

# DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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THE IMPORTANCE OF METHOD IN THE DISCUSSION ON THE  
KREMLIN-DOMINATED BUFFER ZONE

By John G. Wright

The Plenum of our National Committee reached two correct decisions at this stage of the discussion of the problems of Eastern Europe. By a decisive majority it voted (1) to separate the case of Yugoslavia from the discussion of the rest of the so-called buffer zone; and (2) to reject the designation of the satellite countries as "workers' states" in any sense whatever.

Ernest Germain's brilliant document, "The Yugoslav Question, The Question of the Soviet Buffer Zone And Their Implications for Marxist Theory," was constantly referred to and played an important part in the discussion. My purpose is to deal with these implications so far as our method as a whole is concerned.

The Plenum discussion brought to the fore a rather glaring self-contradiction in the approach of the minority supporters of the "workers' states" thesis. Their viewpoint leaves little room, if any, for the role of the subjective factors in the developments in Eastern Europe.

The role of the working class, the program, the party and the leadership was so minimized by them, that it is, in effect, simply cancelled out. In the entire complex situation, they single out, almost exclusively, the nationalizations, or the "statification" of economy. That is, they seek to approach the problem principally from its economic side.

This was clearly evident in the main presentation for the minority position made by Comrade E.R. Frank at the Plenum. In his speech he advanced implicitly and explicitly two theoretical propositions among several others:

(1) Our traditional approach relating to the decisive role played by the intervention of the working class on the one side and the bourgeoisie on the other in effecting basic changes in the structure of the state does not apply to the problem of Eastern Europe today.

The situation there is unique and therefore we must discard our "pat formulas," he said. He did not spend much time in explaining just what made the situation unique, that is, unlike any other in history, nor did he explain why our Marxist formulas must be thrown out of the window. He made these flat assertions and let it go at that. That's hardly enough for so serious a subject.

He devoted much more time to another theoretical proposition, namely (2) We must view reality as it is "without prejudice," and in a most objective way and, above all, "sociologically."

This sociological approach amounts to the following: we set down two parallel columns and in one column we jot down the outstanding characteristics of the Soviet Union as it is today, in 1950; and in this connection we may, if we so desire, take note of its historical origin in what Comrade E.R. Frank labels as the revolution of a "classic type."

In an adjoining column we set down all the buffer states, including Yugoslavia, and see what similarities can be found with the USSR under Stalin -- this time without paying any regard whatever to the historical origin of what happened in each of these countries, ignoring who carried out certain measures, why and under what circumstances, ignoring just how they were carried out, who benefited thereby and so on.

1. In the USSR there is collectivized agriculture; the same is true of the buffer countries. This we are told is an important sociological point. 2. Soviet economy is nationalized; so is the economy of the buffer countries. Sociological similarity number two. 3. The Soviet state oppresses bourgeois elements in industry and agriculture; the same is true in the buffer countries. Similarity number three. 4. There is a totalitarian police state under Stalin; you have exactly the same in the buffer countries. Similarity number four. And so on down the list.

The more similarities you can think up, all the better.

And at the end, without weighing any of these diverse factors or evaluating them from the class standpoint and ignoring all the dissimilarities -- especially that of origin -- you conclude that all these similarities constitute an identity. And, therefore, in Eastern Europe what you have are revolutions of a "new and special type." What has this in common with our dialectical method? Very little.

Not so very long ago, Comrade E. R. Frank, dealing precisely with the problem of Eastern Europe and of the nationalizations there, wrote: "He is a poor Marxist who permits himself to be dazzled by a common formula and neglects to examine the essence of the process." (Fourth International, p. 330ff, November 1946.)

But now we are told that we are poor Marxists unless we apply a sociological method with unmistakable academic whiskers on it. It happens to be the formalistic method of comparative sociology which lays stress on dazzling similarities or "common formulas," regardless of time and place, class and origin.

Sociology which shunts aside living classes and class criteria is utterly worthless. To illustrate, let me cite a sociological definition which is quite famous and which played an important role in the early history of Bolshevism in Czarist Russia.

Long before 1905 everybody from Lenin and Trotsky through the Mensheviks down to the capitalist liberals agreed that the coming Russian revolution would be bourgeois-democratic in character. As a sociological definition, this one is hard to beat. But even it acquires its full and true meaning only in terms of classes.

The liberals and Mensheviks argued that because the revolution would be bourgeois-democratic in character, therefore the proletariat was automatically excluded from the leading role and it was up to the Russian bourgeoisie to carry it through. Despite the important differences between them at the time, both Lenin and Trotsky agreed that such a sociology was worthless, more accurately anti-Marxist. They assigned the leading role not to the bourgeoisie but to the proletariat. History proved they were right.

There is, I am sure, a valuable lesson here especially for those comrades who are now toying with the idea of sociological definitions that ignore the actual role of the classes in the world historical process.

To give a different illustration, let me take Comrade E.R. Frank himself. I mention this not at all in the sense that he is a Menshevik or a liberal. What I mean is that he is venturing dangerously close to the same theoretical trap. Suffice it to point out here that he listed among the features, which in his opinion established an identity between the Soviet Union and the buffer countries, the fact, among other things, that they all have the same police state. Now, this was no mere slip of the tongue. It logically flows from the method of comparative sociology. In listing as many similarities as he could find, Comrade E.R. Frank simply forgot to ask himself: Since when has a totalitarian regime been one of the hallmarks of a workers' state?

One can never fit reality into a wrong theoretical approach without drastically revising not only the present but the past, and the recent past at that. In those sections of his speech at the Plenum where Comrade E.R. Frank tried to explain what were the actual origins of his alleged workers' states in the buffer zone, he contradicted not only what our party and the International have said but also what he himself had been saying, since 1945 and until very recently, about the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism, about the ruthless suppression, not of the bourgeoisie, but of the first revolutionary wave that had started to sweep over these countries when the Soviet armies marched in.

It now turns out that we evidently missed a great revolutionary uprising over approximately half of Europe. It also turns out that we were wrong about the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism there. The revolution was not at all crushed and aborted there, as we have been saying, and in my opinion must continue to say, if we are really to say what is. No. It now appears that the Stalinists were only partly counter-revolutionary. To be sure, they suppressed the insurgent masses but suppressed them only to a degree -- just enough to harness them within the bureaucratic strait-jacket. And then they turned the class struggle on and off like water in a faucet to suit the tempo of the bureaucratic revolution under the banner and leadership of the Kremlin. Stalin it turns out has the power not only to cheat history over a certain span of time -- as he has been doing by betraying the Soviet and the world proletariat. He is also able to manipulate the class struggle at his whim, i.e., determine the course of history. The masses move onto the arena to be betrayed and suppressed; then get off and stand at Stalin's beck and call as suits his plans. Maybe. Maybe Stalin really believes he wields such miraculous super-historical powers. I find it impossible to believe.

It is a big mistake to think that the bureaucracy knows exactly what to do or exactly what it is doing in Eastern Europe. They are proceeding as always in the crudest empirical manner -- from hand to mouth. The notion advanced by Comrade E.R. Frank that the Kremlin introduced in 1945, or at any other date, a regime of dual power in Eastern Europe and then deliberately proceeded from there to transform these countries socially, is, I am sorry to say, a fantastic misinterpretation of the Kremlin's role.

The Stalinists have already followed at least three distinct and different policies in relation to the buffer zone.

Listed briefly these three empirical zigzags are: (1) In the days of Potsdam and immediately thereafter, they followed a policy of collaboration with both the native ruling classes as well as Western imperialism. When that blew up in Stalin's face there ensued (2) a rather prolonged period of intimate collaboration with the native ruling classes from Benes in Czechoslovakia to King Michael in Rumania. And (3) when the cold war was heated up by the Marshall Plan, the Kremlin turned against many of its native collaborators who were among the former ruling circles. All these three policy-phases were accompanied by nationalizations. What their final policy will be, the Kremlin bureaucrats don't know and can't know themselves. Right now they are heading into a conflict with both the peasantry and proletariat whose needs and aspirations they are neither able or willing to satisfy.

Some shrewd followers of the school of comparative sociology will doubtless object that exactly the same thing holds true of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. It cannot and will not satisfy the needs and aspirations of the Soviet masses, either.

Here they miss one of the really new features of the situation. For an even bigger mistake than the one I just mentioned is to think that the Kremlin bureaucracy stands in the same relation to the masses and economies of Eastern Europe as it does to the Soviet people and Soviet economy. Inside the USSR the Stalinists have been and remain a monstrous parasitic growth on the social system that emerged from October. Even today they have no juridical basis for their power and privileges; even today they play no independent role in Soviet economic life.

But what is their position in Eastern Europe? Do their power and privileges have a juridical basis there? Does their position provide them with an independent role in the economic life of these countries?

The answer is of course, yes! To deny it is to blind oneself to the full enormity to the counter-revolutionary crimes of Stalinism and of the counter-revolutionary regimes they have been trying to sustain in almost half of Europe.

In Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary and Eastern Germany -- leaving aside Finland and Austria -- they have the status of conquerors of belligerent states. This status is sealed by treaties and underwritten by the Western imperialists. It is paid for in indemnities, reparations, special trade treaties, not to mention outright pillage. One can scarcely use the term parasitism for what they have perpetrated there. They have exploited the masses and economies of Eastern Europe in a way which differs in degree but not in substance from the imperialist brigands. In relation to the other countries -- Poland, Czechoslovakia, Albania -- they pose as "liberators." But here, too, they played and still play the role of ruthless conquerors. These countries too are subject nations who are likewise being oppressed and exploited. What is the gist of the Yugoslav charges and revelations if not the exposure of precisely such ruthless exploitation?

This role of Stalinism was foreseen by no one. Prior to World War II the counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism manifested itself in the main on the political arena. We recognized it and did not hesitate to explain just how and just why Stalinism acts as an AGENCY of imperialism on the world arena. Now we have seen Stalinism act on the economic field as an AGENCY of imperialism not only by propping up capitalism but by actually running the economies of Eastern Europe on a capitalist basis for the benefit of native and foreign capitalists and for their own benefit as well.

We witnessed this over a span of several years when no one in our ranks questioned the capitalist character of these regimes. Wasn't this something entirely new? Of course it was. Was it possible for capitalist states to operate with nationalized industry? Of course it was. In writing about Eastern Europe all of us, not alone Comrade E. R. Frank, explained that only a poor Marxist could be dazzled by the form and extent of nationalizations and forget about "the essence of the process."

Now we are told that a nationalized economy can be operated only by a workers' state. This is true only for an extended historical period. It is not at all true at all times and in any given situation. Least of all is it true for such a conjunctural, intermediate situation as now exists in Eastern Europe. There is no reason at all -- nor has anyone advanced as yet a half-serious one -- why we must suddenly exclude in principle that the Kremlin can and does operate -- and manipulate -- Eastern Europe on a capitalist basis.

Is the bureaucracy incapable of continuing in the next period to play its role as agency of imperialism economically in the buffer zone? Not at all. That's exactly what they have been doing. They are doing it right now in China without any disguises whatever. Finally, to call the regimes in Eastern Europe "workers states" is to say that the Stalinists have been and are carrying out revolutionary tasks there, in a bureaucratic way, in a "deformed" way, qualify it how you may, revolutionary nonetheless. We must challenge that.

We must say that just the contrary is true. It is the counter-revolutionary essence of Stalinism that has come to the fore in Eastern Europe, and not the reverse. Capitalist relations continue to predominate here, not in the exact same way or manner as in the other capitalist countries, but capitalist nonetheless. Not so long ago, this was recognized by all of us. Comrade E. R. Frank recognized this in 1946 when he wrote: "It is of course true that these Balkan countries by no means present a picture of classical capitalist relations. It is a rather bizarre capitalism..."

Comrade Cannon has suggested that we regard the handiwork of the Kremlin in these countries as degenerated capitalist states propped up by the Kremlin. Comrade Germain has also proposed the same approach. This Marxist formula has, first of all, this merit that the role of the Stalinists in the USSR is clearly differentiated from their role in the buffer zone, where not the native quislings but the Kremlin is the real power. Moreover, the unfolding crisis of Stalinism, in Eastern Europe, in which the counter-revolutionary role of the Kremlin is one of the major factors, is neither obscured nor ignored by this formula as is the case with the "workers state" formula and its proponents.

We must reject a sociology that would lead us from one theoretical trap into a worse one, the worst being an entirely alien conception of the meaning, nature and role of Stalinism.

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If, for the sake of discussion, we were to grant the minority all their statistics, the "total" character of nationalizations and all their other hasty assertions of fact in this connection, there would still remain unanswered many more questions than appear to be "solved" by such a lop-sided approach.

To illustrate. From a practical standpoint, no amount of statistics is capable of providing an answer to the question of whether or not these nationalizations are purely conjunctural, i.e., intermediate in character. From all indications, their fate is still to be decided. On this, too, we were all agreed, at least until very recently. How then is it possible to draw far-reaching theoretical and political conclusions from purely conjunctural situations?

What is far worse, up to now our Trotskyist school of thought has rejected as false the notion of approaching economic factors, singly or collectively, as if they led an independent existence; as if they could be weighed and evaluated at any time and in any circumstances separate and apart from their class roots and class content, independently of the methods of economic leadership and finally -- what is most important! -- independently of the political program and leadership involved. Yet all this appears to fall away in the thinking and argumentation of the "workers-statists." We are presented with bare facts and statistics of nationalizations. The course of events leading up to them, the entire Kremlin policy with all its twists and turns from Potsdam to 1950, not to mention the wartime policies, evaporate into thin air. All this seems to be without any apparent importance compared to the decisive "reality" of nationalizations. Assuredly, this bears little resemblance to our method of thinking.

A famous Russian poet Krylov once wrote a fable about a "realistic" character who is so dead sure of the importance of acorns as to place the entire stress on them -- "After all, acorns are good for me and look how plump they make me!" He is convinced that neither the roots of the oak tree nor its trunk have anything at all to do with the matter. Trotsky, like Lenin, often cited this Krylovian "realist" as a classic exemplar of narrow thinking.

Thus far in the discussion there has been considerable reference to the 1939-40 dispute with the petty-bourgeois opposition inside the SWP. This is only to be welcomed. But from the standpoint of method the following must be borne in mind.

In evaluating the class nature of the USSR, our opponents of 1939-40 denied completely the role of the economic foundation. The polemic, of necessity, stressed this aspect; the subjective factors, their role and importance, appeared to fall into a subordinate position. But, in reality, that was not at all the case. Because all of us, and in the first instance Trotsky, never dealt with Soviet nationalized economy "as such," but invariably stressed its origin

in the proletarian revolution and its subsequent evolution. We took into account all the changes introduced by the Kremlin and concluded that the qualitative stage of reversion to capitalism had not yet occurred in these remaining conquests of October. Moreover, we, and first of all Trotsky, never forgot to bring the subjective factors to the fore in discussing the role of the Kremlin both in relation to the Soviet Union itself as well as to the then occupied territories.

Trotsky did not stop in 1939 with explaining what made possible both the "impulse" in the direction of the social overturn in the case of Eastern Poland as well as the incorporation of this territory into the USSR. He also evaluated the relative weight of these "conquests" as against the damage they inflicted upon both the USSR and the world proletariat. And his conclusion was that the latter far outweighed the former.

Isn't it incumbent also upon us now not only to assay the progressive aspects, whatever they may be, of the nationalizations in Eastern Europe but also to weigh the extent to which these are disorienting and demoralizing the working class in these countries, and, above all, on the international scale?

In 1939, the counter-revolutionary policy of the Kremlin, as Trotsky correctly pointed out, "not only facilitated the outbreak of a new imperialist war but also made extremely difficult the utilization of this war for revolution." Aren't these same policies today sowing demoralization and disorientation to an even far greater extent among the workers of Eastern Europe, Western Europe and throughout the world? With Stalinism appearing on the world arena as a power "second only" to imperial Washington, aren't these same policies facilitating the outbreak of World War III and rendering it extremely difficult to utilize the post-war convulsions of world capitalism and its war preparations to promote the socialist revolution? All this is an integral part of Trotskyist politics. And yet sad to say, there is little note taken of it in the approach and argumentation of the minority. They seem to feel no need for it. The reason is their completely one-sided approach. It tends to exclude this side of our analysis and they wrongly believe that it is something to be taken for "granted."

Among the most fruitful features of the present discussion is that it, of necessity, brings to the fore the role of leadership, program, party and class. Since Lenin's death, no other tendency except ours has paid any serious attention or made any lasting contributions in this field. This side of the theoretical contributions and traditions of Trotskyism came up for exhaustive study and discussion not only in the course of the 1939-40 dispute, but also much earlier in the history of our movement, namely, in the course of the 1925-27 Chinese Revolution, and later in 1928-29, during Stalin's "left turn" in the Soviet Union and the launching of the First Five-Year Plan.

Both of these historic disputes occurred inside the Russian Left Opposition. Involved were a grouping led by Preobrazhensky, Smilga and Radek, on the one side, and Trotsky on the other. The central issues discussed at the time have been partly overlooked by some in the current discussion and, in part, remain unknown to many



members recruited in recent years. Yet from the standpoint of method, the discussions of 1925-27 and 1928-29 are assuredly just as important as that of 1939-40.

In approaching the 1925-27 Chinese events, Preobrazhensky, Smilga and Radek inclined to place primary stress on the economic -- or objective -- side of China's development. They were critical of Trotsky for "over-emphasizing" the role of program, leadership, party and class -- that is, the subjective factors. This was formulated most clearly and succinctly by Preobrazhensky who wrote to Trotsky as follows in 1927:

"Your fundamental error lies in the fact that you determine the character of a revolution on the basis of who makes it, which class, i.e., by the effective subject, while you seem to assign secondary importance to the objective social content of the process."

Guarding all proportions, the minority in the present discussion presents in substance the same criticism of the majority views in relation to Eastern Europe. Let us listen to Trotsky's answer to Preobrazhensky:

"How to characterize a revolution? By the class which achieves it or by the social content lodged in it? There is a theoretical trap lodged in counterposing the former to the latter in such a general form." Then after taking up the various historical examples brought up by Preobrazhensky, and citing some of his own, Trotsky goes on:

"The gist of the matter lies precisely in the fact that although the political mechanics of the revolution depends in the last analysis upon an economic base (not only national but international) it cannot, however, be deduced with abstract logic from this economic base. In the first place, the base itself is very contradictory, and its 'maturity' does not allow of bald statistical determination; secondly, the economic base as well as the political situation must be approached not in the national but in the international framework, taking into account the dialectic action and reaction between the national and the international; thirdly, the class struggle and its political expression, unfolding on the economic foundations also have their own imperious logic of development, which cannot be leaped over."

This is a far cry from the way the minority spokesmen proceed. Trotsky's correspondence with Preobrazhensky was reprinted in the New International, April 1936, pp. 58-62. These along with the entire discussion of that period merit the closest attention and study above all for the profound lessons in method they contain.

I am firmly convinced that one of the principal obligations devolving upon the leadership in the unfolding discussion is to challenge and rectify every attempt to introduce an over-simplified approach either by negating the role of the party, program, leadership and the class (the subjective factors) or, conversely, by cancelling out entirely the economic side of the developments (the objective factors). It is only by correctly establishing the inter-relationship between the primary subjective and objective factors in the situation that it will be possible to lay bare the true nature

and results of the highly complex and contradictory events now unfolding in Eastern Europe.

The approach of the minority is in striking contrast to the one set down by Trotsky in the Preobrazhensky correspondence and on many other occasions. First, the minority dismisses out of hand all the still indeterminate aspects of the situation. Next, instead of establishing the interrelationship between the "political mechanics" of the developments and their "social content," they sever the two, cancelling out in the process the decisive role of the working class, along with that of leadership and program. Then, they go a step further and reduce the highly contradictory economic set-up in the satellite countries to bald statistics of nationalizations. Finally from this, they wrongly insist that definitive conclusions about the class nature of these states may be deduced "sociologically," or more accurately, abstractly.

Trotsky's approach may appear paradoxical to those who are attracted by simple, neat and rigid formulas. But it has the merit of taking into account the living forces which play an all-important role in the struggle. It takes into account the decisive significance and role of the working class, its party, leadership, program. On the contrary, the simple, neat and rigid formulas which stress the objective factors to the exclusion of the subjective do so only at the risk of turning into a caricature the reality which we all seek to understand as well as the Marxist method which we must apply.

No less important from the standpoint of Marxist method are the lessons contained in the 1928-29 discussion within the Communist Left Opposition. The historical background of this discussion was briefly as follows:

The Stalinist bureaucracy found itself in an economic blind alley in the Soviet Union. In both economic and political fields it was compelled to make an abrupt zigzag to the left. This experience was "unique" from two standpoints. First, it marked the launching of the First Five-Year Plan, an economic event never witnessed in history before; secondly, it marked the first time that the Stalinist bureaucracy -- then not yet completely degenerated -- engaged in a sharp left maneuver. It broke with the right wing, led by Rykov, Bukharin, Tomsky (and in this country by the Lovestoneites). It was by no means accidental that Preobrazhensky, Radek and Smilga used the new Five-Year Plan as a bridge for retreating from the positions of the Russian Left Opposition. For just as they had split the economic side from the political during the Chinese events, just so in 1928-29 they began to center their entire attention on the "concrete figures" of the First Five-Year Plan. They took these statistics separate and apart from the correct methods of economic leadership and, above all, independently of the role the Soviet proletariat would play and the political leadership that would carry out the planning.

This highly simplified approach found its crassest expression in the theses written by Radek at the time. Radek took as his starting point the proposition that "the concrete figures of the five-year plan" expressed in essence "the program of socialist construction." Implicit and explicit in this position was the notion that the Stalinist leadership proved, as Trotsky put it, "better than their theories."

Trotsky mercilessly attacked Radek for his anti-Marxist emphasis on the exclusively economic side of the question while completely blotting out in this connection the nature and role of the Stalinist program and leadership. "Pitiful indeed is the politician," he wrote in May 1929, "who gauges a political line within the range of a small span of time without asking himself who are the elements that are carrying out a given political line and for what reasons." (Bulletin of the Russian Opposition No. 1-2, Page 9.)

The bare statistics of nationalizations can no more be correctly weighed and appraised separate and apart from the political side of the developments in Eastern Europe today than it was possible to assay and evaluate the "concrete figures of the First Five-Year Plan" in 1928-29.

Having arrived in an economic blind alley in the satellite countries, the Kremlin found itself compelled to break with the native ruling classes and to carry out a policy of nationalizations and by dint of circumstances may have even found themselves compelled to go further than they had originally intended. Nevertheless it is impossible to evaluate these nationalizations separate and apart from the political leadership which has carried them out, independently of its program, its aims, its character and its role not only in the Soviet Union but also in these satellite countries and above all on the international arena. If this lesson is firmly learned, it will more than justify the present discussion.

To repeat, we must firmly reject the minority position as pedantic and sterile in method and wrong and harmful in their conclusions.

The East European developments are extremely involved, self-contradictory and self-destructive, conjunctural and intermediate in character. They can neither be encompassed nor understood within the very narrow framework of the minority's approach.

It is precisely in such situations as we now witness in the satellite countries that the need and importance of method comes most forcefully to the forefront.

In an unsigned article published in the New International, August 1934 (p.37) Trotsky gave the following invaluable advice:

"The vast practical importance of a correct theoretical orientation is most strikingly manifested in a period of acute social conflicts, of rapid political shifts, of abrupt changes in the situation. In such periods, political conceptions and generalizations are rapidly used up and require either a complete replacement (which is easier) or their concretization, precision or partial rectification (which is harder). It is just in such periods that all sorts of transitional, intermediate situations and combinations arise, as a matter of necessity, which upset the customary patterns and doubly require a sustained theoretical attention."

These words apply with full force to the developments of Eastern Europe today.

A NEW WORKERS STATE AND THE TASKS OF TROTSKYISM

By James E. Boulton

I. Preliminary

The imperfections and vicissitudes of real life are truly odious. Yet they are not absolutely inescapable; for in some provinces of man's endeavor the happy act of thought may effectively anticipate these annoyances. Politics is such a province. Here we are fortunate in having the example of one renowned thinker fervently bent upon circumventing the imperfect, the pit-falls, and opportunist temptations that could befall the march of American labor toward socialism. Daniel De Leon, an otherwise imperfect man himself (he was impossible to live with and, like David, he had his Absalom) conceived of a combination political party and trade union to be known as the Socialist Labor Party. The very conception of this organization guaranteed in advance that all workers adhering to its ingenious unions shall be thoroughly indoctrinated in and bound by the discipline of certified revolutionary socialism.

If history will accord to the American SLP a very special place in its museum of curios (for in a way the SLP did serve -- it was the first "Marxist" party in America), it will also damn that party as being wholly unsuited to the tasks of life.

The unfolding of socialism, initially as a struggle for proletarian state power, and later for the progressive dissolution of that same state power, will reveal much that is to our disliking, that might very well have been avoided had the proletarian struggle began where it must end: which means, according to Lassalle that "Only when science and the workers, these opposite poles of society, become one, will they crush in their arms of steel all obstacles to culture." If scientific consciousness rather than the evolution of the forces of production were the locomotive of history, life would be different and the march toward socialism efficient. But we will begin with what is, and try to understand proletarian history as it unfolds in life predicated upon man's economic environment.

Some comrades have found that a modern revolutionary social struggle in a relatively small, economically backward country, menaced and even influenced by the counter-revolutionary Soviet bureaucracy, did not flower into a full-fledged social revolution. At least one important aspect was absent, the free birth of a "new type of state apparatus." Moreover the whole affair was attended by the "criminals," Tito and Company. (They officiated, as a matter of fact.)

Faced with a mass movement some people invariably find it unsuited to their remarkable standards. They assign to the masses and the majority parties precisely the tasks which should be their own as leaders in the historical process: the fulfillment of the revolutionary goals in action. We cannot scorn realities because they are not good enough; we must learn to accept them, to base ourselves upon them, and then see if we can make some changes.

## II. The Discussion in Relation to Our Tasks

The revolutionary action of the masses on an all-sided scale and directly bearing on the question of state power is a relatively infrequent occurrence. The inability of a revolutionary leadership to seize upon, better, to anticipate and merge with the most pregnant moments of class conflict for the purpose of carrying out its strategic tasks is often the direct cause of immense catastrophes. Its task, then, is not merely, or even primarily to cast the most scientific balance-sheet of historical events, but to effectively intervene, to the extent of its physical capacities, in each development from the point of view of its concrete tasks. A Marxist analysis of events is only important in so far as it aids in anticipating and influencing events; and in no-wise does the greatness of Marxism lie in its ability to present the scientific account of events. This latter is an auxiliary task. Marxists who simply scold after the fact are really accessories to the fact. The idea of waiting for history to conclusively settle the Yugoslav affair, i.e., to crush the Yugoslav state, is suicidal.

Just to begin with, it simply will not do at all to say: "the Titoist Communists are a pack of criminals; they aborted the revolution; the state power is inadequate; it rests upon a too narrow base and its conquests are shaky; the regime and the party lack Marxist theoretical foundations and perspective." This much we must recognize: the Yugoslav Communists actually led the mass social struggle through a civil war, overthrew the bourgeois state power, inefficiently or otherwise, have pretty thoroughly broken the back of bourgeois social power by the fairly comprehensive nationalizations; and, above all, to embark on some kind of a socialist program they have inspiringly defied the political, social, and military power of the Soviet bureaucracy, without making any serious concessions to imperialism. And that is something! It is the first event of its kind since the infinitely more magnificent struggle of the Bolsheviks in October, 1917.

Given the definition of our strategic tasks in relation to a political estimate of the realities in the buffer zone quite apart from a scientific characterization of the sociological nature of the buffer countries as a whole or separately, revolutionary Marxists were derelict in their historic responsibilities to fail to elaborate a tactic signifying their intervention in the struggle for socialism. We must ask: do the recommendations of a theoretical school (a very good one) to a workers' party holding state power (with or without a proletarian "new type of state apparatus") constitute adequate political intervention at the side of masses in struggle? To go further, given the indispensability of the internationalist strategy of Trotskyism to the revolutionary movement of the buffer masses, particularly that of Yugoslavia, does a theoretical estimate of Titoist leadership pursued by programmatic ultimatums to that very leadership, characterized at best as dubious, of Stalinist origin, constitute a tactic of struggle?

What is fundamental in the whole situation is the existence of extensive communist masses in revolt against the counter-revolutionary actions and influence of the Soviet bureaucracy, a reality surely reflected in the leadership crisis of international Stalinism.

This revolt on a mass scale, aye, embracing the toiling masses of a workers' state, has begun not under the leadership of the Fourth International. Nor was it ever required that this revolt of the masses must begin under Trotskyist leadership!

Moreover we have always understood that the initial capital of world communism was the world-wide impetus to class-consciousness set in motion by the glorious revolution of October in Russia. We must now seriously consider what effect these pregnant developments have had upon Slav workers abroad. A glance at the Slav press in the United States is sufficient to indicate not only the interest but the active solidarity of great segments of Slav workers here. When we consider that Stalinism can do no more than carry on a brutal struggle to demoralize its considerable Slav base, we have a real point of contact with the Slav workers in Europe. We will find that their enemy is not Tito at all, but our enemy: Stalin!! It is to them that we must address ourselves; and here the danger of being "doctrinaire" is immeasurably greater than among the "student intellectuals."

On the other hand solidarity with the Tito forces in action will enable us to better understand the nature of the Yugoslav ruling party, whose evolution to date warns us take pause before categorically branding them as incorrigible rascals, criminals, abortionists, etc. The task of Trotskyism is to merge its forces with these anti-Stalinist masses whether they be Tito-Stalinist or not. Here it is worth restating the cogent advice of Comrade M. Pablo ("Titoism in Evolution," Fourth International, November 1949):

"...the revolutionary vanguard should be conscious of the immense potentialities of the Yugoslav affair and do the utmost to assist its favorable evolution.

"We cannot just wait for what the Yugoslav Communist Party does on its own in developing a correct platform and for what Yugoslavia does on its own in continuing to fight on two fronts against imperialism and against the Kremlin. What will happen to the YCP and to Yugoslavia depends largely, depends primarily on the active aid which the international workers movement can give from now on to this new revolutionary development in the world."

In the discussion of the whole Yugoslav question there is, in the abstract, general agreement on the method of analysis set forth by L. Trotsky in the "Revolution Betrayed." "The scientific task, as well as the political, is not to give a finished definition to an unfinished process, but to follow all its stages, separate its progressive from its reactionary tendencies, expose their mutual relations, foresee possible variants of development, and find in this foresight a basis for action." (My emphasis -- J.B.) Concretely there is an all too evident tendency to see only the reactionary tendencies and to impart to them a decisive weight. This method certainly has the advantage of simplifying our tasks in line with our standard orientation.

Now that which is unfinished in the entire buffer zone is  
1) the preparation of the state power in Yugoslavia for its political and socialist tasks, 2) the decisive determination of the possibilities for the pro-Tito, pro-Yugoslav forces in the remainder of the

buffer, and 3) the evolution of the YCP in relation to its tasks. Here is where our tasks begin.

### III. Yugoslavia and its Relation to the Buffer Zone

From the point of view of the strategical orientation of the Fourth International the question of the buffer zone resolves itself into the question: what is the social nature of the Yugoslav state? A tactical position that may be of decisive significance to international Trotskyism will depend upon our understanding of the Yugoslav development quite apart from the question of whether the buffer zone as a whole consists of bourgeois states on the road to structural assimilation into the USSR, or degenerated workers' states, etc.

Until the masses have spoken in these countries their development has a very limited signification in revolutionary strategy. The question of their sociological character takes on an almost academic imprint. Their importance at this time is most relevant to the question of the historic possibilities of the Yugoslav struggle. Their internal development has underscored by contrast the distinctive revolutionary features of the Yugoslav state. The political manifestations of their contradictory processes of social and economic change will be a measure of the revolutionary strength of Yugoslav "communism."

The universal nationalizations that occurred in the buffer zone signify not only the incompatibility of the old property relations with the needs of the Stalinist bureaucracy but the readiness of large sectors of the masses to support such nationalizations, independently of whether or not they, the masses, participated in the process of statification.

To the extent that the capitalist restorationist tendencies and Stalinist political-economic exploitation come into conflict with the social needs of the masses stimulated by the progressive impulses of the non-"Stalinist," non-bourgeois Yugoslav state -- to that extent are the possibilities enhanced for the further catapulting of the buffer countries onto the revolutionary road.

The ferocity of Stalinist policification combined with the zigzag course in economic "direction," as well as the widespread Titoist splits in the Communist Parties, are undeniable testimony to the depth of social antagonisms in the Stalinist dominated buffer countries, and to the virility of the revolutionary impulses.

In the socio-political life of the buffer zone, not only do the whims of the Soviet checker players and the machinations of capitalism, external and internal, operate as determining influences, Yugoslavia also -- if it is a workers' state and if a social revolution of a kind has transpired with all that entails from the point of view of Marxist theory -- is an objective factor contributing to the totality of conditions influencing its development.

Now this is what has fundamental significance and immense implication for revolutionists. It signifies that a sector of the Communist masses holding, perhaps in modified form, state power in one country are in revolt simultaneously against world imperialism and

Stalinism. Truly it would seem that international Trotskyism would embrace this struggle by acclamation and above all with the solidarity of its forces.

But if, in the leading center of this revolt, the Yugoslav Communist Party, the state power and ideology of the Soviet bureaucracy constitute the decisive force, then it is clear that this revolt of the masses is only symptomatic and probably of limited duration. Yet the whole evolution of the Yugoslav CP, let alone the undeniable manifestations of revolutionary change, ave, progress in the social-economic life of the state, belies such an untenable estimate.

It becomes very clear then, that how we characterize Yugoslavia sociologically will determine our estimate of the stage and scope of this revolt, whether the struggle is approached fundamentally as a task of "overthrowing" the Yugoslav regime as a condition for its development, or whether the struggle is viewed as one of extending its base and (clarifying its theoretical foundations) correcting the perspectives of the workers' state leadership from the point of view of Trotskyism.

#### IV. The Factor of Stalinism and the Struggle Against It

In understanding the evolution both of the political struggle of the YCP up to and subsequent to its conquest of power, and of the new Yugoslav state, it is of vast importance to international Trotskyism to appreciate the role of Stalinism itself as a powerful factor in the objective process.

Counter-revolutionary Stalinism has been able to maintain its predominant position in the politically organized world labor movement. Its very position as the repository of Soviet state power has been a dominant consideration in the world aim of bourgeois governments. This has set into motion important, non-proletarian political tendencies throughout the world which offers new class collaboration bases for the narrow aims of the Soviet bureaucracy, thus acting as a tremendous influence upon the political orientation of the masses. Above all the ideology of the bureaucracy in a degenerated workers' state has made its imprint beyond the boundaries of the USSR on the social and political forces brought under its influence. (A similar influence affects the worker leadership in the official trade unions of bourgeois countries, a heritage that will only be eliminated when socialism gets underway.) Moreover, in the buffer countries, the proximity of the Soviet military and police force demanded skillful maneuvering on the part of an isolated revolutionary leadership.

If we can perceive that the Titoist fraction steered a tortuous course in the mined waters of international Stalinism (and still does while seeking free waters) we might soberly raise the question: what other course than extinction, or better, the fierce isolation so profoundly characteristic of European Trotskyism, more eminently such in the Balkans, was possible for those Communist revolutionaries who directly experienced the impulses of the masses?

Stalinism supersedes, where it does not complement, the Social-Democracy with its opportunist course of class-collaboration. But Stalinism has (until the present, i.e., the Yugoslav phenomenon)



effectively anticipated, resisted the Trotskyist tasks vested in the tactic of the united front. What is possible on the democratic arena in relation to a Labor Party or even the more "Marxist" classical Social-Democracies, looms little short of impossible in relation to the agencies of Stalinism, a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy born poignantly in the struggle to exterminate Bolshevik-Leninism, i.e., Russian Trotskyism. Is it necessary that the split within the Stalinist parties reveal itself, initially and under all conditions, in the form of an ideological struggle which must perforce resolve itself into Trotskyism (in the more general sense)? Particularly, must a revolutionary fraction struggle against Stalinism from the outside, given the possibility of a certain independence from the Kremlin, developing proportionately with the ascendancy of the leadership's strength in the masses? It is undeniable that an entire layer of communists exposed to the consequences of a blind, illegal struggle, cannot escape unscarred from such a tortuous experience. But what is the alternative when no other course awaits itself? The leadership of a class simply will not wait until history decides the fate of the Stalinist bureaucracy; and there is no guarantee that imperialism or a Soviet bureaucracy reduced to impotence by imperialism and destroyed at the instance of the Soviet masses, will clear the road for us. Much will depend upon the more or less conscious intervention of revolutionary tendencies.

It is just conceivable that history will unveil a number of instances in which the question of class power has already been decided for Trotskyism. What is the significance of Yugoslavia? Historians can wait, but the struggle of the masses continues to unfold ever and anon revealing profoundly new facets; and just because "socialism is an immediate demand" in the epoch of the death agony of capitalism. The Yugoslav masses found a road through the official party of Stalinism. That is clear enough.

It is for this very reason that the road of socialist construction, let alone the defense of its conquests, is infinitely more difficult, more arduous to travel, and more fraught with menaces in the by-ways for the Yugoslav State and its Communist Party. The Yugoslavs are not only encumbered by the Stalinist liabilities, their bureaucratic methods, their empiricism, but the Party ideology and traditions make it difficult to embrace Trotskyism, toward which they are impelled in life, and daily. It remains to be seen if the Trotskyist leadership can facilitate this new birth of Yugoslav Communism.

We need not fear the revelation of state power inaugurated without the leadership of the Fourth International. For surely the decisive battles of the world proletariat will be fought on the terrain of the developed capitalist nations, endowed with the requisite productive forces for socialist planning and a proletarian base, sufficiently large and culturally equipped for proletarian administration of the state and economy. The greatest danger to the indispensable hegemony of Trotskyism in the international labor movement lies in a sectarian isolation from the struggle of the Communist forces of Yugoslavia against the Soviet bureaucracy and in a failure to perceive this struggle in the actions of the state power.

## V. Sociology and the Trade Unions

To arrive at our definition of the sociological character of Yugoslavia, it will be instructive to review our criterion for determining the class character of trade unions and political parties.

A workers' party with roots in the masses of a given country, with cadres that have assimilated the experiences of a whole history of class struggles there, who possess an appreciation of the traditions, will be based for and estimation of the struggles of that country's proletariat. Detached from the struggles of a nation's proletariat, a revolutionary party must call upon its whole reservoir of theoretical forces to arrive collectively at its views. It must substitute conscious science for the capital of genuine experience.

It has always been the theory of "revolutionary" syndicalists and ultra-left sectarians that the non-socialist trade unions are not workers' organizations with an historical mission; they are purely and simply capitalist job trusts. Unions originating in the struggle for the division of surplus value, appearing initially as purely defensive organizations of the workers against capitalist attacks upon their living conditions, unions not born as ideological formations of the workers with a program for their emancipation from wage-slavery are, to be sure, thoroughly counter-revolutionary agencies of the capitalist class, "blind alleys" leading to destruction.

Revolutionary Marxists had done with this nonsense a long time ago; for Marxists do not create the class struggle, they are born of it. Unions arise at a given stage of capitalist development as workers' organizations, assuming a myriad of diverse forms with varying capacities for struggle, and usually devoid of communist goals. They appear as the social expression of the rising organic composition of capital leading to a fall in the rate of profit, which phenomenon evokes the familiar assault of the capitalist upon the source of surplus value, the worker and his wages. Lenin even characterizes these workers' unions as "schools for communism."

Or what is our criterion for a workers' union? Its socialist program? Its jurisdictional base? The policies of its officialdom (Mississippi semi-fascists)? Its contracts? Its internal regime? Or even the matter of its organizational point-of-origin: strike, company maneuver, jurisdictional raid, or NLRB election?

To repeat, our sole criterion is its origin as a class organization at a given stage in the development of the capitalist forces of production, as an expression of the fundamental contradiction of capitalist production relations. There is no question of whom the founders intended it should serve; it must serve, must become the historical inauguration of a struggle for the proletarian dictatorship.

Most unions are imperfect, inadequate, as a matter of fact must give way at a certain point in the class struggle to economic organizations of a higher form, at once economic, social, juridical, and political. Most trade union struggles are inadequate; and those sectarians who choose to separate the "Tito clique" from the Yugoslav

Communist Party and the mass social struggle might very well, just to be consistent, raise the slogan for a UMW strike: "No support to John L. Lewis." Why not? His struggles are always inadequate.

It will not be too unusual to find this "imperfect" quality in workers' parties, aye, of workers' states! and of the struggles out of which they are born.

We characterize workers' parties not by their program, which objectively usually serves the bourgeoisie, nor by this or that policy, nor by the bourgeois origins of a leader, but by their point of origin in the class struggle as parties expressing the class aspirations of the workers. They are really very different, have a different class composition and outlook from the other political parties: bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, bourgeois-fascist.

The processes of nature as manifest in society go on quite independently of our abstractions, of our theoretically conceived outlines of their evolution. Our theoretical norms, while valid from the point of view of materialist science, are necessarily ideal, and almost invariably do not correspond to concrete realities. To perceive the abstract in the concrete, therein lies the key to revolutionary thought in action, to the understanding of life. And it is no secret that our difficulties arise because social phenomena is more complex than any other matter subjected to scientific investigation, precisely because social phenomena is human. This root, man, so fascinatingly favored by the faculty of consciousness, thereby behaves in wholly abnormal correspondence to the laws of physics (which nevertheless operate decisively in the function of the mind). The superstructure of man's society is not a direct reflection of the evolution of his production relations, but a complex expression of the interaction of these relations with his consciousness. "History is not made out of the whole cloth."

## VI. The Form of State Power

It is only natural that the state forms issuing from the struggles of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie (or against a combination of the bourgeoisie and the Soviet bureaucracy) will assume diverse forms, carrying numerous imperfections and varying potentials for socialist development. In this sense such states will be transitional, evolving with leaps and set-backs toward more satisfactory norms that must correspond to a widening of the transformation on a world scale of class relations and the freeing of ever greater productive forces for the development of socialism. Nevertheless, such states issuing out of the destruction of bourgeois political and social power at the instance of the armed working class led by more or less socialist proletarian parties will constitute workers' states, will moreover begin planning on a non-capitalist basis.

To erect a criterion which demands a social struggle ideologically founded in a perfected Marxist leadership and conforming to an uninterrupted expression of democratic class creativeness issuing in a "new type of state apparatus" (obviously Soviets -- 1917) strait jackets historical development in accordance with our will. This error must ultimately lead to the same kind of conclusion that recorded the end of the workers's state, USSR, in the light of its degeneration.

Since the days of the "Communist Manifesto of 1848" it was understood that the specific form of class rule, state structure, would reflect a stage in the socio-economic evolution and political maturation of the revolutionary class, would depend upon the conditions and relationship of forces in which the precise class struggle was located, the totality of factors attending the rise of state power.

"Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class, an oppressed class under the way of the feudal nobility, it became an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune, here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany) there taxable "third estate" of the monarchy as in France, afterwards in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, corner-stone of the great monarchies in general -- the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of modern industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative state, exclusive political sway." (Bourgeois and Proletarians.)

What is decisive then is the essence of class power, whose historical interests are expressed by the state in accordance with the capacities of the class and its leadership at various stages of the development of production and class relations.

An unfinished state power reflects an interrupted evolution of the revolutionary struggle out of which it ensues. Each struggle of the revolutionary class expresses a stage in the evolution of the productive forces of society, the cultural level of the class forces maturing within these productive forces, the relative social weight of these class forces, and the capacities of their leadership. World imperialism does not permit the productive forces within the countries of late arrival onto the stage of capitalism to fully mature and exhaust their possibilities within that system. The social struggles open up under unfavorable conditions and their issue will reflect these conditions in such manifestations as the degenerated workers' state in the USSR, and the hybrid form of the workers' state in Yugoslavia.

To be sure, we witnessed no uninterrupted evolution of the state power in Yugoslavia, no clear consciousness of the goals and tasks, which were arrived at spasmodically and with evident hesitation. Yet here the direction is all important now; the rupture with the Soviet bureaucracy impels the party of power onto new roads, theoretically known to Trotskyism.

To adduce in relationship to Yugoslavia empirical evidence of the inadequacies, even bureaucratic acts against the workers, of the ruling YCP, evidence of the impossibility of socialism predicated upon the narrow base for economic planning and the low level of productivity, is simply to overlook the class essence of the matter, to repeat basso profundo that "socialism is impossible in one country," to say nothing of the class nature of the state.

To demonstrate, while failing to understand the location of the Yugoslav communist struggle under pressure, real live pressure of the reciprocal relations of world imperialism and Soviet bureaucra-

tism in the international labor movement, that the movement of the Yugoslav masses was subjected to bureaucratic control of the party behind which it rallied in struggle, that the People's Committees have been treated shabbily, have been bureaucratically hampered and dangerously restricted in their free development, that all vestiges of the old state apparatus have not been demolished, moreover were even exploited by the regime, is simply to demand that the form, not only of the workers' state but verily of its birth, conform to truly ideal socialist norms.

Now, we more than likely have in Yugoslavia a hybrid workers' state evolving perforce of the struggle against Soviet bureaucratism toward more democratic forms. It is possible, in a general way, to equate this stage of the proletarian state power to the pre-constitutional or limited monarchic regimes of bourgeois revolutionary history.

Comrade M. Pablo has defined the Yugoslav workers' state, as a "social form derived from secondary roots, of a transitory and deformed character," and bearing the imprint of Stalinist intervention. In presenting an all-sided delineation of the conditions of origin for both the struggle led by the YCP and of its issue in the state power this definition locates the phenomenon in its proper historical setting. And this is the indispensable starting point in our whole strategical orientation in the new struggle, the revolt of the communist masses against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

#### VII. Estimates of the Yugoslav State in Relation to its Origin

An ostensible compatibility of the two essential definitions of the Yugoslav state, as a "workers' state...transitory and deformed," (Pablo) and as neither a bourgeois or workers' state but "necessarily a brief transition toward the dictatorship of the proletariat," (Germain) might appear to exist. The latter consummation of the struggle in Yugoslavia is not yet visible. Germain asks: "how do the committees actually function in Yugoslavia?" In other words there is absent "the construction of a state apparatus of a new type," which might yet appear. The military-political power of the Communist Party (a workers' party) within a bourgeois coalition government, but resting upon the victorious struggle of the armed partisan, peasant and workers' movement which succeeded in destroying the state power of the bourgeoisie during the civil war "did not succeed in arriving at fundamental transformations in the structure of the state apparatus and of the economy. It was only in 1946, after the halt of the mass movement, that these transformations were undertaken by administrative action as in other countries of the buffer zone." (Germain, IIB, p.9, January 1950.) But nothing is as yet conclusive. Essential to the whole argument of Comrade Germain is that the mass action itself did not directly result in the construction of a state apparatus of a new type. A number of important conclusions flow from this idea. In his emphasis upon the "crucial years of the establishment of Tito's power (1944-45) he attempts to demonstrate the preponderant weight of Stalinism in the Yugoslav experience.

It is this evident weight attached to Stalinism as a subjective factor that supports the sectarian hesitancy to recognize the not only progressive, but independent character of the Yugoslav Communist

Party and its leadership. It will be absolutely impossible to separate the outcome of this struggle from the role of the leadership, YCP.

Germain attaches an almost decisive significance to the events occurring in this period of arrestation of the revolution. Parenthetically it should be pointed out that this formula is infinitely superior to that of the cult whose experience invariably detects an "abortion." This formula admits of resurgence of the revolution but becomes inadequate when it is clear that the renewed struggle is under the auspices of the YCP. And without the overthrow of the Tito clique. Now, why? It is impossible to believe that a mere dispute with the Soviet bureaucracy reopens a struggle that is "necessarily a brief transition toward the dictatorship of the proletariat."

We will venture the hypothesis that the struggle developing in full view of the military-state forces of imperialism and the Kremlin hesitated under the leadership of the YCP. Reports of the discussions in the YCP at this time (45-46) indicate that it was necessary to assess the struggle, estimate its potentialities, re-define its tasks, and to strengthen the unity of the Yugoslav leadership in preparation for the impending rupture with the Soviet bureaucracy. At no time did the communist aspects of the struggle have the blessing of the Kremlin.

In regard to the agreements and compromises all we can do is repeat that the conditions of struggle often enough dictate detours and compromises, that all kinds of agreements and compromises are possible so long as the power and the instruments of struggle are protected.

While both the Pablo and Germain line of reasoning support the existence of a genuine revolutionary movement of the masses in revolt against the Soviet bureaucracy, and even the defense of the Yugoslav state in this struggle, there is an immediate divergence on the question of whom this struggle is directed against from the point of view of Trotskyism's strategy. It is either against the pro-Stalinist regime in Yugoslavia, or, in solidarity with the YCP, against the Soviet bureaucracy.

An attempt to pose the question as one of support of the Yugoslav mass movement and the YCP against the Soviet bureaucracy, and for the dictatorship of the proletariat, but against the Tito clique of reactionary criminals, is wrong both from the point of view of the theoretical estimate and as a tactic of struggle. It is the fulfillment of the sectarian orientation in the mass struggle. The question of the leadership of the YCP can only be posed when we have demonstrated in life our unity with the Party's struggle. Outside of this relationship we will find ourselves indistinguishable in the eyes of the masses from the Stalinist counter-revolutionaries who make but one demand: "overthrow the Tito clique."

#### VIII. Conclusions

Our tasks cannot be absolutely and conclusively defined in relation to every aspect or for every conjuncture of the struggle, but in the main must follow a general orientation of critical solidarity with the state struggles, the state power, and the party of

state power. All of our slogans must include the organized masses, not in the sentimental fashion of the sectarian sycophants who glow with affection at the abused plight of the masses while leveling the scornful finger at their organizations, their struggles, and their leadership; they must include the masses in the Bolshevik sense, i.e., to "merge with them, if you will." (Lenin)

The slogans of defense of Yugoslavia against imperialism and the Kremlin, and for the right of national self-determination, will only have meaning if the Trotskyists solidarize themselves in action with the struggle being waged by the Yugoslav regime, by bringing forces to its aid through a tactical orientation toward the Communist masses.

Immediately, we must change our tone; we must cease issuing ultimatums to the Yugoslav Party.

Wherever possible we must merge our forces with those of the Titoists. Wherever this is impossible we must implement the tactic of the united front in that serious way in which Trotskyists have always understood this task.

In unity with the YCP struggle we will be able to advance our internationalist strategy, press the slogans for a Socialist-Danubian Federation, and for the extension of workers' democracy in Yugoslavia. (Without forgetting that the Kremlin agents are equivalent to Menshevik and S-R counter-revolutionists.)

Above all we must tell the masses that the march toward socialism has resumed, has been transformed from a succession of defeats into resurgent power, that Trotsky's prediction that if the Second Imperialist World War "provokes, as we firmly believe, a proletarian revolution, it must inevitably lead to the overthrow of the bureaucracy in the USSR and regeneration of Soviet democracy..." ("The USSR in War," September, 1939) has found material expression in the Yugoslav state power, the fierce split in the Stalinist parties, and the mass revolt against the Soviet bureaucracy. Trotsky never intended that this process would be bottled-up in the space of ten days, or even a year or two. What was important in his whole conception is that the war crisis of imperialism would reveal the resurgence of revolutionary mass struggles and a break in the power of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The process is far more important than the quantity of "socialism" in these events.

The revolutionary workers will receive with joy the tidings of every progressive development in Yugoslav society. Herein lies our message to the masses.

Long live the worker and peasant fighters of the partisan civil war!

Long live the Communist workers of Yugoslavia!

Long live the Peoples' Democracy of Yugoslavia!

Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
February 9, 1950