

Xs: MA, Joe, Dony, Jack, *Cur*

17 AVR. 1978

Tokyo, March 25, 1978.

To the United Secretariat Bureau

Dear Comrades,

APR 24 1978

I enclose a copy of my short remarks on the United Secretariat document: "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat". The Japanese Political Bureau has approved the submission of my article to the United Secretariat, although I am exclusively responsible for the content of it.

Another PB comrade Takayama, who is also a member of our International Commission, has written a rather long critical article on the socialist democracy document; about 24,000 letters in Japanese. We will produce a summarized translation of his article for the international discussion. Some other comrades will write more, of course, in Japanese.

We already published a full translation of the socialist democracy document in our paper last summer, and the coming issue of our magazine is to publish it again in May this year. We translated cde. Livio's statement on the document and published it in our internal circular letter. A cadre school of the greater Metropolitan area committee discussed on the document at the beginning of this year. Of course, our international commission had discussion on it at its several meetings.

All those are a part of our preparatory discussion for the 11th world congress; the socialist democracy document states that it has been "submitted to the discussion preparatory to the Eleventh World Congress of our movement, at which they (the theses) will be discussed and voted on." However, in my understanding, there was no decision to include such a subject in the agenda of the 11th world congress, at the last IEC meeting. The United Secretariat stated publicly that the socialist democracy document has been submitted to the 11th world congress and that it has decided "to open a public discussion around these theses," so the Japanese section is now conducting its preparation, of course, through the internal discussion so far. But I warn the United Secretariat that the discussion will become a full theoretical and programmatic discussion or debate, because the real question is that of democracy in general in relation with and under the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, the whole problems of the permanent revolution in theory and practice and in the past and present. Wasn't the Portuguese question, which were heatedly debated in the International, a question of democracy and the proletarian dictatorship? Wasn't the Angolan question, also heatedly debated in the International, a question of democracy and the permanent revolution?

Wasn't the question of the Argentine PST tactic on the "institutionalization" a question of democracy and the proletarian dictatorship? We are ready to have a full, open and public debates and discussions on the question of democracy and the proletarian dictatorship, that is, the central problems of the Marxism, Leninism and Trotskyism.

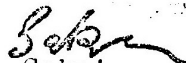
Anyway, the coming world congress will not be able to

conclude the debates and discussion on the question, because the question itself is vast and tremendous. Thus, even in this context, I think that an IEG meeting should be held in this year, in order to reorganize the 11th world congress, at least.

The socialist democracy document states; "We consequently pledge to publish the contributions to the discussion, criticisms, amendments, or counterdrafts which we receive, whether from members of our movement, from other organizations or tendencies in the workers movement, or from individual authors, provided they do not exceed reasonable length and are not simple reproductions of previously received contributions. We will strive to reproduce these contributions to the discussion in one or several pamphlets whose publication we will announce regularly in our other publications." We want to know a bit more about this regulation for the public discussion. Can the sections and organizations of the International conduct their public discussion in their own languages? Or, is it that all the public discussion should be conducted under the sole control of the United Secretariat? We want to publish cde. Takayama's article on the socialist democracy document and other comrades' articles on the subject in our magazine. Is it all right?

Many thanks for your help to cde. Muraki.

Yours fraternally,


Sakai

(First page retyped)

On 'Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat'

--A Preliminary Contribution on Democracy and the
Proletarian dictatorship--by Sakai, 23 March 1978

1) A strict class perspective for revolutionary democracy is very much important. An overall democracy is possible to be realized more or less satisfactorily in any one country only under the perspectives of general international class struggle as a proletarian permanent revolution in its full sense. The fight for workers and peasant's democracy is an integrated part of the overall proletarian struggles for permanent revolution, and the former is impossible, if not as an organic part of the latter, in the workers' states and the imperialist and neocolonialist countries. However, this vital point is not clear in the United Secretariat document of "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (Inprecor, 7 July 1977).

First of all, the concept of 'democracy' or 'socialist democracy' itself is not clear in the socialist democracy document.

National liberation of an oppressed people from a certain political and economic domination, national unification of a divided people under a certain oppression, a national separation of an oppressed people from a given state, an agrarian land revolution, a destruction of an old family system which is oppressive especially against women and children, an oppression of national, racial or any other discrimination among a population--all those are democratic or bourgeois democratic; democracy itself is a bourgeois one as a category. All those democracies are bourgeois, so are they excluded from the "socialist democracy"? Is that; the socialist democracy is

a state-system in the form of workers and peasants' councils with unlimited freedoms of opinion, speech, press, association, assembly, demonstration, strike, sabotage and so on under a domination of the nationalized and planned sector in the whole economy? Even so, how is it possible for the Fourth International to discuss about such a "socialist democracy", without taking up the question of democracy in general in relation with and under the proletarian dictatorship?

There are various campaigns, actions and movements by the national minorities against the national oppression in the Soviet Union. There is "the domination of Eastern Europe by the Kremlin" (the United Secretariat statement on the Vietnam-Cambodia conflict): that is, there are undemocratic relations between the Soviet Union and the other Eastern European workers' states. What are the answers of the various Eurocommunists to those democratic questions? What is the answer of the Fourth International to those questions? On Indochina the United Secretariat states; "It must be stated that the interests of the working masses of Indochina are bound up with the establishment of growing cooperation on all level--among Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos..... however, such cooperation cannot be imposed. The federative structures it requires can only arise out of the revolutionary mobilization of the Indochinese masses, with strict respect for the rights of minorities to decide for themselves. Because of this, the struggle for internationalism is closely connected to the fight to establish genuine socialist democracy in Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos, to institute a government of workers and peasants' councils in the Socialist United States of Indochina." (le pouvoir des conseils ouvriers et paysans) (the United Secretariat statement on the Vietnam-Cambodia conflict) So, is the answer of the United Secretariat to the Eastern European democratic questions; "the fight to establish genuine socialist democracy" in the Soviet Union and other Eastern European workers' states and "to institute a government of workers and peasants' councils (le pouvoir des conseils ouvriers et paysans) in the Socialist United States of the whole Eastern Europe? Even so, the answer would be misleading and illogical, if the Fourth International does not stand definitely for a much broader regional perspective of the Socialist United States of the whole Europe as a part of the world socialist revolution.

In any case, we cannot understand the method of the socialist democracy document in this respect. Or, will the United Secretariat write several other documents on the various other democratic questions in relation with and under the proletarian dictatorship?

3) Secondly, the question of the class nature of democracy has not been posed straightforwardly and consistently in the socialist democracy document.

It is very much interesting, cynically to say, to see the fact that there is no reference to the imperialist nature of the bourgeois democracies of the USA, Canada, Western European countries, Japan, Australia and New Zealand in the very long text. It remains at the level of democracy in general, on which Lenin criticized K. Kautsky severely..

The socialist democracy document states; "Marx and Lenin's whole critique of the limitation(!!!) of bourgeois democracy is based on the fact that private property and capitalist exploitation(i.e. social and economic inequality), coupled with the specific class structure of bourgeois society(~~atomization~~ and alienation of the working class, legislation defending private property, function of the repressive apparatus, etc.), ~~result in~~ result in the violent restriction of democratic rights and the practical enjoyment

of democratic freedoms by the big majority of the toiling masses, even in the most democratic bourgeois regimes. "(Chapter 4, the former emphasis added) but, in our understanding, Lenin took up the question of democracy precisely at the imperialist stage of capitalism; therefore, he analyzed the specific imperialist bourgeois democracy and the specifically progressive nature of democratic demands of the oppressed peoples. The U.S. democracy is a typical imperialist democracy based on its international system of exploitation and its own giant military power, and the Western European and Asian Pacific democracies are based on the neo-colonialist oppression and supported by the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie of U.S. imperialism.

Immediately after the above quotation, the document continues; "The logical conclusion flowing from this critique is that workers' democracy must be superior to bourgeois democracy not only in the economic and social sphere -- not only in the right to work, to security of existence, to free education, to leisure time, etc., which are obviously important -- but also in the scope and extent of the enjoyment of democratic rights by the workers and all layers of toilers in the political and social sphere. To grant a single party, so-called mass organizations, or 'professional associations' (like writers associations) controlled exclusively by that party a monopoly on access to printing presses, radio, television, and other mass media, to assembly halls, etc., would, in fact, restrict and not extend the democratic rights of the proletariat compared to those enjoyed under bourgeois democracy." Does this document limit its "sphere of influence" in the 'industrially advanced' countries? If not, the document should have recognized the difference between the imperialist countries and the colonial or neo-colonial countries on the very question of democracy. Imperialist democracy is a restriction or oppression of democracy in the colonial or neo-colonial countries, where there is no bourgeois democracy in China, Vietnam, North Korea and other Asian countries, which are currently workers' states, and the democracy has been qualitatively "extended" through their liberation. Here we must ask the authors of the socialist democracy document; which are more democratic, those "imperialist" Asian workers' states and the "most democratic" bourgeois democracies of the imperialist world? Of course, we stand for the workers' democracy in those Asian workers' states, although we recognize the objective social and political difficulties in those countries. However, as Bolshevik-Leninists or Leninist-Protskyists, we must recognize the qualitative "extension" of democracy in the workers' states definitely as our international class base in opposition to the imperialist bourgeois democracy. The national and democratic liberation of oppressed peoples through establishment of their workers' states is a definite part of the general proletarian struggle against the imperialist bourgeois democracy, including the openly imperialist social democracy and the Eurocommunist-type reformist bourgeois democracy. This fundamental point of Leninism is totally lacking in the socialist democracy document. Or, the authors of this document lamenting that their fight for pure and genuine democracy is very difficult among the imperialist proletariat due to the shortness of democracy in the neo-colonial workers' states.

In this respect, comrade Moreno was very much correct, when he criticized the capitalist Europe document in its lack of characterization of Western Europe as imperialism. (of the 10th world congress of the capitalist Europe document, drafted by the currently discredited party for the 11th world congress, takes up the problems of bourgeois democracy in Western Europe, but it is highly interesting methodologically because the fact that it treats the problems in relation with the numerically degenerated workers' states of Eastern Europe, but does so in the specific imperialist or neo-imperialist framework of

the "capitalist Europe" in alliance with US imperialism. When we define the bourgeois democracies as specifically imperialist or neo-imperialist, we can wage our proletarian class struggles against the democracies in the imperialist countries, defending the workers' states and the advances of the colonial revolution and encouraging the advances of political revolution in the workers' states.

The socialist democracy document states in the first chapter as follows; "Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, the chiefs of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfill all these functions, and the more the functions of a state power are performed by the people as a whole, the less need there is for the existence of this power. (State and Revolution) Thus, the dictatorship of the proletariat is nothing other than a workers democracy." The quotation from Lenin is correct, but how can the United Secretariat draw the conclusion of the second sentence from the first, after having had so many "non-democratic" workers' states for so many years? The socialist democracy document states that "the dictatorship of the proletariat is nothing other than a workers democracy." Does this mean that the existing bureaucratized "workers' states" are not the states of the proletarian dictatorship? How did L. Trotsky debate against Burnham and Schachtman on the problems of the Soviet Union and the dictatorship of the proletariat at the end of the 1930s? The authors of the document just "forget" the fundamental class criteria of the dictatorship of the proletariat or a workers' state.

Finally, when in its general democratist context the socialist democracy document states; "if the revolutionary marxists leave the slightest impression, either through their propaganda or through their practice, that under the dictatorship of the proletariat the political freedoms of the workers will be narrower than under bourgeois democracy -- including the freedom to criticize the government, to have opposition parties and an opposition press -- then the struggle to overcome the fetters of parliamentary illusion will be incomensurably more difficult, if not impossible." We state that, if those revolutionary marxists would show even a slightest hesitation in defence of the existing workers' states from imperialism and capitalism under some acute situation, like that just before the breakout of the second world war, "for the sake of democracy", they would be categorically condemned to defeat in face of an imperialist-capitalist counter-revolution. By the way, do the authors of the document exclude a possibility of a fascist or nazi-type counter-revolution in the future? Wouldn't they foresee any possibility of a bloody civil war in the "capitalist Europe" or in the future through a total impasse of the bourgeois democracy itself. In any case, the whole question is on which class base we are fighting for democracy, nationally and internationally.

In the third chapter the document states; "From a marxist, i.e. historical-materialist point of view, the basic causes of the political expropriation of the Soviet proletariat were material and socioeconomic, not ideological or programatic. ... The catastrophic decline of the productive forces in Russia as the result of the first world war, the civil war, foreign imperialist intervention, sabotage by probourgeois technicians, etc. led to conditions of scarcity that fostered a growth of special privileges. The same factors led to a qualitative weakening of the already small proletariat. In addition,

large portions of the political vanguard of the class, those best qualified to exercise power, died in the civil war or left the factories to be incorporated massively into the Red Army and the state apparatus. After the beginning of the New Economic Policy a certain economic upturn began, but massive unemployment and continuous disappointment caused by the retreats and defeats of the world revolution nurtured political passivity and a general decline of mass political activity, extending to the soviets. The working class was thus unable to stem the growth of a materially privileged layer, which, in order to maintain its rule, increasingly restricted democratic rights and destroyed the soviets and the Bolshevik party itself (while using its name for its purposes). These are the main causes of the usurpation by a bureaucracy of the exercise of direct power and for the gradual merger of the party apparatus, the state apparatus, and the apparatus of economic managers into a privileged caste." Those explanations are generally correct about the political degeneration of the first workers' state as an objective process. But how can the document draw a conclusion as follows; "The main causes of all these processes were objective, material, economic and social. They must be sought in the social infrastructure of Soviet society, not in its political superstructure and certainly not in a particular concept of the party." This is not a Marxist historical materialism, but certainly a Kautskyist vulgar "materialist determinism". How can the authors of the document ignore the active role of the consciousness. They should learn seriously on the "dialectic" interaction between the existence and the consciousness from our outstanding Marxist theoretician, comrade Ernest Mandel. If he is not enough to persuade the authors, they must go directly to L. Trotsky and, especially, his "Results and Perspectives". "The proletariat grows and becomes stronger with the growth of capitalism. However, the timing when the power transfers into the hands of the working class does not depend directly on the level which the forces of production have achieved, but on the various relations in the class struggles, the international situation and finally some subjective factors such as the workers' tradition, initiative, readiness and so on for the struggle." "The state is not an end in itself, but it is a giant tool which organizes, disorganizes and reorganizes the social relations. It can be a powerful lever for the revolution or a tool for an organized stagnation, according to who controls it." ("Results and Perspectives" Chapter 4, retranslation from the Japanese edition) and the state is a political superstructure. There is nothing like a vulgar objectivist "materialist determinism". If not, or if "the main causes of " the bureaucratic degeneration of the first workers' state "must be sought in the social infrastructure of Soviet society, not in its superstructure and certainly not in a particular concept of the party", how can the Fourth International fight convincingly for the proletarian democracy or workers and peasants' democracy in those socio-economically backward Asian workers' states? Or, who decides which of the Asian workers' states has or have the social infrastructure matured even in a minimum for the proletarian democracy? How about Cambodia or Laos?

Anyway, the "continuous disappointment" of the Soviet working masses "caused by the retreats and defeats of the world revolution" played a very important role in the defeat of the left opposition in the 1930s. This important element is not a phenomenon "in the social infrastructure of the Soviet society", but isn't it a phenomenon "in its political superstructure"? Secondly, the ideological crystallization process of the bonapartist bureaucratic elements around the new program of socialism in one country played the same important and active role in the whole Stalinist degeneration. And this political and ideological process in the Soviet superstructure played the decisive role in the retreats and defeats of the world revolution. Thus, finally, the bonapartist Stalinist bureaucracy consolidated itself as a conscious

thermidorian" or "counter-revolutionary" bureaucracy in the workers' state in the 1930s. Thus, the whole process of interaction between the existence and the consciousness -- or the "social infrastructure of the Soviet society" and "its political superstructure" -- was cruelly dynamic in a terribly negative way against the first workers' state and for the world revolution as a whole. ~~Furthermore~~ ^{also} ~~the~~ ^{line} in the last analysis, the thermidorian degeneration of the first workers' state had not been inevitable socio-economically, i.e. materialistically. The final degeneration became inevitable politically, only because the international proletarian movement of the 1920s and 1930s could not overcome the betrayal leadership of the Stalinist Kremlin, which was nothing ~~more~~ ^{other} than an international superstructural phenomenon.

As a whole, the socialist democracy document ignores one of the central cores of the theory of permanent revolution, and it can easily lead to the very denial of the essential role of a political leadership for the working class movement. Anyway, in our opinion, when we want to grasp the theory of permanent revolution in its full sense and the dynamic interaction between the existence and the consciousness, we must consider the three fundamental factors; (a) given socio-economic conditions, (b) a given balance of forces between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and (c) given nature and degree of the proletarian consciousness through its political institution all in their national and international scales.

5) More practically on democracy and the socialism in one country or the permanent revolution, the socialist democracy document does not present the fundamental Bolshevik-Leninist position that the fight for proletarian democracy is categorically to ~~be~~ ^{be} ~~done~~ ^{done} with the narrow nationalist positions of the various bonapartist bureaucracies, ideologically expressed by the theory of socialism in one country and practiced internationally through their conservative and gradualist foreign policies firmly relied upon their own military forces and upon the international status quo. The socialist democracy document is drafted exclusively for the reformist illusion of the whole European workers' movement; it is criminally illusionally and demagogic.

Here again, we must return to our founding teacher of L. Trotsky on democracy and its international class perspectives in Europe. He opposed the workers' democracy, the interests of the oppressed peasants and oppressed national minorities to the political rule of the imperialist bourgeoisie in the capitalist-imperialist Europe; he opposed the workers' ~~democracy~~ ^{democracy}, the interests of the workers and peasants alliance, and the interests of the oppressed national minorities ~~to~~ ^{to} the thermidorian rule of the bonapartist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union; at the same time, he presented the single and unifying international perspective of the Socialist United States of Europe for the both struggles in the capitalist-imperialist Europe and the Soviet Union, as being opposed to the capitalist-imperialist oppressive "nation-states" and the nationalist-reformist capitulation of social democracies in face of those "nation-states", and to the thermidorian "state-philosophy" of socialism in one country and the nationalist international policies by the bonapartist Stalinist bureaucracy. Didn't he state again and again that the capitalist-imperialist "nation-states" were the core of the oppression in general or the oppression of democracy in Europe, and that a planned international unification of the forces of production was the only one practical infrastructural ^{step} for an overall democracy of workers and peasants in Europe? In Europe our democratic and national program was the international class struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe.

113

How is our workers democratic program for Europe today in the socialist democracy document? It spends most of the space to talk on democracy in general, but it never takes up those questions, such as the fight against the bonapartist philosophy of socialism in one country and the conservative and nationalist international policies of the bureaucracies, in the interests of the workers and peasants' democracy in the workers' states, and the fight against the imperialist politico-military alliance between US bourgeoisie and Western European bourgeoisie and so on. As for us in East Asia, we are strongly convinced that our East Asian scale fight against the US-Japanese politico-military alliance is our strong weapon to accelerate the fight for proletarian democracy in the Asian workers' states and in the Soviet Union. I have already express this type of opinion on Europe in my "Letter to an IMT Comrade", which was presented to the United Secretariat in 1976 but has not been published in the IISB so far. So, here I limit on only one point more.

In our opinion, the imperialist politico-military alliance between the US bourgeoisie and Western European bourgeoisie is the fundamental basis of the latter's neo-imperialist democracies. If the Atlantic neo-imperialist alliance ~~would~~ ^{will} enter a real crisis, there will be categorically no room for bourgeois democracy, and the Western European proletariat will face a choice: out of the three; a victorious proletarian revolution which will fight for unifying with the political revolution in Eastern Europe, a genuine fascist-nazi-type counter-revolution, or another soviet military intervention as was in the second world war. In this context, we tend to conclude that the socialist democracy document ~~represents~~ ^{represents} another defeat for the European proletariat.

6) There are many other points in the socialist democracy document on which we want to discuss, so we must produce another article on it. However, we insist that the general framework of the socialist democracy document ^{is} wrong through and through and that it is very much dangerous to discuss on some tactical questions, presented by the document, in the present non-Leninist-Trotskyist framework.