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# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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## Anti-War Manifesto

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### Special Articles on the SOVIET UNION

Theoretical Organ of  
International Contact Commission

VOLUME I

OCTOBER 1939

NUMBER 16

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Organ of the  
Provisional

INTERNATIONAL CONTACT COMMISSION

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ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO:

INTERNATIONAL NEWS, 1904 Division Street, Chicago, Illinois, USA

# Manifesto of the International Contact Commission

WORKERS OF ALL CONTINENTS, OF ALL RACES AND COLORS

The new imperialist war has begun!

The Anglo-French bloc is at war again with Germany. Italy and other powers will be involved very soon. In a period of months the United States will be drawn in. At present American Imperialism is busy taking away all the international markets of the European powers at war.

As predicted by Marx and Lenin, capitalism can not solve its problems except by recourse to the most organized mass murder in all history.

Millions died in the last world war; ten million of the flower of the working class and peasant youth. Twenty-five years and one month later more millions are being asked to die again for the profits of Krupp and Thyssen, Schneider and Rothschild, Deterding and Grenfell, Morgan and Rockefeller, Mitsui and Mitsubishi.

Workers are being asked to die for "national honor," the glory of democracy, for the peace and independence of "little" Poland, for the integrity of Danzig, for self-determination, for "justice and honor." Empty lies and shibboleths!

Behind the words "independence for Poland" is the fight of British imperialism against the German imperialists for the domination of Europe; behind these words lies the struggle over oil and rubber, coal and iron, copper and manganese, colonies and fields of investments. The self-determination of Danzig is a brutal smokescreen for the 30 million tons of Polish coal produced each year, for the 40 million acres of fertile land, for the cattle and horses of Poland, for the iron deposits and lignite, for the salt and manganese, for the rich fields to which Poland is the doorway.

All the talk of peace and democracy are lies and deception, the fraud and fakery of the most brutal murderer of all times, IMPERIALISM! Thirty-six billions have been spent by German Imperialism for guns and ammunition, while a nation of 88 million people is reduced to semi-starvation, a ration card system worse than the worst unemployed dole. The peacefulness of the Nazi butchers is attested to by their murder of thousands of revolutionists, of thousands of Jewish and Catholic people, by the subjection of Austria and Czechoslovakia. What the German working class is being asked to fight for is perpetuation of

the 60 to 72 hour week, the forced labor of youths and older men that is killing off thousands, the forced evacuations of thousands of families, the vicious restriction of all movements and actions of the German working class and poor farmers.

#### BOTH SIDES HAVE SIMILAR INTERESTS

The camp of the other side is no better. The workers of Poland, France and England are being asked to fight to protect the vast stolen empires of British and French Imperialism, protect the oil fields of Iraq and Mesopotamia, the iron, coal, rubber, wheat, rice, tin zinc, nickel of Malaya, Palestine, South, East, West Africa, of Canada and Zanzibar, Guinea and Australia, Morocco and Indo-China. What the workers are being asked to "defend" is the horrible exploitation of peasants and workers in British India, the practical slavery of millions of Negroes in Africa, the stealing of the land of hundreds of millions of poor peasants of the British Empire, the murder of thousands of colonial people, the system of starvation which Britain and France have spread throughout their colonies.

And what is the role of the two great "neutrals," the United States and Japan? There is not one iota of difference between all these camps. J. P. Morgan and Co., through its puppet editorial staff on the Fortune magazine have already let it be known that they are supporting America's entry into the next war which may include parallel action with British Imperialism, just as in the last World Carnage. Workers in America are again going to be asked to die to protect the American Empire, to protect the system which throws 16 million out of work and onto slow-starvation doles; which murders and lynches helpless Negroes in the South, which controls and aids the vicious dictatorships of Vargas, Gomez, Trujillo, Bernavides, Batista, which enslaves the Porto Rican, Cuban, Haitian, Panamanian, Phillipine and other colonial people of the western hemisphere. And Japan, with the same goal as all the rest, is trying to make the Pacific Ocean a Japanese lake, just as the United States has made the Carribean the exclusive property of American Imperialism.

#### DON'T SHOOT — FRATERNIZE

Workers of the World, refuse to shoot your brother across the trenches! Unite with him. He is your greatest ally in the struggle against the imperialists of all the world.

Twenty-five million workers are unemployed in this world. The warehouses are full, there is a super-abundance of money for war supplies, for guns and ammunition — BUT the masses of the world are going hungry and naked. Capitalism destroys the things of life. It is interested only in the profits gained from the murders of millions of youth.

The war of the bosses for profits, must be turned by the working class of the world into a WAR AGAINST THE BOSSES, A WAR FOR

#### THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION, FOR SOCIALISM!

The victorious October Revolution in the weakest link of capitalism in 1917, in Russia, stopped the last world blood-bath. Dying capitalism was confronted with two dozen proletarian revolutions, a struggling working class fighting to end once and for all the system of war, unemployment and oppression. The treachery of the social-patriots of that period, the Second International, and later the treachery of Stalinism in China, Germany, Britain, Spain, etc., gave capitalism a new lease on life and paved the way for the new imperialist war of today. The Stalin-Hitler pact of "Peace" was the Stalin signal for Hitler to go ahead. It is still another sellout by Stalinism of the working class.

The defeats that the working class have suffered in the last twenty years, defeats aided and abetted by Stalinism and Social-Democracy have warped the Workers State in the Soviet Union to the point today where it is on the brink of counter-revolution back to capitalism; have permitted world capitalism to reorganize their forces for a new war for profits.

The workers of the world, however, will not be deterred. The voice of Marxism, the voice of the International Contact Commission for the New Communist (4th) International will be heard around the world. In the midst of the treachery of world social-democracy and Stalinism, which again is supporting the "fatherland", the Contact Commission calls for the proletariat of all capitalist nations to work for the defeat of its "own" country, the defeat of its "own" army.

In the imperialist war, workers on both sides must fight for revolutionary working class action for the defeat of their "own" boss class, for the class struggle against capitalism. If the Soviet Union under Stalinism becomes a tail to one of the imperialist groups, the workers in the capitalist countries must continue on the same policy, that of revolutionary defeatism, to turn the imperialist war into civil war for working class emancipation. The defense of the Soviet Union can only be carried through by supporting the working class forces and by a relentless fight toward a political revolution against Stalinism. Cessation of the class struggle against Stalinism and other anti-working class forces in the Soviet Union cannot be tolerated just because the Soviet Union is at war. On the contrary it is precisely in this hour of danger in order to save the Soviet Union that the working masses must intensify the struggle against the imperialist agents in the Soviet Union as well as fight the imperialists themselves.

#### FIGHT AGAINST SOCIAL PATRIOTISM

Those who are speaking of a "fatherland"; those who call for defense of "democracy"; those who are calling for "punitive" wars against Fascism — these people are a tail to the imperialists. The only defense of the interests of the working class of all countries, is the international struggle against international capitalism, fascist and democratic both.

Those, who like the Trotskyites, Brandlerites, Lovestoneites, London Buro, and others, confuse the struggle against war, who are for yielding on the class struggle in war time, just as they now capitulate to bourgeois democracy before the war in certain countries (support of a Caballero government in Spain, a Blum-Cachin government in France, Ludlow amendments and Labor Party in the United States) — these people will be the 1939 Kautskys, the centrist renegades. The centrist position of these people on war must and will be exposed, and their membership won over to the position of revolutionary defeatism by the work of the Contact Commission.

Workers of the world! the bosses war horror has descended on us. The social-chauvinists are again confusing our ranks as in the last blood-bath. But the road to victory, to the final elimination of war, unemployment and starvation, lies clear a head and accessible. Continue the class struggle in war time!

The International Contact Commission calls on all working class organizations and revolutionary workers to unite on the basis of the class struggle against capitalism and revolutionary defeatism against the imperialist war.

Not a man, not a gun for boss war!

For independent working class action!

Fraternize with the "enemy" across the trenches — unite against the common enemy, your "own" capitalist country!

Defend the Democratic Rights of the Working Class!

Turn the Imperialist war into Civil War!

For the Social Revolution!

Build the New Communist (4th) International!

Provisional International Contact Commission

Red Front of Germany

Leninist League of Scotland

Revolutionary Workers League, U. S.

# CHARACTER OF THE STATE IN THE SOVIET UNION

No question is so little understood and more distorted than the Russian question. Fundamentally this confusion is a continuation of the petty-bourgeois concepts of the state that existed in Lenin's day. Having failed to understand the character of the bourgeois state yesterday, the ultra-lefts and opportunists cannot comprehend the meaning of the Workers State today.

Their objections falls under six heads. Let us list them and treat them one by one:

- 1- The terror by Stalin against the former revolutionary leaders and others.
- 2- Wage labor and surplus value exist in the Soviet Union today.
- 3- The Soviet State today is made up of bourgeois forms and must consequently be bourgeois in character.
- 4- A small mainority make exorbitant sums and reap the fruit of the large majority; therefore, state capitalism exists.
- 5- The Soviet Union is moving back towards capitalism and is in the process of transition. It is neither a Workers State nor as yet a capitalist state.
- 6- Stalinism plays a counter-revolutionary role in all revolutionary situations; therefore the Soviet State cannot be a Workers State.

## I -- THE STALIN TERRORISM

"Look at the terror in the Soviet Union against old revolutionists." our "Marxists" say. "Can that be a Workers State?" Our good "Marxists" have forgotten all that has been said on the question of the state. For them it is merely a moral question -- bourgeois morals at that. In a similar vein the Social Democrats of yesterday pointed to the terror under Lenin and Trotsky to "prove" the same point.

Terror, however, is a characteristic of ALL states, slave, feudal, capitalist and Worker. In itself it denotes that classes exist and that there is a class struggle. Furthermore, even the question of whom the terror is directed AGAINST does not solve the question of the CONTENT of the state. It will determine who has control of the state.

The state under Robespierre in the French Revolution directed its terror in its first period against thousands of bona fide capitalists and their agents in the Assembly. It passed innumerable measures against the usury and exploitation of the banks and industrialists and actually ENFORCED most of these. Yet who will deny that this was a CAPITALIST state which Robespierre headed?

The state is a product of class antagonisms and the social relations of a particular mode of production. Quite apart, then, from the wishes of the men or classes involved, the character of a state is determined by its economic base --- the MODE OF PRODUCTION. Every important change in the mode of production will have a bearing on the form and structure of the state. Revolutionary changes in the mode of production cannot be effected without revolutionary changes in the CHARACTER of the state.

Although episodically the GOVERNMENTAL REGIME can be at variance in its political and social outlook with the given mode of production under the state, nevertheless such a lag can only be shortlived and in no way affects the character of the state.

"By way of exception, however," says Engels in his ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY, "there are periods when the warring classes so nearly attain equilibrium that the state power, ostensibly appearing as a mediator, assumes for the moment a certain independence in relation to both."

Our bourgeois moralists who go by the borrowed name of "Marxists", point with horror to the murder of thousands in the S.U. "A revolutionist is more persecuted in the Soviet Union than in Germany" is the argument of these people. The full historical meaning of this sentence is lost on them. The contradictions between a bureaucracy composed of bourgeois, petty-bourgeois and a small proletarian strata, objectively working for the re-introduction of capitalism, on the one hand, and a socialist economy on the other, will obviously be far greater than the contradictions even in a Fascist nation where the proletariat has not yet achieved power. When the fact is added that the Soviet Union is an isolated Workers State within a whole general framework of capitalism in decay, one has the historical basis for the unprecedented terrorism of Stalinism.

#### TRANSITION ECONOMY MOVING BACK TOWARD CAPITALISM

The terror in the Fascist regimes is occasioned precisely by the economic decay, the near-bankruptcy of the economy, the economy of scarcity. Otherwise the bourgeoisie could continue to rule by the old forms -- bourgeois democracy. Let our so-called Marxists explain on their basis -- why a "capitalist" nation which created 300 cities in ten years, which increased its productivity 900% from 1913 -- the "greatest accomplished by any country in the world", a nation, which these people claim is capitalist, whose share of industrial production in the world rose from 4.9% in 1928 to 17.5% in 1938 DESPITE THE WORST DEPRESSION IN CAPITALIST HISTORY -- let these revisionists explain why such a "capitalist" nation must resort to such horrible terrorism. Strengthen the capitalist economy of any nation and you strengthen the base of bourgeois democracy. Obviously the terrorism in the Soviet Union cannot be explained by any formula that capitalism exists there. Such a hypothesis can lead only to the Stalinist idea that the increases in production have paved the way for the

highest form of democracy in the capitalist world. The only explanation for this phenomenon lies in the gigantic contradictions of a TRANSITION ECONOMY moving backward TOWARD CAPITALISM.

Obviously what we are dealing with here is what Engels referred to when he spoke of the warring classes attaining such a close equilibrium (in this case the proletariat and world capitalism with its agents within the Soviet Union) that the state for a period is able to function with a "certain independence in relation to both", Bonapartists, etc.

#### II -- SURPLUS VALUE AND WAGE LABOR

The ultra-lefts constantly prate about the similarities between capitalist economy and Soviet economy. In both instances they say there is surplus value and wage labor.

Yes, it is true that in the Soviet Union there is some production for the market, but planned economy is the KEY factor even though the planning is poor. And it is also true that surplus value, just as under capitalism, is still being created.

But our good "critical Marxists" fail to deal with the dis-similarities. They fail to point out that surplus value is NOT privately appropriated but is appropriated by the state. They fail to point out that the planned economy has, despite the Stalinist warpings of the system, increasingly changed production for the market under an economy of scarcity to an economy of abundance.

Again our critics forget all the laws of decay capitalism. "Planning" under decay capitalism is the planning of an ECONOMY OF SCARCITY. It means destruction of the living standard of the masses, rations, etc. Those who glibly speak of the Soviet Union as a Fascist state must be prepared to explain the increase in the TOTAL forces of production, including in the consumption fields. In the worst years of the depression the Soviet Union geared up its producers goods from 7 billion rubles in 1928 to 19.1 billions in 1932. In the worst years of the depression, from 1928-32, the Soviet Union added 7,000 kilometers of railroads, added 70 million kilometer tons of freight. From 1932 to 1934, two short years, the Soviet Union rose from the 6th producer of electric to the 3rd; from 1928 to 1934 worst depression years, it rose from the 6th coal producer to the 4th, from 6th to 2nd in production of pig iron; from 5th to 3rd in production of steel; its output of machinery was 7 times as much in 1934 as in 1928; in addition, it was the leading importer of machinery. From 1928 to 1932 the output of United States coal and oil, 15 and 11 times, respectively, that of the Soviet Union, fell to only five times as much as in 1932. Food and consumers goods rose by 3.2% and 4.4% from 1933 to 1934. These are not official (Stalinist) figures. They are taken from the figures of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce which has such people on its board of directors

as the vice-president of Bethlehem Steel, the chairman of Chrysler Export Corporation, the president of Goodrich Tire, the general manager of RCA Communications, etc.

Figures, alone, of course, are not conclusive. But how do our critics explain an increase in capitalization of 88 billion rubles in 5 or 6 years? Despite all the bureaucratic excesses of Stalinism, it is a tribute to the intrinsic vitality of the warped Workers State and to Transition Economy that in such a backward country, it is possible to lay down, even theoretically, the general rule of the 7 hour day, while in America the general rule is a 40 to 48 hour week, in France the 60 hour week is legalized, in Germany 60 to 72 hours, etc. Planned Economy under the Soviets has proved superior to the capitalist anarchy of production for markets in its "free" competition (democratic) or its planned scarcity and barter (fascist) forms. What we object to in relation to Stalinism is its wrong planning methods, its bureaucratic excesses and the false relation of internal development to the world revolution.

What is misunderstood is the CHARACTER of a Dictatorship of the Proletariat in general, and the character of such a Dictatorship in the Soviet Union in particular.

Generally speaking, a Transition Economy (the economic phase of the Proletarian Dictatorship) has elements of both capitalist and socialist economy, and in that sense represents a contradiction of the two.

The Soviet Union, however, has two other important contradictions: 1- It was a BACKWARD link of the world capitalist chain, one of the least developed of all capitalist countries in the world in every sense of the word. 2- It has remained isolated for 20 years as a Workers State totally surrounded by capitalist powers and is now moving back toward capitalism instead of forward toward socialism.

Under such circumstances obviously the limits of economic progress WITHIN THE SINGLE WORKERS STATE were greatly proscribed, at best, with the capitalist factors outweighing the socialist factors. But with the bureaucratic distortions and excesses of Stalinism as an additional weight at the throat of the young, isolated and backward Workers State, the capitalist factors must certainly begin slowly to replace more and more the socialist factors. But that does not change the CHARACTER of the economy which at best is only a dialectical combination of capitalist and socialist factors.

For our ultra-lefts there is only black and white; for the centrists there is only shadings of impurity; but for the Marxists there is a dialectic understanding and exact labelling of black and white and the other colors.



## THE STRUCTURE OF TRANSITION ECONOMY

Capitalist economy does not become converted in a moment to socialist economy. A long transition period is needed for this. The important thing is that the proletariat shall seize state power, shall expropriate the big capitalists and BEGIN planned production. But the complete elimination of the capitalist sectors of economy can take place only when: 1- The decisive capitalist states have been overthrown by a proletarian revolution; and 2- Planned socialist production has proceeded to such a point that it naturally replaces all forms of capitalist production and has raised the standard of living of all workers and farmers far above the highest capitalist standard.

Until such a period Transition Economy will be an unknown equation depending on the level of development of the country involved, the relationship of forces of the Workers State with WORLD capitalism and the policies of the leadership of the Workers State. The main distinctions from the capitalist mode of production will, however, always be present, except that they will not be in a finished form but in a dialectical process of development. Private appropriation under Transition Economy is eliminated in favor of State appropriation, and later under Socialism, of Social Appropriation. Commodity production TENDS TO BE DISPLACED by production for use. Wage labor tends to become Social Labor, that is, wages are less and less determined by the value of labor power on the open market of competition but by planned relations to the totality of social production and the individual needs.

Despite all the excesses of Stalinism, its unjust and bureaucratic share in the produce of society, its bureaucratic and faulty planning, its enormous concessions to world capitalism, and to capitalist strata within the Soviet Union, the above fundamental factors still obtain in the Soviet Union. The only point of departure is that the equation of capitalist to socialist factors, due to the Stalinist warnings and the isolation of the Soviet Union, are constantly favoring more and more the capitalist factors, so that today the whole structure -- economic, political and social -- of Transition Economy is on the verge of being caved in.

## III -- THE BOURGEOIS FORMS

The third argument of our Critics against the Workers State is that bourgeois forms are prevailing in the state apparatus. The Soviets have been liquidated in favor of a parliament structure. Workers democracy no longer exists in any form, etc.

Again, those who hold to this position fail to take into account the historical and subjective phenomena.

No state is carved out of the whole cloth. The forms of state power are as variegated as the number of states. They are conditioned by the economic base beneath the state. The FORM of a state is very important but not decisive in determining the class content of the state. The 1918-19 Scheideman regime accepted the Soviet and Workers Militia forms LEGALLY INTO THE STATE STRUCTURE OF GERMANY. This, however, did not make Germany a Workers State any more than the acceptance of bourgeois forms by Stalinism makes the Soviet Union a capitalist state.

The Hungarian bourgeoisie, before Bela Kun in 1919, also accepted the Militia and Soviets directly and legally into the state structure. The Companys regime in Catalonia not only accepted for a time --- although not in its constitution --- not only the Red Guards and the Anti-Fascist Committees, but even tolerated the seizure of bourgeois property. Nevertheless, not one of these regimes was a Workers State. In FORM they had great similarities with the Workers State form. In CONTENT they were capitalist states: they continued the old capitalist mode of production and the old capitalist private appropriation.

Some of the present colonial countries in FORM approximate Feudal states more than they do capitalist states -- backward states in Asia, Peru, etc. for example. In content, however, the economy is dominated and in the grip of the capitalist mode of production; and the state -- product of irreconcilable antagonisms -- serves the interest primarily (despite the wishes or desires of thousands of feudal landholders) of capitalism, especially foreign capital.

No one denies that the question of Workers Democracy is of decisive importance for the Workers State. No Workers State can exist long without it. Nevertheless, the fact that Workers Democracy as a rule no longer exists in the Soviet Union does not in itself predetermine the CHARACTER of the Soviet State.

There are innumerable examples in bourgeois history where democracy for the exploiters or large sections of them did not exist. The Robespierre regime was one example in point. Lenin refers to a few other examples, the two Bonapartist regimes, etc. But this factor in itself does not determine the character of a state.

#### THE MEANING OF WORKERS DEMOCRACY

Workers Democracy is based on economic development. Workers Democracy in Russia could not possibly be as advanced as Workers Democracy in a newly-formed Workers State, say in England, Germany or the United States. The level of economic development in Russia was too low and still is too low for the same level of Workers Democracy to obtain. But instead of developing and aiding democracy for the workers, Stalinism, in order to maintain its

bureaucratic rule, suppresses it,

The ultra-lefts adduce from this fact the idea that Bolshevism always was an anti-working class tendency, deliberately confusing Bolshevism, Marxism, with Stalinism. The opportunists, on the other hand, renew their request for "democracy" in the Soviet Union, i.e., Bourgeois Democracy, the legalization of all parties, etc.

Workers Democracy cannot be re-established through the legalization of the various parties that objectively or subjectively serve the bourgeoisie, from the white Guards to the centrist groups. Workers Democracy must be re-established primarily through the Soviets and the arming of the working masses. As a decisive and important adjunct of this, the right of factions WITHIN the Marxist Party must be recognized and adhered to. Those parties which together with the Marxist Party have seized power and have accepted the basic principles of the workers state must take immediate steps toward unification into one powerful Marxist organization. At the conclusion of the process of negotiations and unification which will be of short duration that group or party not accepting the Marxist program must be suppressed the same as the other parties that do not accept the basic principles.

Stalinism, however, has warped or destroyed whatever semblance of Workers Democracy did exist or was possible. For the moment the Stalinist-controlled state enjoys, as Engels points out, an "ostensible independence" of the classes involved because of the backward sweep of the Workers State, both in the economic and political spheres, has caused a temporary and unstable "equilibrium" of the classes. But that does not alter the CHARACTER of the State; it merely alters its DIRECTION and DEVELOPMENT.

For the character of the state to be altered, not only police measures must be used against the proletariat but a violent counter-revolution must replace the October property relations by a capitalist mode of production.

#### IV -- STATE CAPITALISM

When you confront the anti-Soviet "theoreticians" with the question, "who are the capitalists in the Soviet Union?", they invariably answer that the top bureaucracy that controls the machinery of state live in palaces and fine summer homes, draw dozens of times as much pay as the average worker -- that is the new capitalist class in the Soviet Union. According to these people, the form of capitalism is somewhat different than in other states, but it is STATE CAPITALISM, nevertheless.

State capitalism is a fancy myth. The control of the whole system of production through STATE OWNERSHIP is theoretically

conceivable but practically it is impossible under capitalism. The concrete examples in Germany and Italy tend to confirm this fact. In Germany, especially, state ownership is practically negligible.

#### THE STATE AND DECAY CAPITALISM

In the period of decay capitalism the bourgeois state is forced to intervene more and more in the economic affairs of the nation, to aid the natural process of "big fish eat little fish", to help through state coercion the natural process of capitalist crises of re-organizing industry and economy on new levels, or eliminating greater and greater portions of the middle class and lesser capitalists, and of passing the burden of this re-organization onto the shoulders of the proletariat with a lower form of economy of scarcity.

This intervention sometimes takes on the form of state ownership. When certain industries no longer can show a profit in the ordinary processes of capitalism, the bourgeois state may step in, take over the industry (or firm), and in exchange for the capitalist stocks bearing no dividends, the government gives good government bonds bearing interest. In all such instances, actual control will rest with a group of government-appointed men representing -- more than likely -- the same interests who have been "bought out". In other words, state ownership under capitalism (State Capitalism) is merely a form of "alleviating the distress" of the most pressed sections of capitalism by means of government aid. It is merely another form of government subsidy, in addition to all other forms, (direct subsidies, contracts at exorbitant prices, state loans at low interest rates, state grants of land, mail contracts, etc.).

State ownership under capitalism is due to the basic decay of the system and the attempt to hold back the forces of production. State ownership under Transition Economy is for productive development.

In the Soviet Union there was none of the above-cited hocus pocus. The bourgeoisie was not re-imbursed; it was EXPROPRIATED. It got nothing in return for its properties except an opportunity to work just like the proletariat. Furthermore, in the first years of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat the wage differentials between various layers of the working class were being constantly reduced.

With the triumph of Stalinism, however, and the theory of "Socialism in One Country" which changed the direction of the Workers State back toward capitalism instead of forward to Socialism -- with this triumph the whole process was reversed. Bureaucratic ultimatums replaced free working class initiative and control (through the trade unions, Soviets, Party, etc). A new layer of the proletariat had to be developed as the shock troops for forcing the Stalinist line and economic excesses down the throats of the rank and file workers.

Differentiations within the working class instead of being eliminated were constantly fostered and further developed.

That process reaches its culmination today with the gigantic excesses of the members of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Furthermore this process is culminating in the legalization of private property in certain spheres; the accumulation of capital by many kolhoz members and bureaucrats; the introduction on a far wider scale of government bonds, forced loans, etc.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOVIET UNION

One must look at the Soviet Union from the point of view not of its excesses and the capitalist FORMS that are being re-introduced and eating up the vitals of the Workers State and Economy. One must look at the Soviet Union from the viewpoint of its dialectical development:

- 1- The seizure of power and expropriation of the bourgeoisie.
- 2- The failure of the world proletariat to extend the revolution to other countries.
- 3- The temporary retreat to the NEP and then the movement towards planned socialist production.
- 4- The failure of the world proletariat in the 1923 era to again extend the revolution and the rise of a petty-bourgeois clique within and outside the Workers State, which warped the character of the dictatorship in all of its forms.
- 5- The development back toward capitalism, enormous concessions to the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois strata within the Soviet State, and political concessions to the world imperialists on the outside (U.S., France, Germany, etc.)

A capitalist is one who owns and controls means of production and is able on that basis to pocket surplus value created by the proletariat which operates those means of production. Is the Stalinist bureaucrat, then, a capitalist? What means of production does he own? What surplus value does he appropriate? Of all the values produced in the Soviet Union, the producers -- the proletariat, kolhoz people, etc. -- take a certain share. The rest is used for state expenses and the introduction of new means of production. It is true that the bureaucracy takes a disproportionate share of the values produced. This disproportionate share is reaching the level that a NEW FORM OF PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION AS A PRELUDE TO A NEW CAPITALIST ORDER IN RUSSIA is taking place. PRIVATE capital in the Soviet Union and PRIVATE property (the basis of capitalism in all its forms, even State Capitalism) AS THE DECISIVE ASPECT OF ECONOMY does NOT exist in the Soviet Union. It is being re-introduced precisely through this new form of primitive accumulation.

But to label these "beginning" processes back towards capitalism as capitalism is just as fallacious today, as the labelling of the period of primitive accumulation in the final stages of

Feudalism (throwing of the serfs off the land, etc.) as capitalism itself.

Precisely because the process of accumulation represents only the "beginning" processes back to capitalism, precisely because the basic property relations of October still exist, we refer to the Stalinist bureaucracy as a STRATUM rather than as a class. The bureaucracy is composed of a growing capitalist stratum, a constantly smaller proletarian stratum, and the Stalinist force balancing itself between the two, with its main weight supporting the growing bourgeois force. Whether the proletariat again regains full power, or the bourgeois force with the aid of world imperialism is successful in its counter-revolution, the Stalinist force will be crushed.

Before this accumulation in the Soviet Union reaches capitalist proportions, the growing bourgeois STRATUM must SEIZE POLITICAL POWER, MUST EXPROPRIATE THE WORKERS STATE, AND MUST RE-ESTABLISH PRIVATE PROPERTY AND CAPITAL AS THE LEGAL BASE OF SOCIETY.

#### V -- THE PROCESS OF "TRANSITION"

Another argument which has cropped up in the movement lately is the argument by certain groups that the Soviet State is in a state of transition back towards capitalism, and that a Workers State no longer exist. These people argue that the character of the economy, despite the warpings of Stalinism, still remains Transition Economy, a socialist, not a capitalist mode of production. But the forms of the state power of the proletariat no longer exist -- the Soviets have been liquidated, Workers Democracy destroyed both in the civil realm and in the army, etc. Consequently the State can not be called a Workers State, but the workers of the world must still defend the remnants of the October Revolution.

This position, although it admits of the proletarian character of the economy, nevertheless feeds grist to the mill of all those who consider the Soviet Union to be capitalist, who are against its defense in any shape, form or manner.

A trade union dominated by gangsters and bureaucrats will be used by them against the workers interests but objectivity still reveals that even such warped trade unions are workers organizations.

One must speak not only of the DIRECTION of any phenomena but of its CHARACTER as well. The revolutionary transition period from capitalism to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat can be defined not only as to DIRECTION but as to CHARACTER as well. The dominant State during Dual Power and up until the forceful seizure of power by the proletariat remains a BOURGEOIS STATE. Its base rests upon private property capitalist economy. That is the DETERMINING FACTOR.

As pointed out above, bourgeois states quite often UNDER proletarian pressure, accept proletarian forms--soviets, etc. While this tends to show the direction in which society is moving--on towards the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, it does not obliterate the character of the remaining state.

The International Contact Commission designates both the direction and the character of the present state in the Soviet Union by the term "warped Workers State". To designate the character without giving the direction can lead to opportunist errors---that Stalinism is leading the Workers State towards Socialism. But to designate the direction without giving the character can lead to ultra-left errors---that there is no longer anything in the Soviet Union to defend, that Capitalism already exists there.

Either error if not corrected in time, leaves the door open to much greater errors.

#### VI -- THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY ROLE OF STALINISM

As a final argument against the Workers State, the revisionists point to the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism on a world scale, especially its recent role in Spain, where Stalinist soldiers manned the guns that shot down workers on the barricades, fighting for their liberation from capitalism.

Again, however, of what decisive importance is this factor in relation to the character of the Soviet Union itself? The counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism merely emphasizes that within the Soviet Union as well, it is the objective agent of the world imperialists re-paving the way for capitalism.

To assume that the character of a Party in a Workers State determines the character of that State is to give support to the STALINIST THESIS that the Party and the State are synonymous. For the Marxists, the Party is a GUIDING organ for the State apparatus; the decisive ruling organs of the working class and the state, however, are the Workers Councils, the Workers Militia, etc. The degeneration of the Party merely means that the State guiding force has degenerated. The character of the State is determined by the economy underneath it, not the Party over it.

Let us take an analogy of a trade union that is run by a bunch of unscrupulous bureaucrats who work hand in hand with the bosses--the building trades of the AFL, for instance. As revolutionists we call on the building trades workers to join these unions, despite the reactionary role of its leadership, and to work to throw that leadership out. In practice everything done by the union officially is against the interests of the workers; nevertheless we consider the union a working class INSTRUMENT, which is warped.

The same can be said of the Soviet Union. Based on the property relations introduced by the October Revolution, the State is a Workers State, but a warped Workers State. \*\* (Note 1)

#### WAS SOCIALISM POSSIBLE IN THE SOVIET UNION ?

Many of our ultra-lefts and reformists are now busy re-studying the events in the Soviet Union. Every bit of degeneracy of the Stalinists gives them another opportunity for petty-bourgeois platitudes: "Lenin was not correct, after all. Had he lived he would have realized that there could be no PROLETARIAN revolution in Russia, that only a bourgeois revolution was possible."

At the root of this error is the poor memory of our critics. They entirely forget that no one of the Bolshevik leaders of 1917 -- including even Stalin -- expected Russia to build Socialism. On the contrary, they made it clear that Socialism in one country was impossible, that without the extension of the proletarian revolution to other and more industrial countries, the Soviet Union itself would inevitably fall.

That the Workers State has been able to hang on even this long -- 22 years -- despite all the defeated revolutions, is a sign of the historic strength of the proletariat, and the inherent chronic weakness of the bourgeois states and economies, which were unable to smash an isolated Workers State with a backward economy.

What has caused the decline is the false nationalistic policy, a reversal of the Marxian theories of Lenin, and in his time, of Trotsky--the false theory that Socialism CAN be built in one country. The failure to extend the proletarian revolution, which this theory necessarily involved, made the warping of the Workers State and a reversal of its DIRECTION --within the framework of Transition Economy, however -- inevitable.

Is the Soviet Union, then, doomed? Too many people have already given up in their own minds the Soviet Union to the beasts of capitalism. They do not nor cannot conceive of the inherent strength of Transition Economy, warped as it is, still has, and the enormous potentialities of the Russian proletariat which has tasted a new form of society.

\* \* \* \* \*

\*\*\*(Note 1) But the bureaucracy, which temporarily controls the state and acts in its name, is warping its purpose and scope, is moving the state and the economy backwards, is moving against world revolution, just as the bureaucrats in our trade union work against the interests of the workers.

The enormous political concessions given by Stalinism to the imperialists -- the latest of which, by the way, the concessions to Hitler, are helping the imperialists start their war -- bespeaks of the weakness of Stalinism internally in the Soviet Union; it bespeaks of the imminent struggle of the proletariat to regain its lost workers democracy and to oust Stalinism, and the imminent attempts by the bourgeois forces inside the Soviet Union and outside to re-establish a capitalist order in Russia. Those who no longer consider the Soviet Union a Workers State will be taken by surprise when the workers resist the counter-revolution. For them the counter-revolution is already over. If their ideas have any strength at all in the Soviet Union, they can only serve to demoralize the working class, to check their attempts at resistance.

#### PREPARE THE RESISTANCE OF THE WORKERS

The Marxists must systematically -- no matter in what country they are -- prepare the resistance of the Soviet workers to the impending counter-revolution. Only those who have a correct understanding of the character, the development, and the direction of the Workers State will be able to lead this resistance successfully.

One final word to the mundane pessimists, the erudite gentlemen and Hearst-like demagogues who point to the failures of Communism, who speak of it as a pipe-dream. The bourgeois revolution took hundred of years to develop. From the first successful revolution in Holland to the extension of that revolution to England, it was more than fifty years. From the time of this first revolution until the system of capitalism became decisive in world affairs, after the French Revolution, it was more than 200 years. The struggles of the proletariat against capitalism have by no means taken so long a period. Furthermore, the contradictions between Feudalism and Capitalism -- although severe-- were nowhere near as strong as the contradictions between Capitalism and Socialism. In the one case it was a contradiction between two forms of private property rule. In the other it is a contradiction between private property as a whole and socialized property.

Nevertheless the working class has made gigantic strides in the last few decades, despite all its set-backs. History is on the side of the working class. A proletarian vanguard that digests the lessons of the past defeats and the one victory in October, will turn the tide in the near future, by giving guidance to the upsurges that are inevitable and leading them in the most successful revolutionary development in the history of mankind.

## ON THE QUESTION OF "RED IMPERIALISM"

We have already dealt with the most important aspects of the question of the Soviet State. In this article we desire to present some fundamental points concerning the false ultra-leftist position of "red imperialism"; and also, the theoretical relation of the question of the state in the Soviet Union to the entire theoretical structure of Marxism.

### ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID TO HITLER

With the Stalin-Hitler Pact functioning in the second imperialist war, the possibility that a secret military agreement has been reached (Editors' note; This article was written on September 5th, 1939) brings many questions to the fore: Are Russia and Germany preparing to divide up Poland and Eastern Europe? Is Hitler promising Stalin some land if the Stalinists do not give military aid to the Anglo-French imperialists, but instead give economic aid to the German imperialists? If it is true that Stalin has agreed to such a policy, then it is another betrayal of the interests of the working class having nothing in common with a Marxist policy. On the contrary, such a policy would be power politics and a capitulation of Stalin to Hitler.

But let us first assume that these rumors are untrue, that although the trade treaty and non-aggression pact are principally false and a further capitulation to imperialism, no secret military agreement exists. On this basis it must be understood that economic aid in the period of the war to an imperialist power by the Soviet Government (Stalin to Hitler) equals a certain form of political aid; and although this is not military aid in the strict sense of the term, nevertheless it does AID THE MILITARY MOVES of German imperialism; and hence, must be decisively condemned as further capitulation to imperialism.

### "RED IMPERIALISM"

But now, assuming that such a military agreement exists, the question arises: Is it wrong for the Soviet Union to take over more land in the struggle against border capitalist or semi-colonial countries behind which stand the forces of world imperialism? Or is this wrong in the period of the imperialist war? Of course not. The October Revolution can only be extended by the overthrow of capitalism in these countries and the establishment of Soviet Governments affiliated to the developing world federation of Soviets. This is the correct theoretical position;

### EXTRA TERRITORIAL RIGHTS

In this connection, one must remember the issue of the Chinese Eastern Railroad in Manchuria and the polemics over this question. At that time, many ultra-lefts and capitalist writers claimed that this policy represented "red imperialism". It is true that Soviets were not established in Manchuria; that this was extra-territorial rights carried over from the Czarist days. But its purpose and use by the Bolsheviks was exactly the opposite of that of the Czar. The latter used it as a penetrating wedge for the exploitation of China. The Soviets used it as a front line trench to protect the Soviet Union against imperialism, and as a wedge to further aid the development of the revolutionary struggle in China to throw out ALL the imperialists.

Under Lenin this was the line of march of the Soviets and the Red Army, i.e., the extension of the October Revolution. But the betrayal of the Chinese Revolution under Stalin modified the relation. Instead of being instruments of revolution, the Communist Parties became border patrols for Stalinism; and the Chinese Eastern Railroad also took on this defensive character. This was due to the false Stalinist policy, and not to the "land grabbing". In the very early stages of the Left Opposition, Trotsky correctly defended the question of the Chinese Eastern Railroad against Urbadins and others.

### RED ARMY MARCHES

Moreover, in 1919 when the Hungarian Workers State under Bela Kun was isolated and besieged, the Red Army attempted to march through Rumania in order to help extend the revolution. Similarly, during the Civil War days the Red Army marched into Poland in order to extend the revolution westward.

### TWO POLICIES

The above examples of Soviet extra-territorial rights is one historic lesson that can be studied in two phases: In its healthy period under Lenin with a revolutionary policy; and now in the period of its degeneration under Stalin with his counter-revolutionary policies. Thus, a review of this question in the past period gives us the theoretical base as our guide today.

### NEW TERRITORIAL CONQUESTS OF THE SOVIETS

Let us assume that in the imperialist war the Soviets see an opportunity to extend the borders of the Soviet Union; as the non-Marxists say: land-grabbing and "red imperialism".

From OUR STANDPOINT this extension of the Soviet Union beyond its present borders would be correct, but it would have to be carried out on the basis of the fundamental principles of the October Revolution and its property relations. The workers and oppressed

masses of this given country would overthrow the capitalist system with the aid of the Soviet State (either openly or secretly or both) and establish a Soviet Government and affiliate to the developing world Soviet center.

Of course, even here from our standpoint, a bitter struggle would develop between the Marxists and the workers of the new Soviet against the bureaucracy in the present warped Workers State. This, however, is not the problem at the moment.

#### CAN STALINISM CARRY THROUGH A REVOLUTION?

We state that it is impossible for the Stalinists to successfully lead a proletarian revolution, just as it is impossible for the leaders of the Second International to do so. On the contrary, the Stalinists are a brake upon the social revolution. Under these circumstances, what kind of land extension would develop? Would it be imperialist?

It is theoretically possible that the workers and oppressed masses, in spite of and against Stalinism, can overthrow their own capitalists and then affiliate and become absorbed into the present WARPED Soviet structure with Stalinism still in control. The attempt to digest this sector of former capitalist economy and the newly liberated masses into the present Soviet property relations would intensify all the internal contradictions and sharpen the class struggle within the Soviet Union, especially to the degree that Stalinism remained in control.

But this intensification of the contradictions of the warped Workers State would in no way IN ITSELF be a fundamental social transformation of the re-establishment of a capitalist state and a capitalist economy in the Soviet Union.

This is true even with the most negative variant. Let us assume that Stalinism would incorporate the new country or part of a country LEAVING INTACT the present capitalist property relations. Even this IN ITSELF would not mean a return to a capitalist economy and state in the WHOLE of the Soviet Union. It would indicate the degree of degeneration of the Soviet Union under Stalinism and would most likely reveal that the FINAL struggle between the fundamentally antagonistic forces of Capitalism and Communism was at hand --- a definite indication that either the bourgeoisie would be able to carry through their social revolution against the property relations of October, or that the Soviet workers, with the aid of the world proletariat, and especially those of the given country being absorbed into the Soviet Union, would be able to carry through their political revolution against Stalinism, stem the attacks of world imperialism, and revivify a HEALTHY Soviet structure. /\*\*\*, especially Hitler and the ever-growing and more powerful capitalist ELEMENTS in the USSR,

The important question here involved is not the question of whether it is correct for new territory to be added to the Soviet Union. The important question is UPON WHAT BASIS IS THIS NEW TERRITORY BEING INCORPORATED? --- 1) the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Soviets on a healthy basis; or 2) the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Soviets but with Stalinism gaining the upper hand over this section; or 3) the addition of new territory retaining its essential capitalist economy with some modifications??? (None of these issues involve the question of extra-territorial rights, such as the Chinese Eastern Railroad, with which we dealt above).

#### THE DIRECTION AND THE CHARACTER OF THE PROCESS

This is the DECISIVE question to determine the DIRECTION of the PROCESS in the Soviet Union; but even this, even its most negative variant, does not yet DECIDE THE PROCESS. The question not alone of their direction but of the CHARACTER OF THE ECONOMY AND THE STATE --- the DECISIVE aspect of the WHOLE problem. --- can be settled only upon the basis of the maturing political and social revolution. Both of these elements will be brought to the surface at once in the Soviet Union.

#### PART II -- THE CHARACTER OF THE SOVIET STATE IN THE LIGHT OF THE THEORETICAL BASES OF MARXISM

Those who claim to be Marxists and at the same time assert that the Soviet Union is not a warped Workers State, that it is not a Workers State at all, present the following position: That although the Soviet Union still retains its property relations in essence, it is not a proletarian dictatorship today because of Stalinism, it is not a Workers State, but at the same time, some say, it is not a capitalist state. Others claim that it is not a Workers State and definitely a capitalist state.

Those who present either one of these "straddle-the-fence" positions in between Marxism and ultra-leftism with their above-stated position automatically question ALL OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF MARXISM. The following five principled questions, as well as others, must be answered by these people, or they kick these Marxist principles in the teeth:

1- If the Soviet Union is not a Workers State and not a capitalist state, then what kind of a state is it? Our position on this is that there is a WARPED Workers State resting upon what basically remains of the October property relations; that Stalinism is a cancerous growth on the Soviet Union playing a counter-revolutionary role. This flows from the Marxist principle that in modern society there can only exist either the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie in any of its forms, or the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. But on their basis, they must show how a NEW, THIRD TYPE of state can exist.

2- What determines the character of the state? The correct position on the question of the character of the state, regardless of its form, is that it is determined by the mode of production, the property relations. This basic Marxist tenet refers to the character of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie, not the FORMS of these two states. But those who have the position that the property relations are not capitalist are therefore in the basic contradiction of trying to explain how the Character of the state can be different than the mode of production on which it rests.

3- Related to this, what are the laws of the capitalist mode of production and their relation to Transition Economy? This question, involving the basic issues of the three volumes of CAPITAL are presented in the May issue of the MARXIST. We therefore have the right to ask the advocates of the above position: If the character of the state, on YOUR basis, is different than the mode of production, what is its relation to the capitalist mode of production?

4- Does a NEW historical class exist in the Soviet Union, or does a re-established CAPITALIST CLASS exist there? We answer these questions in the negative and then show in our material the development of the "new" capitalist STRATUM and its increased pressure on Stalinism; how the Stalinist apparatus is honey-combed with this element and how the whole structure, under this pressure, and its world capitalist base, is shifting to the right and is perilously near the brink of capitalist restoration. But since the advocates of the above position do not accept our position, they must show HOW the new capitalist CLASS exists, what is its material base in Soviet society, and what is its relation to the character of the state.

5- Can state power be obtained by reform or revolution? On this basic question we state fundamentally that the seizure of STATE power can only be through revolution, that the proletariat can only seize state power through the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. And the same applies to the overthrow of the Workers State --- it can only be accomplished by a capitalist (counter) revolution. But since our opponents do not believe that the Workers State exists, they are definitely implying that it has been destroyed by REFORM. This is also a fundamental revision of Marxism, and gives grist to the theoretical mill of the social reformists who wish to reach socialism through the gradual reform of capitalism.

The above five principled questions as well as others must not only be answered by those with the above-stated position, but must also be immediately answered by those who believe that the Workers State no longer exists in the Soviet Union.

## ULTRA-LEFT ECLECTICISM

The "real" ultra-lefts, by means of eclecticism and not dialectics, take care of these fundamental contradictions with one stroke of the pen. They blithely state that there never was a proletarian revolution in Russia, that there was only a bourgeois revolution, that a Workers State never existed, that it was always a capitalist system and a capitalist state. This is a very simple and convenient process; but those who thus shut their eyes to historical reality and negate the basic premise of the October Revolution can have their simplicity in peace. We argue here only on the basic premise. And those who hold the "neither-nor" position should here take cognizance of where it is leading them. For, on the basis of the acceptance of the basic premise of the October Revolution, they are obligated to answer above listed principled questions in accordance with the principles of Marxism; or they must renounce their claim to being Marxists.

In the face of the Stalinist revisionism and the ultra-leftism which the former feeds, the revolutionary Marxian position on the Soviet Union is objectively standing the test. Sometimes our emotions tell us one thing, as they do about trade unions and trade union bureaucrats, as they do now about betrayal after betrayal, the Stalin-Hitler Pact, etc. --- but these subjective reactions do not determine objective reality; reason and facts do this and give us the correct analysis and position.

September 5, 1939



# HOW TO DEFEND THE SOVIET UNION

(Editors' Note: This is a resolution adopted over a year ago -- August 7, 1938 -- by the Political Committee of the Revolutionary Workers League on the defense of the Soviet Union..

\* \* \* \* \*

1- When the Soviet Union will be part of an armed conflict, either due to an imperialist invasion, or with Stalinism as an ally of one group of imperialists against another group of imperialists, the war will have a two-fold character: As an imperialist war with Stalinism as an ally of one group, it will be an imperialist war with elements of revolutionary war. As a war of defense against imperialist attack of the Soviet Union, it will be a revolutionary war with elements of the imperialist conflict. The contradictory position of the Soviet Union brings forth this condition.

It is the purpose of the Marxists in all cases TO DEVELOP THE STRUGGLE INTO A GENERAL REVOLUTIONARY WAR TO STRENGTHEN AND EXTEND THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION.

2- Unconditional Defense means the COMPLETE support of Stalinism in periods of military struggle; revolutionary defeatism means that one considers the Soviet state and army bourgeois and stryggles against it as in a capitalist country; however, the position of conditional defense means: the defense of the Soviet Union against the imperialist invasion and the imperialist agents within the Soviet Union -- the Stalinists and others. In a war Stalinism will be a brake upon the Soviet Union even more so than it is today.

If the political revolution against Stalinism is not completed before the war develops, then the participation of the Soviet Union in that war will enlarge all the contradictions within, and will lead to a violent solution of these antagonisms. The Russian masses with guns in hand will be more than a match for Stalinism and other such enemies of the proletariat.

3- The main line for conditional defense of the Soviet Union is the independent working class action, internationally and inside the Soviet Union:

a- The political and organizational independence of the revolutionary Marxian organization.

b- Revolutionary Defeatism in all capitalist countries, no matter which side of the struggle they are on.

c- Help the Russian Marxists build a Marxian Party in the Soviet Union.

d- For Soviets, a genuine Red Army and workers democracy in the Soviet Union.

4- The Red Army under Stalinism is warped and used by the bureaucracy for anti-working class ends. But as a Red Army it is based on the proletarian property relations and will have millions of armed workers in its ranks. It is not a bourgeois army. We are for independent class action inside and outside the Red Army.

We are against calling on the workers at all times to join the Red Army. We are equally against calling on the workers at all times not to join the Red Army. It is a tactical question whether under certain circumstances we call for joining the Red Army or whether under other circumstances, we call upon the workers not to join the Red Army.

Our perspective is to organize Workers Militias wherever we can to strengthen and extend the October Revolution; and where we are in the Red Army we work for workers democracy and Soviets.

A healthy Red Army should always be backed up by irregulars or Workers Militia forces; even in circumstances where we favor joining the Red Army, workers militias and partisan bands must be established. However, in those places where we favor joining the Red Army we do not pose the workers militias as instruments counter to the Red Army.

The revolutionists work within the Red Army of Stalinism to transform it into a genuine Red Army based upon industrial structure and with genuine soldiers democracy against the Stalinist officers caste. The Soldiers Committees must regain control of the Red Army.

In other places where Stalinism or other counter-revolutionary forces cannot be dislodged, where the Red Army cannot be transformed into a genuine class instrument, and where the Red Army becomes the disguise for these enemy forces, it will be necessary to constitute Workers Militias to carry out the defense of the Soviet Union against these units.

5- Material Aid to the Red Army:

The Marxists must give their material aid to the Marxists internationalists and the Russians who are working for the creation of a

new Communist Party.

Where workers organizations not under the control of the Marxists, are willing to give material aid to the Soviet Union, the Marxists shall: Clearly state the policy of conditional defense. Endeavor through representatives to see that this aid goes to the left forces fighting on an independent class line against imperialism and the Stalinist agents.

Where the Marxists are unable to carry through this policy, as a general rule we do not oppose these workers sending aid to the Soviet Union, but the forces working for independent class action work to obtain this material. Under specific conditions, as exceptions, considering the concrete stage of the struggle against Stalinism and other counter-revolutionary forces in their struggle against the workers and peasants, we shall fight against shipments to these anti-working class forces.

Above all, conditional defense means in each concrete situation the defense of the Soviet Union against ALL imperialists and their agents in the Soviet Union, the Stalinists and others.

## RED FRONT NEWS — ARRESTS REPRESENTATIVE TO I.C.C.

We have just learned from the Red Front comrades that several of their comrades were arrested just prior to the opening of the Second Imperialist War in one of the Scandinavian countries and others were arrested in Germany. This has forced them to alter some of their plans and to reorganize their forces. The outbreak of war has placed the greatest of burdens upon their shoulders. The arrested comrades outside of Germany have already been deported to another country, but we do not know the fate of the comrades arrested in Germany.

In spite of these difficulties the representative of the Red Front has informed us of the selection of a temporary representative to the Provisional International Contact Commission, a comrade who will be able in a short time to function in America with the Commission.

The action of the Red Front in taking steps to strengthen the International work in this hour of crisis reveals the true internationalism of the German affiliate of the INTERNATIONAL CONTACT COMMISSION in their struggle to overthrow Hitler.

The affiliated organization in Great Britain and the United States will carry out the same line to turn the imperialist war into a civil war.

September 12, 1939

## LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA

THE MILITANT WORKERS GROUP OF AUSTRALIA TO THE R.W.L. & I.C.C.

Editors' Note: The following is the reply of the Militant Workers Group of Australia to the letter of the R.W.L. which was issued at the time the Fourteen Point Programmatic Declaration was first circulated. By the time this letter was received, the Provisional INTERNATIONAL CONTACT COMMISSION was already functioning; and the reply, therefore, to the M.W.G. is from the I.C.C.

\* \* \* \* \* \*\* \*\*\* \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* \* \* \* \* \*  
20/7/39

Revolutionary Workers League of U.S.  
The Secretary  
Dear Comrade:

Please accept our apologies for the delay in replying to your communication of May 22nd. It was essential for us to discuss this matter thoroly before replying. Thru this discussion we reached the following conclusions: The R.W.L. must be informed re our group that we are small in numbers, have little finance, and have no influence as yet on the labor movement in this country. We are in fact a nucleus organization. We have exceptional possibilities for growth in Brisbane by reason of the fact that we are the only left group functioning here. In the South, in Sydney and Melbourne, there are several groups: S.L.P., Socialist Party, I.W.W., Trotskyists (two varieties) and others. Here the organizations with a working-class orientation are: the A.L.P. which is now and has been for years, the State government party; the Protestant Labor Party formed recently ostensibly to combat the predominating Catholic influence in the official Labor Party. The Stalinists who have been gaining in influence lately; our group. So at least we have no pseudo-revolutionary opposition.

Another point that must be brought to your attention is that altho individuals may proclaim themselves Marxists, we do not refer to our group as a Marxist organization. But this does not mean that as a group we are opposition to the teachings of Marx and Engels in any particular. We have the example of the Stalinists, the Trotskyists and others claiming to be prophets of the only true "Marxism-Leninism", and we have noticed that the use of the term is only too frequently to screen the introduction of policies and tactics inessential to, and at variance with, the teachings of Marx and Engels. No criticism of the R.W.L. is herewith intended.

Re your program of fourteen points:

We disagree on points 2 and 5.

We agree with reservations on points 1...deleting reference to the extension of the October Revolution, as we do not regard Rus-

sia as a workers state. Point 9 we would like to hear in greater detail your views re the formation of Workers Councils: we think that many divergences from the methods used in Russia would be necessary in the interests of workers democracy. Same re Point 10.

We agree with all other Points, especially 4, 6, 7, and 8, provided that the words "Revolutionary Communism" may be always substituted for "Marxism" and "Revolutionary Communist" for "Marxist" or "Marxian".

We do not consider that these differences should separate our organizations, we regard the R.W.L. as a revolutionary communist organization, and we would readily participate in the Provisional Contact Commission, provided that we may obtain the above opinions as a minority, and that participation will not prevent our pursuance of comradely relations with the LRWP and possibly with the Mexican group that has broken with the Trotskyists.

Re the remark re sectarianism in the letter to Z... K..... this was made for the purpose of argument (we said in the letter "without prejudice", i.e., temporarily, for the sake of discussion.). We do not regard the R.W.L. as sectarian, in fact we have no opportunity for forming such an opinion as we have had contact with your organization only by correspondence, and your material does not justify a charge of sectarianism. You have an approach common to most Marxist organizations that is dogmatic, but not a proof of political sectarianism.

Am sending you more papers by ordinary mail.

Comradely,  
(signed) V. Q...  
Secretary

P.S. Perhaps it is as well to add that on the points on which we do not as yet agree with the R.W.L., we remain open to conviction that your views are correct. So far, especially on Point 5 re Russia, we cannot see that you are right. While we do not refer to the Soviet Union as a capitalist state, we do not see how, in view of the proven facts of the oppression and exploitation of the Russian masses, workers and peasants, by the bureaucracy, the Soviet Union can be regarded as a workers state. In fact, it seems unwise to so refer to it. None of us claim to be theoreticians, but we feel that what is needed is some new designation to apply to Russia. I think I have informed you that we agree with you in the essentials of the policy to be adopted towards Russia in the event of war.

Re Point 2, our objection is not to the necessity for the Revolutionary Communist organization remaining politically and organizationally independent of other organizations, and being international in program and organization (we presume that necessary

variations to meet local needs and conditions are regarded as permissible.). But the paragraph in question (Point 2) gives the impression of a likelihood of a repetition of the organizational error made for instance, in the first years of the Workers Party in this country when the W.P. set out to be organizationally a replica of the Communist Party in miniature. We think that the whole question of the organizational apparatus and methods will bear a great deal of reconsideration and overhauling, with a view to insuring that achieving the essential unification and centralism, the no less essential democracy within the organization is not jeopardized.

We have your material on the L.R.W.P. which is under discussion.

Here the question of the day is the National Register. There was a good deal of opposition when the Register was first suggested. Then the A.C.T.U. (Australian Council of Trade Unions) stepped in and announced that they would very kindly lead the opposition. The Laborites and Stalinists who make up the A.C.T.U. started a boycott campaign by means of which they have managed to stifle most of the enthusiasm. Now they seem to be preparing for an ingenious betrayal.

V.Q.

## "FOR CLARIFICATION"

Provisional  
INTERNATIONAL CONTACT COMMISSION

August 12, 1939

V. Q..., Secretary  
Militant Workers Group,  
Australia

Dear Comradé Q...:

We have your letter of the 20th of July and have sent your letter and this proposal for action to the affiliated groups not yet having representatives in the Center. We are proposing to the sections that this position on the Militant Workers Group be adopted: that at the present stage your group be considered a sympathetic organization to the Provisional INTERNATIONAL CONTACT COMMISSION; that we continue the discussion started for clarification and basic agreement on our positions.

## 1- The Russian Question

Your letter presents a position on the Soviet Union which stated that although you do not consider the Soviet Union to have a workers state, at the same time you are convinced that it is not a capitalist state. Furthermore, you state that you agree with our position on the policy toward the Soviet Union in the event of war.

We are glad that in regard to these two fundamental aspects of the question, you have defined your position, but we would like to know what your position is in regard to other equally fundamental aspects of the question. Otherwise, it is difficult to make a complete evaluation.

As yet you have not stated what KIND of a state exists in the Soviet Union. Since you present the position that it is neither workers nor capitalist, you should state what kind of a state you think it is. From our standpoint there can exist no STATE in between the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Not in form, but in CONTENT, it must be either the one or the other in the present period.

In answering this question it is essential for your organization to determine what you think are the property relations in the Soviet Union. A reply to this question will determine your position on the kind of a state that exists in the Soviet Union.

From our point of view it is not only necessary to deal with the DIRECTION that the Soviet Union is moving in, but its CHARACTER as well. We agree with you 100% that the Soviet Union is moving back to capitalism. Nevertheless, it is of the utmost

importance to state the CHARACTER of the Soviet State, lest your position be used an umbrella for all sorts of elements: both those who are and those who are not for the defense of the Soviet Union.

It is in this light that the Provisional INTERNATIONAL CONTACT COMMISSION speaks of the Soviet Union as a warped Workers State. The character of the state is determined by the property relations, no matter what the forms of that state may temporarily be.

The Provisional INTERNATIONAL CONTACT COMMISSION presents the position that the basic aspects of the October property relations still remain, in spite of the inroads of the capitalist sector of economy. This determines for us the basic aspect of the question of the dictatorship: that a Dictatorship of the Proletariat exists in the Soviet Union. This economy and its state are undermined, warped and degenerated under Stalinist hegemony.

But to complete the process, which is rapidly approaching a climax, a social revolution is needed. To oust the cancer of Stalinism, on the other hand, the proletariat must carry through a political revolution. In this process, the bourgeois elements within the Soviet Union are increasing their pressure upon Stalinism. Stalinism, as the agent of the imperialists, at the present moment, used against the world revolution, is rapidly losing ground to the more open agents.

But as yet the Stalinists still dominate the Soviet State structure.

The state under the Stalinist stranglehold is used against the interests of the proletariat; just as bourgeois states under dictatorial regimes in developing and decay capitalism have been used for long or short periods by a bureaucratic force against the historic interests of the capitalist class.

The Soviet State has taken on bourgeois forms in its degeneration. It has not been used as a driving pressure to overcome the international and internal contradictions confronting the Soviet Union after the October Revolution. It can remain at its present unstable stage only for a short period. Its direction is towards capitalism, but its CHARACTER, based on the property relations, is that of a Workers State.

The first issue of INTERNATIONAL NEWS presents a position on the question of workers democracy under the Soviets which we endorse. A document on How to Defend the Soviet Union will be published in the second issue. These documents clearly define the question you speak of.

In the document on Workers Democracy we emphasize the need of ARMING THE WHOLE WORKING CLASS THROUGH THE SOVIETS AS ONE OF THE PILLARS TO ASSURE WORKERS DEMOCRACY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BUROCRACY. That is not the case in the Soviet Union under Stalinism.

It is unfortunate that the Soviet Union is complicated with so many contradictions that confuse the issue. Taking power in a country predominantly peasant, a backward country, has created a basic contradiction which it has not overcome; a contradiction which the seizure of power in an advanced country will not have. The inability of the world proletariat to EXTEND THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION to one or more advanced countries created a second contradiction of major import which in turn opened the door for the more favorable relation of forces of DECAYING capitalism vs. RISING proletarian power.

An exploiters state comes into being AFTER the economic might of the new exploiter class has firmly established itself in the womb of the old society. An exploiters state calls for the defense of the exploiting minority and the subjection of the exploited majority. The new exploiter can carry over decisive aspects of the previous state of the disposed exploiter.

The proletarian state must be different. It cannot use the exploiters state. It must tear it to the ground. It must construct a new type of state. The proletarian economic domination and control of production does not precede the building of the new state; rather the economic control and reconstruction can only be carried out through the seizure of state power.

The historical and material differences in this aspect of the exploiters state and the workers state and economics lead many comrades to confusion on the question of determining the CHARACTER OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT.

The new state cannot rise above the economic level. Backward economy will recreate bourgeois forms, and if not fought against, will finally overcome the advance.

The agreement of the Militant Workers Group of Australia and the International Contact Commission on the question that the Soviet Union is not a capitalist state, and on how to defend the Soviet Union is a basis for further discussion and clarification. Toward this end we elaborate our position and await your answer.

## 2- The Political and Organizational Independence of the Revolutionary Marxian Organization

On this question your organization states that you fear there may be some disagreement. But you do not state on what aspect of the question, and do not present sufficient material to indicate where this disagreement may be or where it may develop. At the same time you state that you are of the opinion that the whole question of organization apparatus and method will bear reconsideration and correction. We would like you to present your position on this question.

## 3- Are We Marxists?

We have presented the position that we are Marxists. We have rejected the term Marxist-Leninist, etc. Our theoretical foundation represents the concretization of Marxism in the present period. Therefore it is the most logical term to use to designate us. This in no way excludes the use of a more popular term, supplementing this theoretical term. At the same time we use the term Communist but we do not see the need of a policy of replacing the term Marxist with Revolutionary Communist. We use both.

## 4- Our Agreement on Basic Questions

Your letter dealing with the Fourteen Points of the Provisional INTERNATIONAL CONTACT COMMISSION clearly shows that upon the other basic points, your organization is in full agreement. The fact that your organization agrees with the correct position on revolutionary defeatism in the present pre-war period is a heartening sign. The Commission, replying to your letter and publishing your letter and this reply, does so with the aim of further discussion and clarification of these differences.

Comradely,

(signed) Hugo Oehler  
for the  
Provisional

INTERNATIONAL CONTACT COMMISSION

Provisional  
**International Contact Commission**  
for the New Communist (4th) International.

Central Committee of the Red Front of  
Greater Germany.

Leninist League, Scotland.

Revolutionary Workers League, U.S.A.

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Address: **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

**1904 W. Division Street**

**Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.**

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