 2, 1953

SECTION V: PABLO'S ROLE IN THE COCHRAN FIGHT

[Although Pablo declined to take an open stand in the early stages of the dispute, the Cochran-Clarke-Bartell faction in the SWP insisted with great confidence that it represented his views in the SWP. When James P. Cannon wrote to Pablo seeking clarification on this, he received an answer that was evasive except on one point: Pablo expressed a clear preference for Harry Frankel's document on Stalinism over that written by Joseph Hansen (see the previous volume of this series). He also admitted in a letter to George Novack that he had been maintaining correspondence with the minority faction without informing the SWP leaders of this fact.

[Despite a statement from the International Secretariat praising the unity agreement reached at the May 1953 Plenum of the SWP National Committee by the two factions, (see *Speeches to the Party*, Pathfinder Press, 1973 for material from this plenum) the SWP majority leadership was becoming convinced by Pablo's evasiveness that he was indeed giving encouragement to the Cochran-Clarke-Bartell grouping behind the scenes. They objected to the fact that this political intervention in the SWP struggle was carried on without the knowledge of the party leadership.

[Even more serious, if Pablo was encouraging a revisionist faction in the SWP, it meant that he must be in fundamental agreement with them on the political questions in dispute. The SWP leaders decided to raise a discussion of these issues internationally.

[Pablo, backed by the Bureau (Pablo, Ernest Germain,

and Pierre Frank) of the International Secretariat, responded to these developments by adopting an increasingly threatening tone. The SWP leaders were warned against any attempt to organize a tendency against what was called "the whole international leadership." In these letters, the Pablo leadership criticized positions taken by the SWP on East Germany and other questions. These criticisms made their sympathy with the views of Cochran-Clarke-Bartell much clearer.

[Pablo replied in September to Cannon's speech, "Internationalism and the SWP" (reprinted in *Speeches to the Party*, Pathfinder Press, 1973, pp. 67). In this article, "Some Very Strange Conceptions of Internationalism and the International," he challenged Cannon's opposition to the use of Comintern-like centralism in the Fourth International. According to Pablo, internationalism required "relying with full confidence on the line, the judgement and the discipline of the international movement as a whole."

[Pablo indicated his perspectives for the coming struggle by the tone of his remarks (he describes Cannon's speech as the "most revolting projections of a complex which is now exploding with unprecedented brutishness."). He threatened, in effect, to split politically with the SWP unless it changed its course.

[The language of this document was not calculated to assuage fears that Pablo headed a secret faction that intended to finish with the older cadres of the International, unless they agreed to "rely with full confidence" on Pablo's line.]

1. Letter from Michel Pablo, Ernest Germain, and Pierre Frank to Farrell Dobbs, Morris Stein, and Joseph Hansen

February 13, 1953

Dear Comrades FD, MS and JH:

Manuel has shown us your letter to him. It gives notice of the rupture of the truce, the beginning of a violent struggle of tendencies. It goes without saying that we desire to receive as quickly as possible all the documents which will enable us to understand the precise meaning of the positions of the two tendencies.

We are very much troubled by the international consequences of this struggle. Before decisive political steps

are taken in one sense or another, we deem it necessary to make precise our view on the two paramount questions:

(a) We will be resolutely against any tendency or attempt to transform the American organization into a propaganda group whose essential activity would be directed towards the workers following the Stalinists in the United States. Our documents, those of the Third World Congress, the report to the 10th Plenum as well as the report to the 12th Plenum, do not lend themselves to any equivocation on the subject.

In order to carry out your fundamental tasks, your organization should center its main efforts on the real mass movement of your country, out of which will inevitably emerge the major forces of opposition to imperialism and the war within the United States.

(b) We will be no less resolutely against all attempts to bring in question the general line of the Third Congress. As to the question of Stalinism especially, which you see as involved in your discussion, we would like you to know our point of view which is as follows:

It is evident that in the period now facing us of settlement of final accounts, the Soviet bureaucracy will provide us with some demonstrations of the most abominable betrayals ever perpetrated by it against the world socialist revolution, but it is no less evident that the counter-revolutionary character of the Soviet bureaucracy does not sum up and will not sum up the *whole* policy of this bureaucracy. In this policy, in effect, the no less ferocious desire of the bureaucracy enters in of defending its privileges and its power against imperialism, that is, of defending the Soviet Union in its own manner. This *contradictory* nature of the Soviet bureaucracy, its *double role*, will be exacerbated, *both sides*, more and more by the *new objective conditions* in which this bureaucracy is now placed. Only this double role can enable us to understand such questions as: the evolution of the peoples' democracies from 1944 to 1950 ending in the destruction by bureaucratic-military means of capitalism after a phase of preserving capitalism in these countries; the different phases in Stalin's attitude towards the Chinese revolution ending in the present alliance with the Chinese Peoples' Republic in the face of the threat of imperialism which weighs on both countries; the war in Korea and Vietnam; the current

policies of the CP's; the relations between the Soviet bureaucracy, the CP's and the revolutionary mass movements; the Kremlin's policy in the face of the accelerated war preparation of imperialism, etc.

All attempts to place in question this line of our movement established by the Third World Congress and based fundamentally on the traditional Trotskyist conceptions of Stalinism which might develop out of the discussion in your party on the problems concerning the tactics to be adopted at present in the United States; all attempts to create new confusion in one sense or another on this problem will immensely hurt our international movement.

Our movement was armed by the Third World Congress with a correct analysis of all these questions concerning Stalinism, with a clear, revolutionary perspective, and with a general orientation of sinking roots in the real mass movement of each country. It is this analysis, this perspective, this orientation which has already permitted it to make remarkable progress in several countries and which assures its future. We note moreover with satisfaction that you affirm your complete agreement with this fundamental line of the Third World Congress.

On the eve of decisive class battles on a world scale; on the eve of very serious tests for your own organization, the loss of the ideological cohesion of the international Trotskyist movement would be the worst blow which could come to us. We place our confidence in all the cadres of the American organization avoiding such an eventuality as placing in question the acquisitions of the Third World Congress.

Very fraternally,
Gabe, Germain, Pierre.

2. Letter from Gerry Healy to Morris Stein, Farrell Dobbs, and Joseph Hansen

London
Feb. 19, 1953

Dear Morris, Farrell and Joe, .

Please excuse my delay in commenting on your recent letter which M. showed me. I have also seen the letter from E. G. & P. to you and in addition it has been possible for me to discuss with them on the spot. This letter, however, is purely personal, although John expressed himself in agreement with the general line I take.

From your letter and minutes, the situation appears extremely sharp. Something big is coming up the line—or all our past experiences of such things count for nothing. On occasions such as this we must bring all our thoughts to bear upon the overall picture of our world movement. The problem is not simply Cochran—all sorts of questions can be posed, with serious consequences for our whole work.

First, the war seems to be getting very near. Since the end of the last one, our sections in Western Europe have had a rough time, splits and sharp internal fights have taken a severe toll, both in England and France. In other countries, lack of cadres has held us back considerably. Over the past year, it is my distinct impression that the

picture on an overall scale has distinctly improved (despite the PCI split). Some very serious work in the mass movements is being done now, and in France in particular. Everyone wants to get on with the job and the nearness of the war adds to their determination.

My first feeling, therefore, is one of extreme worry—are we threatened with another international split? If so we must avoid it at all costs. Our movement must not go into the war, smashed up and divided.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am for the fullest political clarification—this is basic, but it is not wrong to consider all things in an objective way before the fight starts. This is the worst possible time for yourselves and the international. It is not 1939. The steady activity of the Secretariat has co-ordinated and guided our work to a semblance of world organization entirely unknown then. Whatever happens with you will have almost instantaneous repercussions over the most important countries.

Let me add one thing more. I am fully aware that our secretariat has some defects, but it is the best—the very best we have ever had. Their letter to you, in my opinion, is not too good. What it says politically is O.K., but there was no need for a sermon on Stalinism. The line is what is

important. There is agreement to support the SWP against a propaganda orientation towards Stalinism. There is agreement on the line of the 3rd Congress—these are the things which are most important. So far as we are concerned here, we will stand firm on these two blanks.

I realize that there may be some comrades in your majority who oppose the 3rd Congress resolution on Stalinism. That is a complication. Negativism on this point could very well feed people in the Cochran camp who may be dithering about on the Stalinist issue. We must have clarity all round, no matter whose toes may be trodden

on. For instance: S. [Sam Gordon] here took it upon himself to bring to G's notice that he opposes the 3rd Congress on Stalinism. O.K., but it is not *our line* and we should certainly defend the line of the international if called upon to do so.

It is absolutely necessary to proceed as cautiously as possible (I know you are doing your best) because we do not wish to have a split in our still very weak international movement.

Best wishes,
Jerry

3. Letter from Michel Pablo to George Novack

March 23, 1953

Dear Friend:

I have received your letter which I naturally awaited with much impatience. What you write me about the atmosphere in the Party, and more especially Clarke's reactions in the PC toward you during the discussion of your report and the projected tour you ought to undertake, saddened me much. I will let him know my opinion on this matter.

Naturally it is not a question of yielding to this or that sentiment but of politically reacting, discerning the political essence of the matter, then taking this position or that, and striving to orient the struggle, henceforth inevitable, toward as progressive an outcome as possible for the whole of the movement nationally and internationally.

The political basis of the struggle is not yet sufficiently clear to me personally. I have read only the first documents, the last being Hansen's article.

I will restrain myself quite a bit from expressing any opinion before arriving myself to a very clear insight into the struggle and acquiring a conviction about it. This both through a spirit of responsibility toward your own as well as the international movement.

In this letter I content myself simply to conveying to you certain remarks. If Bartell's report did not satisfy me much in certain of its phrases, I found his second document "The struggle, etc." much clearer and better balanced. It is difficult to extract from this text that it represents any pro-Stalinist or essentially pessimistic tendency.

Hansen's article struck me by its very sharp attack against what he calls pro-Stalinist ideas and tendencies indirectly expressed here and there by this or that person in the NY local.

This manner of opening in any way the national discussion risks being considered by the others as provocative, exasperating them, and from the first carrying the factional atmosphere to a paroxysm.

But that seems to me by far the most important thing is the following: is there really now in the US in our organization a pro-Stalinist *tendency* to which it is necessary to give elementary lessons on what Stalinism and Trotskyism is? Is it possible that a part of the organization, a *tendency* is submitting to the pressure of Stalinism? Is it correct to see the essence of the matter in that, and center the discussion on that?

I confess to you that for the moment I doubt the cor-

rectness of such an orientation of the discussion. And for the following reasons.

Since the Old Man's death up to now we have not had to deal in the world movement with pro-Stalinist *tendencies* (I don't speak of individuals here and there) who have capitulated or wanted to capitulate to Stalinism, but on the contrary with tendencies which have gravely erred in the opposite sense. Both during the war and after, where we committed the gravest mistakes, even unpardonable ones, it was a question of tendencies which confused the mass movement and the Revolution with its episodic and ephemeral Stalinist or Stalinized leadership as in Greece in 1944, Czechoslovakia in 1948, China yesterday and even still today. All this without mentioning the delays and errors committed by the entire movement on such questions as the nature of the buffer countries, the Yugoslav Revolution and the Chinese Revolution.

Stalinophobia is not simply a sentimental reaction toward Stalinism (its odious appearance) as Hansen writes, but a much deeper manifestation in our movement which has expressed the sectarian consequences of our isolation and the mechanical, scholastic handling of the genuine revolutionary spirit of the teaching and method of the Old Man, in a new international period created during and since the recent war.

It is there that the principal danger by far lies, and there is still the danger today against which we have effectively fought. All those who have quit us have not gone to the Stalinists but to the reaction and have become both anti-Stalinists and fierce anticommunists.

It is hard for me to see that in the US, the fortress of imperialism preparing counter-revolutionary war, there can be a genuine danger of a *tendency* in the Trotskyist organization which is capitulating to Stalinism.

What appears to me much more possible is that the pressure now weighing upon our American organization and its isolation inevitably provokes internal uneasiness and unconscious tendencies toward discouragement and pessimism. There is the true danger that could be surmounted only on condition of elaborating concretely both the specifically American prospects for tomorrow and the tactic most appropriate for the present to bind us, to help us root ourselves in the real movement of the masses of the country.

While exploiting to the full the present possibilities, this tactic should not sacrifice the future; in any case it ought

not to separate us from the real proletarian masses and their organizations.

Such a discussion which would show either that the Party is now doing all that is possible in this field, while also retaining a clear perspective of its future role, or that there actually are certain matters to think over and eventually to correct, could be a highly profitable discussion, at the end of which the organization as a whole would emerge strengthened.

Meanwhile a discussion centered on Stalinism seems to me (at this precise moment, perhaps tomorrow I shall see its eventual value) as artificial, passing by the essential issue.

I repeat that all this still buzzes in my brain without myself being able to say that I as yet see sufficiently clearly.

Fraternally,

4. *Letter from Michel Pablo to George Novack dated April 1953*

Dear Friend:

Jim's two letters interested me very much. They confirm for me that the main question of the current discussion revolves around the American situation. But not only from the viewpoint of perspectives and the place of America in the World Revolution.

I believe that agreement can be had relatively easily on that, and I don't believe there can be people there who, either by minimizing or completely neglecting the "Theses" of 1946, by arguing that the Third WC has rendered them, in any manner whatsoever, superfluous.

As Jim said, the "Theses" actually form a unity with the documents of the Third WC and constitute a fundamental document for our international movement and for the

American organization in particular.

However I have thought that the discussion is likewise revolving around what entirely immediate policy the organization ought to follow in the months to come and not in the years to come.

The present difficult situation weighs upon the organization and it is almost inevitable that the discussion demonstrate the necessity of knowing what should be done, not tomorrow but today, by basing itself upon the existing concrete conditions.

As it proceeds we shall see.

I appreciate your letters very much which help me to see more clearly into the situation amongst yourselves.

Very Fraternaly

5. *Letter from James P. Cannon to Michel Pablo*

Copy for Jerry
Dear Comrades:

May 22, 1953

Comrade Ben Stone, who has belonged to Local New York for eight years, joined the caucus of the Cochran faction last February when it started open recruitment in New York. He has just broken with them and come over to the majority. Enclosed is his announcement of the action. This will be followed by an article in preparation, analyzing his experiences with the Cochran grouping and its real views and character. In discussion with Comrades Warde and Hansen, Comrade Stone made the following observations:

1. He and others were first drawn into the Cochran combination on the basis of New York Local issues alone, and then maneuvered step by step into opposition on national and world questions.

2. The Cochranite leaders assure their followers that Pablo's views are the same as theirs. They have not, however, given any specific evidence to substantiate this claim.

3. To back this up, the Cochranite leaders declare that Clarke has been Pablo's "right-hand man"; is today his closest associate and co-thinker in the U. S., and is best

qualified to know his real views.

4. The Cochranite leaders contend that they are the authentic representatives of the Third World Congress line as presented by Pablo; that Cannon formally accepts, but actually has mental reservations about it; and that when Pablo's anticipated intervention occurs, it will be on their side.

5. Comrade Stone says that what sustained him in his association with the minority against the majority developed into something much more fundamental. He came to believe that the Trotskyist movement had been bypassed by the historic process; that the Stalinist parties will most likely head the coming revolutionary upsurges of the masses throughout the world, including the United States; that it is political realism to recognize this predominant trend, and adjust to it now.

6. He expressed the opinion that the Cochranite ranks had been largely recruited and remains bound together under the impression that they support Pablo's real views and Pablo supports them.

We are sure you will be interested in this information.

May 28, 1953

Dear Friend,

You have not written for a long time, nor have I received any news on the trip to . . . despite my insistence concerning this matter.

A letter arrived yesterday signed by Jim commenting on conversations by Stone. To whom was this letter addressed: to me, or to others beside myself—I do not know. I do not yet wish to reply to Jim for this reason.

The meaning of this letter could be that we ought to intervene now in the discussion and to clarify our viewpoints on the disputed questions, at least myself personally.

In any event it becomes evident that we cannot delay in intervening in one way or another. The discussion has actually been open in the movement if only by the fact that your bulletins have been somewhat circulated everywhere, have been read and discussed. At the 13th Plenum, numerous delegates, surprised, some even disturbed, posed the question to me and wanted to know what the position of the IS was on it.

So far as the observations by Stone contained in Jim's letter are concerned: naturally it is impossible to prevent this one or that one from claiming themselves to agree with my personal opinions. I want only to remark on this point that personally I have no other views and opinions than those of the official line of the movement, as well as my written texts, which are sufficiently explicit to permit no equivocal interpretation.

On the other hand, it is absolutely correct, and I have said so very loudly both to you and to everyone else, that George, during his stay here, very considerably contributed to the elaboration and success of the Third World Congress. Here he showed an entirely different political countenance than the one currently attributed to him. I do not deny the possibility that he could have changed since his return to your country and undertaken a wrong line in flagrant contradiction with his entire conduct here, more especially on the question of Stalinism and our perspectives in the United States.

But I confess that no *text* appearing up to now from the minority establishes this in a clear and convincing manner.

Naturally it may also be that orally amongst themselves the leaders and members of the minority discuss in quite a different manner than in their writing and that their real views are actually expressed orally amongst themselves. But you will have to admit that could not be a basis for us to make a serious and responsible judgment.

What I see up to now in the writings of the minority is above all tactical divergences—moreover of secondary importance—so far as the wholly immediate present stage in the United States is concerned.

On the other hand I do not at all share the manner of wishing to extract from these divergences, as well as from the criticism of the past line of the leadership on this or that point, a founded condemnation of the leadership for sectarianism or incapacity.

So far as the discussion on the special question of Stalinism is concerned up to now it has produced two important documents, Hansen's and Frankel's. I regret that Jim rushed to congratulate Hansen so warmly for his work. It does not contain errors as such, but simplifies too much, erases nuances and can give rise to summary and mechanical interpretation.

Frankel's work is considerably more developed and on the whole remarkable.

If it is false to accuse any tendency whatsoever in the party for "sectarian-Stalinophobia," it is rash to accuse another tendency as "pro-Stalinist" for having produced a document like Frankel's.

I don't know what you will do at the Plenum. But I have already written you and I now repeat it: In my opinion the real discussion ought to revolve around the prevailing concrete situation in the United States, of the situation of the workers' movement, the tasks and perspectives of the revolutionary party.

This ought to be the axis of the discussion, without sacrificing the context to it, the latter naturally being nothing else but the world situation in its entirety.

Perhaps this discussion is now necessary but could be useful both for yourselves and for the entire movement only if it unfolds in a less heated atmosphere and without any obligatory perspective of an almost inevitable split at the end.

If during the developments of this discussion any people challenge by writing, in documents, or texts, the political or organizational principles of our movement, they will receive the reply and treatment that they will then deserve.

Finally, a last remark: The present struggle amongst yourselves is the result of a difficult situation of the organization, being subjected to the enormous pressure of the atmosphere now characteristic of the country and reflecting its consequences. This situation is in contrast with that of the whole of the rest of our movement, which in a general manner finds itself on an ascending curve realizing the greatest progress since its birth. Our achievements and even more our possibilities everywhere in addition are really remarkable and are even becoming excellent to the extent that the crisis of capitalism is amplified and the disorientation of the Stalinists increases.

The necessary condition for maintaining this ascending rhythm in the whole of the movement, and fully realizing the new possibilities, is the homogeneity, the solidity, the capacity likewise for constant political elaboration of its leadership.

In the entire struggle you are now conducting, it would be well if you do not lose sight of the global interests of the movement in its present stage.

It is absolutely necessary that I be able to see you this summer. Do not forget that.

Very Fraternaly,
Gabe

7. Letter from Michel Pablo to George Novack

June 23, 1953

Dear Friend:

I received your letter of June 2. I regret its laconic character. I do not understand why the new circumstances no longer justify the projected meeting. On the other hand, I think that before halting the proceedings for my arrival, it was necessary to consult me, and not put me before some kind of accomplished fact.

I do not desire to see Jim and possibly other members of the leadership for personal reasons, as Comrade P., but for reasons pertaining to the policy, interests, and the difficulties of the entire movement as its secretary.

I find it very hard to understand, when I, despite my fatigue, my many daily difficulties, decide to come almost to threshold of your door to see you, that you very simply refuse this interview. The responsibilities for the movement weigh as much on us here as on you. Your help, your understanding, your encouragement, have been essential conditions in the past for the good conduct of our work here.

If, for any reason, these come to be missing, it would certainly provoke grave troubles in the work here. On the other hand, it may be that you are not satisfied with my attitude with regard to your internal situation.

I have learned strange and incredible things, which have enormously surprised and pained me; that I have fomented the struggle of the minority in order to overturn the leadership, etc. On the basis of what proofs, of what factional actions, of incurably factional elements have you formed this so flattering opinion of me?

In any event, I hoped that you personally, having arrived from here so recently, would have known to combat such rumors very vigorously. I have had nothing to do with the genesis and the beginning of your struggle. When it broke out, despite me, I worked to avoid having it

degenerate into a split, or to stray into false political pathways (false in my opinion).

I wrote along these lines both to the ones and to the others, openly and clearly. If I now judge the matter according to the results I must say that I was not wrong, and that the recommendations included in my letter are very close to the views that I find in the joint resolution adopted by your Plenum.

Unless, if, as certain people here believe, the Plenum has signified only a brief truce in the struggle, a strategic retreat, to begin it soon again, and to get it over with the next time. I refuse to admit such an explanation.

That would only please incurably factional elements, who love squabbles and struggle for its own sake. I regard the truce as sincere and that every effort ought to be taken to transform it into a real and durable peace. It is in this sense that I understand Jim's final speech, which I salute and approve with all my heart.

If the situation is like this, there is all the more reason for me to take contact, if not with Jim present, at least with the new leaders of the party. A thorough-going explanation, as well as a joint examination of the problems, difficulties and tasks of the movement are necessary. Otherwise, how do you envisage cooperation with us?

On the other hand, we here unanimously believe that I ought to visit Latin America this summer to get a closer view of the Bolivian situation, and better prepare on the spot the 4th Congress. I considered combining these two visits. If you consider that the first is not realizable in any manner, I would like to know if you could help me financially, and in what amount, to go to Latin America. We have just finished discussing in the I. S. the subject of the two documents opening the discussion on the 4th Congress, and will send them out in a few days.

P.

8. Letter from the International Secretariat of the Fourth International to the National Committee of the SWP

June 24, 1953

To Members of the S. W. P. National Committee:

Dear Comrades,

In its Plenary Session of June 20-21, the I. S. noted with complete satisfaction the spirit and the letter of the resolution of agreement unanimously voted at your Plenum at the end of May. It sees in it the expression of the political maturity of the leadership as a whole, which has resolutely dispelled any idea of split, and sees in it a genuine possibility, proceeding from the new atmosphere established by the Plenum, of arriving at a complete normalizing of the functioning of the organization.

The I. S. hopes that the organization as a whole will enter enthusiastically into its daily work in order to victoriously cope with the present difficult conjuncture in the U. S.

The I. S. does not doubt that all the leading comrades,

and all the members of the organization are fully aware of the excellent revolutionary perspectives opening before the world movement, with the accentuated combined crisis of capitalism and Stalinism, on condition that we are firmer, clearer, more active and united than ever. The I. S. warmly salutes all the leading members of the S.W.P., all its cadres, and all its members. The entire courageous, Bolshevik team created by long and patient efforts, and which so valiantly carries the banner of Trotskyism in the U. S.

It sends its warmest greetings to Comrade Cannon, whose responsible conduct during the recent Plenum it has especially appreciated, and who will always embody for us the founder and the principal animator of the Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist "regime" of the S. W. P.

With our most fraternal greetings,
I. S.

9. Letter from the Bureau of the International Secretariat to the SWP National Committee Majority

August 10, 1953

Dear Comrades,

We have just received documents coming from leaders of your tendency, indicating, among other things, that you believe that the IS or members of the IS have fomented or encouraged the struggle of tendencies in your party, and that they are capable of making it start up again.

We have been extremely surprised and shocked by such an accusation which has no basis whatsoever.

We are all the more shocked that on the basis of such vague and unproved suspicions, and without any previous communication to the IS or any demand for explanations, you appear to have wanted to make contacts for the constitution of an international tendency in the absence of any formulated political divergence with the leadership of the International.

Conscious of our duties toward the International and resolved to serve its supreme interests above all else, we believe that we should not take any further step in this matter, although we record the *extreme gravity* of this projected action.

We again appeal to your sense of responsibility—that we saluted and emphasized in our letter to your leadership after your May 1953 Penum—not only toward your own organization but toward the entire International which is not witnessing any struggle at the present time, which is working in a positive way and everywhere registering progress.

Do not spoil its opportunities which are better than ever by introducing into the political discussion opened for the Fourth World Congress of the International, which has capital importance for its future, factional struggles whose political content cannot at all be seen and accusations without any basis.

This would risk provoking the gravest crisis ever recorded in our international movement.

In case comrades have proof of their accusations and for one reason or another have withdrawn their confidence in the IS or in certain members of the IS, they ought to proceed according to the rules of our movement by taking every question before the leadership of the International, the IEC.

Once again, despite everything that has already been done that is serious, unexpected and very painful for us, we are resolved to undertake nothing on this matter, hoping that there will be no new initiative on your part which will oblige us to reply before the entire International.

On the contrary, we would like to believe that it will be possible to reestablish relations of confidence and cooperation between you and us, relations which since 1945 have been at the basis of the reconstruction and reinforcement of the international Trotskyist movement.

With our Communist Internationalist greeting

The IS Bureau

E. Frank, E. Germain, M. Pablo

10. Letter from the International Secretariat to the SWP National Committee Majority

Comrades,

When we learned, at the beginning of August, about documents by your leaders now circulating among you and about their unexpected and unspeakable content, we made a great effort to suppress our indignation and decided to do nothing for the moment, hoping that you would reconsider and resume a responsible attitude toward the International and its supreme interests. We wrote the letter of August 10 in this spirit.

Unfortunately, since then signs are accumulating which do not seem to justify this hope and show on the contrary that you are embarked on a road which can only disturb us immensely.

It is time for us to speak clearly and frankly amongst ourselves. The publication of the "minutes" of your Penum with the astonishing and revolting last pages with the persistent questioning of Comrade Campbell by Comrade Walter, the latest issue of the FI, as well as a series of articles recently published in *The Militant*, sketch out a course whose meaning it is not difficult to discern. It seems to us that you are now in the process of developing a line different from ours on two fundamental planes: *the conception and the functioning of the International; and the manner of understanding and explaining the*

events which are unfolding in the Soviet Union and the buffer countries since Stalin's death.

On the plane of the International, it appears that you challenge its character as a world Party with a *centralized international leadership* as the statutes voted at the Second World Congress very explicitly specified and as it has developed and functioned up to the present with perfect agreement from its overwhelming majority, including yourselves at their head.

The right and the duty of the international leadership to defend the application of the political line defined by the World Congresses and Plenums of the IEC throughout all the sections, and the regime of democratic centralism as it has been defined with precision by the statutes of the International and not by each national leadership according to the calculation it makes of its interests during a factional struggle in its section, have been challenged.

Under the pretext of coping with the misdeeds of the "cominternist degeneration" and the alleged organizational and tactical errors committed by the International—both of "softness" and "toughness"—the idea is cultivated of an International which would be a kind of Federation of national groupings, each enjoying almost complete autonomy to regulate its own struggles and in which no

political intervention by the International is welcome or permissible except, perhaps, if it completely upholds the interests of this or that national fraction.

Going even further, ideas are now circulating among elements who seem in a hurry to enroll themselves in an anti-International faction, according to which the International after all does not yet exist, that it is only composed of certain important sections, the others do not count, and that it cannot pretend to play the role the statutes assign to it and tradition has up to now sanctioned. The elements who preach the decentralization of the International and now desperately seek proofs of its "bureaucratism" behave as a general rule in their own sections in a completely different manner, fervently defending there the strictest "Bolshevik" centralism.

In reality we have had to deal with such arguments and such resistances each time a factional struggle occurred in a given section and wherever it was necessary to call upon a given section to readjust its policy to that of the International.

But we have advanced despite that toward the creation of a genuine international leadership, which is representative and effective, which reflects a real process of more and more intimate fusion of our international movement into a world Party with a centralized international leadership. The conception and organization of the International, such as we now have it, really reflects an objective progress of the revolutionary workers' movement in general, a higher stage in the development of its consciousness, and *we will not betray it, we will not abandon it, under any pretext or at any price.*

Your organization has greatly contributed to what the International now is. It would be infinitely regrettable if other considerations lead you to reverse your attitude and to stand at the head of the centrifugal, isolationist and anti-International tendencies. If you do so, you will find us irreconcilably opposed to you on this precise plane. We will defend with utmost energy the conception and functioning of the International as its statutes specify them and that its life has sanctioned.

From this viewpoint, we protest against the fact that the pages of the interrogation were added to the "minutes" of your Plenum which give a resume of the record of its work. This is an inadmissible, unpolitical, factional method, alien to the customs of the International, of discrediting leading comrades of the International and preparing the struggle against its entire leadership. Without any proof, suddenly, in the midst of a discussion and struggle over different questions, during your Plenum, Comrade Walter rises up and poses a series of questions of an unspeakable kind to another member of the leadership. You dare to publish this so "political" part without any comment and send it to a series of leading comrades of your section and probably of the International, ignoring, among other things, its statutes on the matter which stipulate: "Article 39—All political or organizational relations of any importance between national sections pass through the intermediary of the IS. In case of urgent necessity, such relations can be effected directly on condition that the IS is rapidly informed of all the details."

And this is also in flagrant contradiction with what you demand of the International: its non-intervention in the internal struggles of your organization. But even before

the International undertakes, in line with its right and its duty, any *political* intervention in this field, you carry the struggle—and in what a manner!—into the International against its leadership. Comrades, the International has no need of secretly instigating factional struggles in any section, it does not dream of struggles "for power," it does not maintain "agents." Its present leadership was formed in the school of democratic centralism in the time of Trotsky and has not experienced the atmosphere of "cliques" and of "combinations" of the Cominternist era. The International sets forth and defends a political line; it sows and encourages political ideas; its strength and its means are political. People of cliques and combinations are always those who lack political means and ideas.

You well know that the International has taken no position *on the political content* of your internal struggle and that it reserves doing so until a more advanced stage of your discussion (that it hopes to see unfold in a different tone and without threat of split) when the differences will have appeared clearly and sharply, which is not yet the case. You ought not to look, comrades, for the causes of the factional struggle within your organization in shadowy actions by the International, but in the fundamental changes in the postwar world situation, in the special situation in the United States, and in the still more special situation of your organization in the framework of this international and national situation. By acting otherwise, you uselessly envenom the atmosphere and lamentably lower the level of the discussion.

Where do you want to arrive at by acting in this fashion?

When we received your Plenum resolution on the agreement and the concluding speech by Comrade Cannon we saluted and praised your wisdom. We then sincerely thought that a period of genuine peace would open for your organization. Now we no longer understand anything. We do not understand the subtleties of your technique of conducting the struggle. We do not understand how, some days after the Plenum and his magnanimous speech, Comrade Walter found himself placed in charge of "foreign affairs," renews the struggle this time against *Paris*, and tries to recruit Stuart—who is a convinced and active opponent of the Third World Congress and present line of the International—as a member of a faction, militarily and preventatively organized against some eventual ulterior but not certain intervention of the IS in your struggle! We do not understand why, after having decided at your Plenum to continue the discussion in a more moderate tone between the majority and minority, you carry the polemic abroad shortly after in as confused and envenomed a manner as before!

Finally we do not understand, in the light of articles by Comrade Wright in *The Militant* and by certain others on the events in East Germany, what your responsible position is on these questions. We do not know if you support the line and ideas contained in these articles; and in this case, we do not know what your position is toward the line and documents of the International on these same questions. For neither the idea of the capitulation of the Bonapartist bureaucracy before imperialism or the restorationist elements in the Soviet Union, nor the idea of the present reinforcement of these elements in the

Soviet Union nor the idea that Malenkov plays and purely and simply continues Stalin's role, that he makes concessions only to the bureaucracy and to restorationist elements and not to the masses, nor the idea of bloody "purges" now in prospect in the USSR on a scale identical or comparable with that of 1936-38, are ours—and you well know it.

The line of Comrade Wright's articles is based on schemas and old reminiscences and not on a correct analysis of the present reality, of the existing relation of forces, and of the present dynamic. It minimizes everything now happening in the Soviet Union and the buffer zone, it is oriented on the *desires* of the bureaucracy—which it envisages as a compact bloc as rigid and homogeneous as a genuine class—and not in the international revolutionary dynamic and the new relation of forces between the masses and the bureaucracy which is unfavorable to the latter, obliging it to make real concessions and limiting its *possibilities* of repression and purges.

We must make the same remark on the subject of the events in East Germany. These events have not demonstrated above all the reactionary and repressive role of the bureaucracy (which we well know), but its weakness in relation to the masses and its dislocation under the pressure and influence of the masses. In East Germany the native and Soviet Stalinists have not above all replied to the revolt of the workers by a large-scale repression, shootings and so on, but *much more* by a series of concessions. Moreover, in Hungary, Rumania, Poland, Bulgaria, Albania they made concessions even before the pressure of the masses was outwardly manifested precisely in order to avoid it. It is in a *second phase* that in East Germany the bureaucracy, in order to survive and maintain itself, is *combining reform and repression*.

On the other hand, the events in East Germany have provoked an extremely significant and valuable phenomenon for understanding the real, and not the bookish, course of the political revolution in these countries: namely, a split from top to bottom in the Stalinist party, with an entire wing of the bureaucracy capitulating before the

workers and siding with them at the moment of the workers' uprising.

In all this there is a brilliant illustration of the correctness of the line of the International, of its documents and especially of the document on "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism" which anticipated this development.

We would like to see these points find an adequate echo in the columns of *The Militant*. Naturally you have full right now to be in disagreement with our ideas on this subject and to formulate political differences which up until recently had not at all appeared or at least were not clearly apparent. The international discussion for the Fourth World Congress amply furnishes the opportunity for all sides to enlighten us thoroughly on all these questions.

If we now summarily lay emphasis on this subject, it is to acquaint you with our viewpoint on the course that your policy now seems to be taking, which could have the most important implications. We ask you whether, before any important crystallization develops on all these questions which would naturally cause the gravest crisis ever recorded in our movement to break out, if it would not be possible to avoid or to limit it by proceeding to a *direct, face-to-face* exchange of views between yourselves and us.

In the last analysis what is involved is the unity of the international Trotskyist movement. Among responsible comrades it is never too late and everything ought to be attempted. Once again, in the name of the consciousness we have of our responsibilities toward the International, in the name of its supreme interests, in the name of loyal and effective collaboration that we and you have had together for so many years and that we have never wished to break, we ask you to *very quickly* decide upon a meeting either at the local of the IS or in some country close to your own.

With Communist internationalist greetings,
The IS
September 3, 1953

11. "Some Very Strange Conceptions of Internationalism and Our International," by Michel Pablo

Only after a long delay—not until September 5—did I see the text of Comrade Cannon's speech at the Majority Caucus Meeting in New York on the subject of "Internationalism and the SWP."

This document, it seems, has been circulated by effort of both the majority and the minority, among all the members of the SWP. I hope that this reply, now unavoidable, will have the same fortune.

Comrade Cannon did not deem it necessary to send a copy of his speech immediately to the IS. Naturally he had strong reasons for this procedure: his speech is actually an all-out attack against the international leadership and the very principles of our International and its present reality, *before any political differences were formulated with the line of the International and its present leadership*. That is the worst method of initiating a struggle. The International does not employ it and will never employ it.

The attack is all the more unspeakable in that it starts out from preventive considerations, even on the organizational plane—since up to the date of May 18 there was no *fact* to prove that the International had instigated the factional struggle in the American organization. Comrade Cannon himself acknowledges this, in black and white: "We have no tangible evidence to prove that there is any conspiracy against us, or any actions against us, on the international field."

The aim of this attack, I say, is two-fold: to discredit the international leadership, and thereby the very concept of the International as defined by the statutes unanimously adopted at the Second World Congress and by the very life of the International.

In a tone half-serious, half-humorous, sometimes threatening, but always paternalistic and imbued with the primordial importance of the United States, the American

revolution, the SWP, its present leadership (its present majority), and especially and above all himself, Comrade Cannon tears apart the "few people in Paris" and, with them, the entire International in its present structure and functioning. For the "few people in Paris" exist and function as a product of the collective will, duly expressed in the International Congresses and the IEC Plenums, of the overwhelming majority of the organized Trotskyist movement.

Comrade Cannon's conception of the International is one of the most extraordinary and most revolting projections of a complex which is now exploding with unprecedented brutishness. He pounds his fist, puts the cards, as he says, on the table, and tells us: "You are making a mistake, young men of Paris; you forget that what you call the International is in reality the SWP as a center around which gravitate various groups and individuals with whom the center (the SWP) maintains relations of 'collaboration, advice, counsel.'"

The conception Comrade Cannon has of "collaborating" and "cooperating" is itself very strange and disturbing. He envisages this in terms of relations of power to power, of one strong position to another strong position, rather than as collaboration and cooperation, on a strictly ideological and political plane, of political ideas and political line.

Comrade Cannon's Conception

But first we must make the necessary introductions, both of the International and, if it is permitted, just a very few words to introduce these "few people in Paris." Comrade Cannon does not seem to be acquainted, or wish to be sufficiently acquainted, with either.

Our International, we believe, is a World Party with a centralized international leadership, not only according to its statutes but as life has formed it. It has become such through a process of real fusion of our movement into a world party, a process marked by regular and very representative congresses and by the unanimous election at these congresses of a centralized international leadership—the IEC. In this IEC the best representatives of the international Trotskyist movement participate; it has met 13 times to now; it has had a most intense political life; all the important political and organizational questions of the International have been dealt with in and through the IEC, as well as through the IS nominated and elected by the IEC and which has hitherto enjoyed the confidence of the overwhelming majority of the Congresses of the International and the Plenums of the IEC.

On the IS there were never only the three comrades of the IS Bureau to whom Comrade Cannon alludes and who have maintained the continuity for several years now, but also other comrades and among these—except for brief intervals—representatives of the US. According to the hitherto almost unanimous opinion, the IS has always acquitted itself of its enormous tasks to the very best, despite the extreme poverty of technical and financial resources, and naturally within the framework of our individual political and organizational capacities, of which we are the first to recognize the exact and in any case, modest limits. Witness to this, moreover, is Comrade Cannon's own letter to the "few people in Paris" in praise of their "great work," which he sent them on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday.

We have never believed that the International is comprised in actuality of a sort of "Paris-New York axis," and that all the rest—the other members of the IS, the IEC and its Plenums, the World Congresses—are really only a fiction, mere forms. On the contrary, we have worked with all our strength—and I believe with a certain success—to create a collective international leadership, which we respect and to the decisions of which we submit unconditionally.

If we are still on the IS, that is because this has been the hitherto almost unanimous will of our international movement, which has been able to express its will freely and openly at gatherings which have been more representative than ever before of its consciousness and its will, that is, the World Congresses and the Plenums of the IEC.

If all this is a fiction, if not a comedy, then we have committed unpardonable bureaucratic crimes.

We have made political and organizational decisions in the World Congresses, the Plenums, the sessions of the IS, and we have demanded and insisted that all the sections respect them and carry them out.

In the name of this conception of the International—as a world party with a centralized international leadership, with its congresses and statutes, with a political line and a common discipline—we have broken with individuals, groups and even majorities of entire sections, who have refused to carry out this line and this discipline. And this always with the full agreement of Comrade Cannon and the American leadership.

We have not at all conceived of internationalism as Comrade Cannon does: mere collaboration, consultation, etc., *with the national leadership of each section ultimately and practically the sole master of its decisions, of its political line, and of the way to conduct itself toward other political tendencies in its organization.*

Nor have we conceived internationalism as the emblazoning—right out in the open, no minced words, crudely (and frankly, Comrade Cannon will say)—of the incontestable and uncontested primacy of one country, one section, one leadership over all the others. No, all that is nothing but a wretched caricature of internationalism and the International, a conception which might be explained by national environment and other similar considerations but which in any case is alien to proletarian internationalism as conceived by revolutionary Marxism.

On the organizational plane of the organized proletarian international vanguard, internationalism consists in the complete voluntary subordination of an organization, of any national leadership whatever—be it among the most important (and precisely then)—to the duly expressed line and discipline of the majority of the international working-class movement to which the organization belongs.

Internationalism, on the part of each organization and each leadership, does not consist in pounding one's fist, spreading on the table the cards of the international importance of one's country, one's revolution, one's numerical forces, etc., in order to demand special privileges and dispensations; but rather, in relying with full confidence on the line, the judgment and the discipline of the international movement taken as a whole—a whole which is organized and, in the last analysis, alone decisive.

Such a conception of internationalism and the Inter-

national does not at all mean that the international movement and its leadership do not take into consideration the special importance of one or another section or national leadership. The political importance of each section and leadership (its number of years, its seriousness, responsibility, capacities, etc.) is not imposed on the International by pounding the table, but in a normal way, naturally, voluntarily, free from all pressure.

In a healthy international movement like ours, this is how things proceed, and not otherwise.

No one, for example, has hitherto minimized the considerable importance, the special merits, the qualities, etc., of the American organization and its leadership. We in our international movement were very proud of it and its leadership. This is especially true of the "few people in Paris." They have missed no opportunity to defend the American organization and its leadership against any attack, any violent criticism, any direct or indirect attempt at denigration. Our own criticisms on certain aspects of its general and organizational policy (criticism of one another is absolutely inevitable and necessary in any living movement which is not immobilized in a paradisaic perfection and which always has room for improvement) have been kept for ourselves and for our fraternal discussions with the leading comrades of the American organization.

As for myself personally, I should say that I have openly defended the American organization up to and including the recent 13th Plenum of the IEC, and have not allowed myself to be moved by any other consideration. All this is the strict truth, and the leading comrades of the International know it well.

Now Comrade Cannon will perhaps say that he is not in disagreement with anything I say about true internationalism and its caricature, but that, as he emphasized in his speech, he is making this other objection: "*We are a part of the international movement, and we are going to have something to say about what the international movement decides on the American question, and every other. . . . etc.*"

Naturally the American organization always has been and is an integral, intimate part of the international movement and its leadership. They are not like a beauty-spot on the body of the International, but an essential part of this body.

But precisely in the sense of an *organic*, not *mechanical*, totality. They are not superadded to the other sections and leaderships, but are *fused* in the international movement considered as a world party with a centralized international leadership. It is in this sense that they have participated and participate in the World Congresses, the Plenums of the IEC, the IS.

They cannot be an organic part of this organic whole which is the International, with its Congresses, its IEC Plenums and its leading organisms—and at the same time mere collaborators who come or go according as they please, according as they accept or reject some decision of the international movement.

No, that is not our conception of the international movement.

Again Comrade Cannon will perhaps say: "Yes, I agree; but I only recognize as the International the base of its sections"—to whom he is now preparing to address himself *if* Paris intervenes in what he considers the affairs

of his organization.

Once more, we are absolutely opposed to such a conception of the International. This has a strong resemblance to the "united front" of the Stalinists who would like to recognize the existence of socialist workers but not the socialist organizations to which these workers belong and whose decisions they follow.

No, the International is *structural, organized*—it is not an amorphous doughy mass of an international movement.

The International manifests itself as a world party through its congresses and its leading organisms, the IEC and the IS. Whoever goes outside of these, in reality goes outside the International, which is neither a vague idea nor an undefined movement but an organization governed by statutes and rules, with a line, a discipline and a leadership, just like each national section.

Comrade Cannon is most scrupulous in regard to these concepts when it is a matter of his own organization. In this field he is constantly bringing up the statutes, rules, line, discipline, leadership, and shows himself ruthless against those who are disloyal and all others who venture to ignore these things.

Exactly the same holds true for the International.

Comrade Cannon will perhaps object that it is one thing to speak of the leadership of his organization, which has "thrown up a cadre of indigenous leaders, who have grown up out of its struggles, who are known to its members and trusted by them"; but quite another thing to speak of the leadership of the International, or at least its present leadership.

Now what is the present leadership of the International? First of all, it is the IEC elected at the Third World Congress, the most representative congress in the entire history of the international Trotskyist movement; and next, the IS named by the IEC. These organisms were duly elected, with almost unanimous agreement. They have a mandate to see that the line of the Third Congress, adopted by an overwhelming majority of the International, is carried out, and that the statutes of the International, unanimously adopted at the Second Congress, are conformed with.

A few words now regarding the IS, and more particularly, the "few people in Paris." On the present IS—which is larger than just these "few people"—there are leading comrades from some of the most important sections of the International: the English, German, French, Italian. The American comrades have been unable to send a comrade, as in the past, but we hope to include one at the first opportunity.

As for the "few people in Paris," allow me to introduce them, since Comrade Cannon has given them the brush-off. They are three; they have assumed the continuity of the daily work of the IS for eight years. Except for one—Comrade Germain—they are unfortunately no longer "young men."

Comrade Cannon correctly says that they were unknown in your party in 1945, and that he did everything to build up their prestige. We do not dispute him, and we take this opportunity to once more and publicly thank Comrade Cannon for this.

They were not, however, so unknown in the working-class movement, and particularly in the Trotskyist movement of their respective countries and the European Trot-

skyist movement. One of them, Comrade Pierre Frank, has been active in the French working-class movement for over 30 years, and in the Trotskyist movement since its beginnings. He is one of the senior members of the international Trotskyist movement, a former collaborator of Leon Trotsky. During the war he was interned in a concentration camp in England.

Another, Comrade Germain, has been active in our movement for thirteen years. He played a very active role in the Belgian Trotskyist organization during the war, helping enormously to rebuild it before he fell into the hands of the Gestapo who imprisoned him for two years in a dungeon in Germany.

For myself, I have been active in the Trotskyist movement since 1928. I was deported, imprisoned and finally exiled from my country. I attended the Founding Congress of the Fourth International. From its beginning I had been a part of the European Secretariat which was reconstructed in the midst of the war under the Nazi occupation in 1943, and I became its secretary in the fall of 1943 after the arrest of Comrade M. Hic. Since 1945 I have been secretary of the IS, which in a quite natural way had become grafted to the European Secretariat, the latter having functioned during the war as the sole international organism outside the United States.

Comrade Cannon makes no mention of the role played during the war by the Trotskyist organizations outside the United States, speaks of the "suppression of our movement in most parts of Europe by the war," and makes no allusion to the European Secretariat, three of whose leading members perished before the end of hostilities.

At all events, these "few people in Paris," unknown in 1945 in New York, were a little better known in the European Trotskyist movement which just at that time had written one of the most glorious pages of our international movement.

Again Comrade Cannon will perhaps say: "Good, good. But what about this method of yours of giving 'orders,' your tendency to 'set up the International as a highly centralized body, on the order of the early Comintern, which could make decisions, enforce orders and so forth, in the old Comintern fashion"—a method, it seems, to which he has always been opposed. The question, Comrade Cannon will finally say, is not one of recognizing no international discipline whatever, but *what kind of discipline*.

In fact, throughout his entire speech Comrade Cannon pictures the "few people in Paris" as having constantly tried to intervene in the affairs of sections (despite his opposition), to impose "orders" and decisions bureaucratically, in a word, as having acted stupidly, inexperienced as they probably are in "organizational and tactical" questions.

This is wrong from beginning to end.

All interventions and decisions were and are made not by the "few people in Paris," but by the IS and the IEC, organisms in which the Australian representatives also participate.

There has never been any opposition on their part in these matters, not even any protests. I will speak later of the Bleibtreu case, which Comrade Cannon is now trying to exploit so much. It may be that Comrade Cannon himself had disagreements—"fairly serious ones," as he now says—with the IS manner of acting. The fact is that his

representatives never formulated these disagreements here, that they always supported and voted with the rest of us, and that in eight years we have not received a single letter from Comrade Cannon formulating any opinion whatever.

The "orders" and interventions of the IEC and the IS were and are of two kinds: first of all, political; and only secondarily, organizational, in the sense of defending or seeing that the statutes of the International are carried out.

The "few people in Paris," that is, the three comrades of the IS Bureau, have never decided and imposed anything whatever on any section whatever, politically or still less organizationally. In constant contact with the sections, they have always given political and organizational advice, often at the request of the sections themselves, as it is their right and above all their duty to do. All important political and organizational decisions have been made by the IS (which has always been a larger body than the Paris Bureau) and particularly by the IEC.

The interventions, if one wishes to use the term, have been primarily *political*. The series of Internal Bulletins of the IS and its dossiers of correspondence with the sections offer ample testimony of this. We will run through rapidly the most important instances, which Comrade Cannon seems to be completely unaware of:

The French situation immediately after the war; the meaning of the Transitional Program and the way of fighting Stalinophilia; the postwar situation in England and its perspectives, the Labor Party question, entrism, and the question of the Soviet buffer zone which Haston raised; the postwar situation and our tasks in Greece; Morrow's political concepts; the political concepts of Shachtman, and of Johnson; the Yugoslav revolution, and the question of the class character of the buffer zone; the Chinese revolution and the ideas, among others, held by our Chinese section; the political concepts of the Bleibtreu group; the necessity of entrism in Germany, and in Holland; the political problems of the Latin American movement in general and several of our sections there in particular; the situation and our tasks in Ceylon and in India; the Bolivian revolution, etc.

Nevertheless, Comrade Cannon has some concrete examples of bad organizational intervention on the part of the IS: the cases of the right-wing group in France, Haston in England, and the Bleibtreu group. What is actually involved here? Let us take up the first case.

If we understand him correctly, Comrade Cannon now reproaches us *a posteriori*, for our "soft" attitude toward the right-wingers in France after the Second World War. He would have had quicker action taken against them; that is, they should probably have been expelled sooner from the section and from the International.

He makes the same remark regarding Haston in England, where the hesitations and delays of the IS caused the loss of at least "one year of precious time" for constructive work in the Labor Party by the English minority—as he says in his June 4 letter to Tom which you are acquainted with.

In both France and England we should have gone ahead much more firmly and quickly. That is Comrade Cannon's opinion. In the name of what? In the name, probably, of the line and discipline of the International which had been violated by the right-wingers and Haston.

Because there is no other principle that can be invoked to justify intervention and measures. Because, also, both the right-wingers and Haston, considered from a national point of view, represented at that time a very large majority of their respective sections and a leadership which had been naturally and normally selected during the hard war years of these sections.

Taking precisely these facts into account, and far from wanting to intervene organizationally with "orders," bureaucratically, and drive toward split and expulsion, the IS did everything possible to encourage above all a *political struggle and clarification in these sections*, excluding any idea of split and expulsion.

Moreover, we have never expelled, and will never expel anyone from the International for political opinions divergent from ours. Actually, the right-wingers, Haston and the Bleibtreu group all *left us*.

This *political struggle* in the French and English sections after the war was led primarily by the IS. The political support of the American organization naturally was precious to us in this struggle.

But Comrade Cannon makes an error when he speaks of "a big wave of Stalinophobia" here during that period. The opposite is true. Both in France and in England between 1945 and 1948 we had to struggle against primarily *Stalinophile, not Stalinophobe* tendencies, since the pressure of Stalinism was dominant during that entire period in Europe.

Finally, there is the Bleibtreu case, which is now Comrade Cannon's trump card. He says: "A few months after the World Congress, where the French party had supposedly accepted the Congress decision, we *suddenly heard that there was a split—or a partial split—in the PCI.*" (My emphasis.)

The *political struggle* against the Bleibtreu group began at the time of the 9th Plenum of the IEC and continued to the Third Congress and beyond. The American representatives here were thoroughly acquainted with the innumerable events and details of the struggle, the behavior and actions of the group. They became more and more indignant over these actions and were in full accord with us on the character of the group and the line to follow toward it. It is astonishing, to say the least, that Comrade Cannon did not know what the attitude of this group was at the Third Congress and immediately after the Congress, when it pronounced itself completely against the line and the discipline of the International. It is astonishing, to say the least, that what occurred at the end of January 1952—that is, about five months after the Congress—made him "hit the ceiling."

Comrade Cannon still does not seem to be completely convinced that the Bleibtreu group was not simply fooling around with the line of the Third Congress and the discipline of the International, but was squarely opposed to it and ignored both the IEC and the IS. He says: "I believe (the French majority) *was fooling around with the World Congress decisions.*"

As for the famous measure of "the International Secretariat having intervened and placed a representative of the IS as impartial chairman over a parity committee"—what is really involved here? It was a measure of temporary suspension from their posts of the majority members of the Central Committee of the PCI, who had once more

refused, at the CC meeting in January 1952, to respect the political discipline of the International which was defended by the IEC and the IS.

They were neither removed nor expelled. They were temporarily suspended from their posts, until the IEC Plenum could make the responsible decision in their case. This measure, of course an extreme one, came after a long series of efforts—all of them in vain—to bring the leaders of the group to an elementary behavior in conformity with the statutes, rules and decisions of the International. It was a measure that the statutes of the International grant to the IS in case of grave necessity. It was taken after everything else had failed, and after three successive meetings of the IS—attended by the U.S.A. representative—in order that all the IS members could have sufficient time for consideration before the measure was taken. It was then voted for unanimously.

But even in the case of the Bleibtreu group, it was never a question with the IS of provoking a split or expulsion. Every time that we seemed to arrive at agreement, with the Bleibtreu group pledging to respect the line and discipline of the International, we were ready to defend the normal functioning of the section, with no exclusion of the Bleibtreu representatives. It was they who shamelessly played with the International and who—like all the others—finally left it. Their conduct since then has very clearly stamped the political character of this group, sectarian and adventuristic, and making a mockery of Trotskyism insofar as they present themselves in its name.

Actually, the difference in Comrade Cannon's attitude, on the one hand, toward the right-wingers and Haston—whom we treated, it seems, with "softness"—and on the other hand, toward the Bleibtreu group—whom we treated with "hardness"—can be explained by the unquestionable affinity of his thinking with certain ideas and accusations formulated by Bleibtreu against the policy of the International and its leadership. That is the explanation of the astonishing *political* silence of Comrade Cannon during the entire political struggle in France, which was of very great importance for the line to be adopted at the Third Congress—as well as his hesitations and torments of conscience in connection with Renard's letter.

I now find a supplementary proof in the way Comrade Cannon reports his other "fairly serious" disagreement with us, one which concerns me especially: "When Pablo wrote his article about '*centuries of degenerated workers states,*' we again had the most violent disagreement." (My emphasis.) Further on, he attributes to me the opinion of "centuries of Stalinism after the revolution." I rubbed my eyes in reading the text of his speech: Was this Comrade Cannon or Bleibtreu speaking?

I never spoke of "*degenerated workers states*" which will last for centuries after the world victory of the revolution, nor, of course, of Stalinism surviving for centuries. It is monstrous and inadmissible that such methods should be used among responsible comrades in so-called "ideological" discussion.

It was Bleibtreu who, shamefully distorting the letter and spirit of my first writings on this subject, attributed to me the idea of "a bureaucracy in the USSR surviving the world revolution." I replied to him on this question in my article "The Unavowed Objectives of an Attack," and also the article "On the Duration and the Nature of the

Period of Transition from Capitalism to Socialism," which I hope all members of the SWP have read and understood. (Internal Bulletin of the IS, No. 8, July 1951.)

But, Comrade Cannon, if the secretary of the International—in whom, moreover, you still recognize certain merits, and about whom you spoke and wrote not so long ago (in any case, since his writings on the "centuries of Stalinism") that he had contributed greatly to clarify precisely the question of Stalinism and its perspectives in the postwar world—if he had written what you now attribute to him, it would have been necessary *with no hesitation whatever* to combat him vigorously and even to demand his removal from the post he occupies.

For how could you keep in the post of secretary of the Trotskyist International a man who defends *the survival for centuries, after the world victory of the revolution, of Stalinism?*

There is, in fact, no worse accusation than this—or rather, no worse calumny. For not only do the writings to which Comrade Cannon refers (has he really read them?) contain nothing of the sort, as can easily be verified by just glancing briefly at the incriminated texts; but they take great care, where special mention is made of the problem of Stalinism—that is, the grip of the Soviet bureaucracy on the USSR and the international working-class movement—to differentiate it very clearly from the other ideas brought up there.

These ideas have to do with the probability for an entire historic period of several centuries of transition *between the capitalist system and the completed world socialist system:* the primarily economic and not political causes of the phenomenon of *bureaucratic deformation* (not *degeneration*) of the proletarian power, which will not completely disappear (though relatively disappearing, as I emphasized, to the extent that the revolution conquers in the developed countries and that the level of the productive forces attains and surpasses the level of the most advanced capitalist country) until a very high level of the productive forces throughout the world has been attained, with the corresponding cultural development.

As for the fall of *Stalinism*, that is, of the rule of the Soviet bureaucracy in the USSR and over a part of the international working-class movement, I have written a hundred times that this will come about in the course of the decisive struggle between imperialism and the revolution.

In all my writings, moreover, I have been among the first, I believe, to analyze the idea that the postwar expansion of Stalinism was, in reality, at the same time the beginning of its break-up, through the resultant objective destruction of its former bases of equilibrium, and through the introduction into its system of new factors of fermentation, crisis and decomposition.

Furthermore, it is not I who in any way whatever have avoided a discussion on the "centuries." I wrote on the subject not once but three times, despite the hesitations, uneasiness and criticisms the subject aroused among certain people, which I well recognized. My thinking on the subject was clear and firm, and I had nothing to retract, nothing to hide or to have forgotten.

It is a great pity that, on the advice of Comrade Morris, who feared for my "prestige" if Comrade Cannon were to attack me publicly—advice which was unquestionably well-

intentioned toward me, and which I appreciate—Comrade Cannon did nothing, said nothing, wrote nothing.

I want to take this occasion to say this very clearly: Our International would not be a serious political organization if such considerations of "prestige," etc., led to keeping people in the leadership who preach *"centuries of Stalinism."*

On the plane of fundamental political and programmatic ideas, there is no question of "prestige" but simply the most complete and most rigorous *political clarity*. In cases like this, each one has the duty to take up his pen and write fully. Of course it is wise to first take the trouble to read and understand what someone else has written, not only in the interest of one's own seriousness but for the honesty of the discussion.

Let us move on.

Comrade Cannon ended his speech with a concept which seems to me to be the key to his other ideas about internationalism, our International, the "few people in Paris," etc. Here is what he says: "This party, comrades, is the most important party in the whole world. Not because we say so, not because we are braggarts, as Cochran says whenever anyone puts in a good word for the party. It is because we are operating *in that section of the capitalist world which is not collapsing*. We are operating in that section of the world which is a concentration of all the power of capitalism—the United States. The revolutions which are taking place in other parts of the world, in China, Korea and other areas of the colonial world—those revolutions cannot be definitive. They can only be provisional—so long as capitalism rules the United States."

I do not propose to reply here *in extenso* to this conception. It offers material for a full discussion, and I hope that we will have it. But I believe certain remarks are necessary now:

There is no question of underestimating in any way the capital importance of the American revolution, the American proletariat, and its revolutionary party, *for the achievement, stabilization and eventual rapid progress toward the genuine socialist society, of the world revolution.*

But it is necessary to understand, on the other hand, that the relation of forces between the rising world revolution in all its forms and American capitalism has changed enormously since the Second World War (in relation to the pre-war situation), and is evolving more and more to the disadvantage of the latter; that even the relation of forces between U.S. capitalism and the coalition of anti-capitalist states (which enter as a part of the global forces of the revolution) has changed and is steadily changing to its disadvantage; that the victory of the American revolution will now in all likelihood be determined and facilitated more and more by the progress of the revolution in other parts of the world; that the power of capitalism is concentrated in the United States as a last fortress, more and more closely besieged on every side by the forces of the rising world revolution; that from this point of view, the importance of the revolutionary working-class movement and the revolution in other parts of the world, far from lessening in relation to the importance of the American working-class movement and the American revolution, and far from being strictly dependent

on the latter, on the contrary strengthen and more and more determine the victory of the latter; that Stalinism will very probably collapse completely in this process, and even before the victory of the American revolution is assured.

A final word: The entire International is indebted to the American organization; among other things, for the example of the ideological struggle, so enormously educational, that it gave in 1939-40. Comrade Cannon himself wrote at that time some very valuable things on the character and functioning of the proletarian party, on a remarkably high and clear ideological level. One can see him through his writings of that time—calm, confident, principled and completely master of himself. The presence of Leon Trotsky, his active participation in the struggle, of which in reality he led the entire political aspect, properly speaking, naturally counted for a great deal in this.

We wish that Comrade Cannon would not now forget his important and worthy contribution of those years in the ideological and organizational education of our

movement.

We no longer have Leon Trotsky. We are only ourselves. Despite our unquestionable progress during these last years, we are still a weak movement, subject to terrible class pressures that increase as we move closer to the final and decisive storm.

We must raise to the highest level the understanding of our responsibilities, the clarity of our ideas, the truly Bolshevik methods of discussion in our movement, worthy of our traditions.

It is up to the leaders and the cadres to be the first to give the example.

September 9, 1953

Note: I have left aside several other ideas in Comrade Cannon's speech so as not to overburden this reply and to concentrate on what seemed to me the essential for the moment.