

# INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

of the  
SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

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## CONTENTS

	Page
1. Notice by the International Secretariat	1
2. The Life of the Fourth International	3
3. Letter of Ver.	3
4. Reply of Trotsky to Ver.	5
5. Resolution of Belgian Central Committee	7
6. On the caricature of Defeatism by Trotsky	8
7. Comments by W. St. and the I.S.	9
8. Second Letter of Ver.	9
9. Must we Modify our Theses on War by Camille	16
10. Answers to Questions by Crux	20
11. The Czechoslovakian Question by Crux	29
12. "For" the Fourth International? No! The Fourth International! by Trotsky	32

NOTICE

Comrades, 12 months have elapsed since the appearance of the first International Internal Bulletin of the IV Int'l, edited by the I.S., i.e., since the month of August, 1937, with the issuance of "Information & Press Service". But you ask: where is the IV Int'l, does an international leadership still exist, what purpose does the I.S. serve?

We willingly agree that the absence of bulletins was a serious shortcoming which the internal publications of our national sections, notably France, Belgium, and America, have only partly made up for. Moreover, there is no lack of national and international problems of great importance for our policy and for our world organization; there were numerous discussions in all our sections, and there was no shortage of documents -- on the contrary. On the other hand, if the I.S. met more difficulties -- material above all -- in its work and if it often had to occupy itself only with questions of primary importance, and was forced to neglect others, most of the time limiting its field of action to the countries of Western Europe, the I.S. has nevertheless openly taken a position on all vital questions, has intervened in numerous political, organizational, tactical and even personal matters by its criticism and its advice.

The almost permanent absence of sufficient financial means has unfortunately prevented us for too long from associating all the comrades of our international movement in this work and from serving as the centralizing point of discussions within our world organization. The generous financial support of our American section which has just constituted itself as the "Socialist Workers Party" (SWP) finally permits us at least in part, to fill up this gap.

From now on there will appear, at short intervals, a series of international internal bulletins in the French language, and if possible, in German and English also -- each with a limited number of pages, having as their task: (a) reports on problems and discussions springing up in the Int'l during the past year; (b) reports on political activity directed by the international leadership; (c) the giving of all useful information on the activity of different sections; (d) furnishing for international discussion a series of important documents -- theses, resolutions etc. -- on which our international movement will next have to assume a responsible position.

The I.S. invites all comrades to study carefully these bulletins, to discuss them in their national organizations, to state their opinion on them, to communicate the result to the I.S., to send their criticisms, suggestions, proposals, counter-proposals, supplementary information, corrections etc. etc, as well as their activity reports, national theses, and drafts of resolutions which the sections shall judge useful to submit for the consideration and decision of the entire international organization.

Subject to modifications, these internal bulletins will deal with the following questions, approximately in the order indicated below and based on the essential documents:

- HOLLAND - The split of the RSIP with our movement; the B-I Group; perspectives.
- BELGIUM - Attitude towards the POUM; the vote for Van Zeeland, trade-union question; discussion on our attitude towards war.

UNITED STATES - Balance sheet of "the entry" the SWP.  
 Czechoslovakia- Situation of the movement, preparation for the  
 new party.  
 SPAIN - Activity of the B-L group and the I.S.  
 ENGLAND \* Situation in the movement; tactics to follow.  
 GERMANY - Crisis and split of the I.K.D.; attitude of the I.S.  
 GREECE - Situation in the LCI and of the United Org. of C.I.;  
 resolution of the I.S.  
 Latin-America - Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Uruguay etc....  
 CANADA - "The Entry"  
 CHINA - Attitude on the war; report of activity, situation in the  
 org.  
 TRADE-UNION QUESTIONS - In Holland, Belgium, France, Mexico.

The I.S. absolutely insists that the subscriptions of national  
 sections--which have become more and more rare--be turned in regularly  
 even if the amount is reduced. We will have to envisage considerable  
 more expense in cases of delay. Without the help of all sections,  
 the most elementary guarantee of stability and security cannot be  
 assured. The subscriptions of our American comrades alone are not  
 sufficient. Let them serve as an example for all!

These bulletins are strictly internal, and must not be considered  
 a means of propaganda. The leaderships of sections are expressly  
 requested to watch that they do not fall into the hands of our  
 enemies or opponents. Only contributions bearing the mention "for  
 publication" can be made public.

The International Secretariat  
 for the Fourth International

### FUND RAISING APPEALS

**LEON SEDOFF FUND:** Our departed comrade Leon Sedoff lived and died as  
 a proletarian, and it is to our organization that the task remains of  
 covering the considerable expenses resulting from his death, namely,  
 the burial, the autopsy, and the toxicologist's legal inquiry,  
 medical treatment, hospital, juridical procedure, etc. We can face  
 these expenses only with the support of all comrades and friends of  
 our international. That is why we ask you to start a large public  
 fund and transmit substantial funds immediately to the I.S.

**FUND FOR THE POI, FRENCH SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL:** France  
 continues to be the pivot of the international situation. The tasks  
 of our French party are enormous. To fulfill them with the necessary  
 efficacy our comrades need your help. Internationalism asks more than  
 fine words----acts and sacrifices!

**FUNDS FOR THE BOLSHEVIK-LENINIST GROUP OF SPAIN** must not tarry any  
 longer. Splendid efforts have been made, but far more is necessary.  
 The possibility exists, despite enormous difficulties and persecutions,  
 of carrying on illegal work in Spain for the Socialist revolution.  
 The Spanish comrades insistently demand our material aid in every one  
 of their letters. The Fourth International will not fail in this  
 task.

THE LIFE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

BELGIUM- On a series of fundamental questions the PSR was opposed to the IS and the international movement, namely: a) policy to be followed in Spain (attitude towards the POUM; b) Trade Union Policy (formation with the support of the PSR of a small independent trade union center); c) electoral tactic and the struggle against Fascism (support by the PSR at that time of the candidate Van Zeeland in the Brussels elections against the Rexist candidate Degrelle). On these three questions, the IS had addressed in due time an open letter to the PSR which was reproduced in the Belgian LUTTE OUVRIERE, organ of the PSR. In so far as our means permit, we will reproduce it in the internal bulletin since the PSR has not yet drawn a definitive balance sheet of these errors, except for the first one. Other differences with the Belgian Party arose on the question of what tactics to follow in Holland (neutrality of the PSR toward fraction work within the RSAP and towards the B-L group), and on our attitude towards the Brussels conference of the London Bureau (the PSR estimating that in view of the importance acquired by the POUM which is a member of the London Bureau the decision of the Internat'l Conference of 1936 must be revised). We will return to these questions.

Today we wish to acquaint the comrades of the International with a discussion on the attitude of the proletariat during the war which is at present going on within the PSR, a very instructive discussion that was carried on in a very unfortunate fashion by Comrade Vor. The numerous documents which we will reproduce below are the essential ones.

1. The occasion for the discussion was furnished by the following extract from the verbal hearings of the sub-commission of Inquiry on the Moscow Trials, which interrogated Comrade Trotsky at Coyoacan in April, 1937, -- an extract reproduced in the first number of the "Only Road" (the "Case of Leon Trotsky" pp. 289 and 290):

"STOLBERG: You are a responsible revolutionary figure. Russia and France already have a military alliance. Suppose an international war breaks out. I am not interested in what you say about the Russian working class at this time. I know that. What would you say to the French working class in reference to the defense of the Soviet Union?

"Change the French bourgeois government," would you say?

TROTSKY: This question is more or less answered in the thesis "The War and The Fourth International," in this sense: In France I would remain in opposition to the Government and would develop systematically this opposition. In Germany I would do anything I could to sabotage the war machinery. They are two different things. In Germany and in Japan, I would apply military methods as far as I am able to fight, oppose, and injure the machinery, the military machinery of Japan, to disorganize it, both in Germany and Japan. In France, it is political opposition against the bourgeoisie, and the preparation of the proletarian revolution. Both are revolutionary methods. But in Germany and Japan I have as my immediate aim the disorganization of the whole machinery. In France, I have the aim of the proletarian revolution."

Letter of Vor.

2. On the basis of the excerpt published in "The ONLY ROAD", Comrade Vor. addressed the following letter to the Excc. Comm. of the PSR of Belgium:

Brussels, December 11, 1937

"To the members of the EC"

"I just came into possession of No. 1 of the Dec. issue of the "Only Road" which is edited by our IS, Marxist Action (Switz.), Revolutionary Communists (Austria) and the Communist Internationalists of Czechoslovakia.

"In the "book review section" a heading analyzing the work "The Case of L. Trotsky", a book which reproduces the verbal hearings in Mexico, we read: (There follows a translation of the passage. See above.)

"For those responsible for the review including and above all, the IS of the Center for the Fourth International, this opinion of L.T. in case of a war of Germany, etc. against France-Russia, etc. is an interesting position.

"But if one supports the German text as do the readers of the IS, how must we understand the opinion uttered by L.T. at the counter-trial in Mexico on the attitude that we must take in the case where Germany, etc. makes war on France and Russia, etc.?"

"In Germany and in Japan, Comrade Trotsky is for the sabotage of the war machine. That is, he is for revolutionary defeatism. In France, etc., Trotsky does not say that we must sabotage the war machine of French imperialism. He would limit himself to a political opposition to the government and prepare the proletarian revolution. In other terms, in France we must not carry on defeatism, but prepare the proletarian revolution. More precisely, in Germany and Japan, we must prepare for the proletarian revolution by sabotaging the war machine, by carrying on defeatism, by transforming this war into a civil war. On the contrary, in France we must limit ourselves to a systematic opposition to the government. The fact that Com. Trotsky did not say that we must sabotage the war-machine in France permits us to assume that Com. L.T. does not espouse the opinion that we must carry on defeatism in France. In France, in other words, the POI must prepare for the proletarian revolution during the war by pursuing another way than that of the Germans. It must do it by another way. Which? If it must limit itself to systematic opposition--this is terribly vague--not by sabotaging the war-machine, therefore not by carrying on defeatism, what must the POI do? There are two solutions which, concretely reduce themselves to one. The POI will not sabotage the war-machine of French imperialism, will not carry on defeatism, in a word, will remain neutral so far as the war-machine is concerned, and that means it will facilitate the victory of French imperialism, or else, it will be consistent and will fight for the triumph of its country. That is called becoming part and parcel of the Union Sacree (Civil Peace)

"And this is the position that the I.S. finds interesting?

"L.T. also said in his reply: "In France I will do one thing; in Germany another." They are two different things, he added and concluded: "Both are revolutionary methods." L.T. conceives of two revolutionary tactics. There must, therefore, have been two fundamentally different situations.

"This is understandable when it is a question of the Sino-Japanese war. There, in reality, there is on one side an imperialist war; and on the other side, a war for national independence of a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country so as to prevent the colonization of the most advanced sections of the country. The tactics of the revolutionaries in the two countries must be different.

"But what is the fundamental difference between imperialist France and imperialist Germany? In their structure, both are imperialist countries. One belongs to the satisfied bloc, the other to the starved bloc. The regime of one is democratic, that of the other fascist. If we consider this indisputable distinction between fascism and bourgeois democracy sufficient to adopt two different tactics with respect to them in case of war for redistribution of the world: revolutionary defeatism in the fascist countries and systematic opposition (!?) to the government in the democratic countries, systematic opposition without the use of defeatism which must inevitably lead to helping the war-machine of these imperialists, then we join up with the Stalinist policy and our organizations will inevitably become integrated in L'Union Sacrée.

"We will be told: But there is Russia. Till now, the POI and our Party have understood our theses on war in the sense that the proletariat of a country allied to Russia does not ally itself with its bourgeoisie. Not to ally oneself to the bourgeoisie signifies, in case of war, the continuation of the class struggle and consequently the practice of defeatism. This is what the POI has explained hundreds of times, this is what we also have explained thousands of times.

"The excerpt produced by us from the review "The Only Road" and which is presented to our readers in Switzerland, Austria and Czechoslovakia; an excerpt found interesting by the I.S., will ideologically disarm our comrades in these countries and, by rebounding, our supporters in other countries.

"I consider this opinion as totally false, dangerous and leading our movement to sink into L'Union Sacrée in the bourgeois-democratic countries.

"I intend to immediately write Com. Trotsky to ask him if this excerpt really represents his thought.

"I also intend to condemn those who find this excerpt interesting, and ask immediately for a general discussion in the Center for the 4th Int'l on this question.  
Revolutionary greetings,  
G. Ver....."

3. We leave aside a long polemic between Com. Camille and Com. Ver. The positions of Com. Camille are more systematically laid down in the article of w.st. to be read further on; while the accusations brought against Com. Camille by Com. Ver. have proven to be largely based on an error, of misunderstanding.

#### Reply of Trotsky to Ver.

But here is the first reply of Com. Trotsky addressed to Com. G. Van who had sent him the documents while he was vacationing in the country:

Jan, 2, 1938

"Dear Com. Van:

I haven't even a copy of the "Case of L.T." here. I cannot therefore analyze the text nor, above all, the context. But the question is very clear even without that--at least for those who do not deliberately want to get tangled up. The commission, as was its duty, manifested a deep interest towards the question of my attitude toward the USSR and especially during war. "If you don't want to support the gov'ts allied to the USSR, you are practically a defeatist." Such was the meaning of the commissioners' arguments, particularly, if I do not deceive myself, Stolberg and in part, the lawyer Minorty. It is easy to see that they reproduce in this way the argumentation of our ultra-lefts, only with the opposite sign (one can see even in this that ultra-leftism is bourgeois thought, only turned upside down and carried to an extreme). I answered in the sense that we develop our policy not thru governments, but thru the masses and while remaining in irreconcilable opposition towards the bourgeois gov'ts allied to the USSR, such as France, in the practical application of our general line we do all--all we possibly can, to protect the interests of the defense of the USSR (or China, etc.). Then I had to give in this connection, some brief examples, along the line of those which served me in the discussion on the Chinese question (two ships, etc). In sum, the question reduces itself to knowing whether we are obliged to defend the USSR or another more "authentic" Workers' State, in case of war, without giving up revolutionary opposition -- and if yes, by what means. This question is dealt with in my article directed against Craipeau. For the moment, I have nothing to add to it.

"It is possible that there is some lack of precision in the stenographic report. It is not a matter here either of a programmatic text well-thought out, or even of an article, but of a stenographic report drawn up by the Commission. You know that I did not even have the chance to revise it myself. Some misunderstandings, imprecisions may have crept in. Enemies can make use of them, but serious comrades must grasp the question in its totality. I remain completely on the base of the theses of the 4th Int'l on war. There is a subject precisely related to this theme and which from its inception had aroused the opposition of Ver. and Craipeau. It is on this that we must speak out: Has or has not the experience of the last years confirmed our theses on this decisive point?

"I saw by chance that the American Lovestoneites have also tried to use the same isolated citation so as to present the matter as if I had two opposing policies during war--one for the democratic countries, the other for the fascist countries. Nothing is more absurd. The war will not be the competition of political regimes. It is a question of sharing the world, of definitely subjugating China and winning back the USSR for capitalism. Our policy during the war must therefore be adopted to the character of the war. We are against the enslavement of China as we're against the re-establishment of capitalism in the USSR. We therefore help the USSR, likewise China, during war by all the means at the disposal of an oppressed and non-ruling class which remains in irreconcilable opposition towards its gov't by preparing to overthrow it and seize power. This is how the question is posed. Whoever poses it other-

wise seeks to evade answering it or else, very simply, to tangle it all up.

"As for Comrade Ver., who unfortunately moves further and further away from Marxism, it is extremely characteristic that he finds it possible to support Sneevliet in his totally opportunist struggle, henceforth in the open, against the 4th Int'l and at the same time direct against us his ultra-left intransigence. So as not to deprive the NAS of governmental manna, Sneevliet has a completely conciliatory, diplomatic and equivocal attitude towards his gov't in peace-time. Can one believe for an instant that in case of war, with Holland's participations, Sneevliet will be capable of a revolutionary attitude? Only a blind-man could believe it. The duty of every revolutionist in Holland, as elsewhere, is to denounce pitilessly the policy of Sneevliet which can only compromise the 4th Int'l. Instead of that, Ver. sets himself up as Sneevliet's guardian-angel. He protects him against fraction work, that is, against Marxism, as he already had protected those poor centrists of the POUM against "nuclei-work" on the part of the 4th Int'l. The world appears to be up side-down in Ver.'s head. On every occasion, he only makes new mistakes to cover up the preceding ones or to turn attention away from them. He is oscillating now between Sneevliet and the Bordigists and his oscillations become more and more menacing, fortunately not for the 4th Int'l, but unfortunately for Ver. himself. I have already written in a preceding letter that we must save Ver. from himself. This task becomes more burning than ever. But Com. Ver. can be saved neither by concessions nor by considerations. The firm bulwark of all the 4th Int'l sections, the Belgian included, must be opposed to him. In any case, the decisive question for Ver.'s future is not his factious distortion with regard to badly interpreted, isolated quotation, but his attitude towards the POUM and Sneevliet, that is for Marxism or opportunism, for the 4th Int'l or for the London-Bureau.

"This is all I can say for the moment and I really believe that after all the polemics of these last years, it completely suffices.

"My best greetings,  
L. Trotsky"

#### 4. RESOLUTION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE BELGIAN PSR.:

"The CC of the PSR, meeting January 22 and 23, 1938, after a searching examination of the extract appearing in the "Only Road" and considered by the editorial-board as an interesting position, as well as documents submitted for its deliberations on this question, considers:

"That it was an error on the part of the "Only Road" editorial board to extract these 10 lines from the voluminous book reproducing the Verbal Hearings of the Comm. of Inquiry on the Moscow trials, and to publish this extract without any other political comment, it brought trouble into revolutionary ranks.

Consequently: the CC of the PSR reaffirms its position on the necessity of the complete practice of revolutionary defeatism--to wish for and concur in the defeat of its imperialism and to profit by military reverses so as to transform this imperialist war into a civil war with the taking of power as the object--in imperialist countries "allied" to the USSR as well as in "enemy" imperialist countries, to publish them with the introductory remark "an interesting position";



countries; in a word, to struggle for the defeat of all imperialisms and the victory of the world revolution.

"It considers that only this policy can effectively defend the economic base of Russia and prevent the restoration of the economic system of private property and that this policy of defeatism excludes in no respect the struggle of workers in all countries to strengthen the war-strength of the USSR, the progressive camp in the Spanish civil war as well as colonial and semi-colonial countries fighting for their national independence. (Resolution passed unanimously.)

The C.C. of the P.S.S.R. asks Com. Trotsky to please explain what he means by sabotage of the war-machine in "enemy" countries of the USSR, as well as systematic political opposition in countries allied to the USSR.

The CC. of the PSR at the same time asks if he does not consider that there is a contradiction between sabotage of the war-machine and article 79 of our theses on war.

5. In the meanwhile, Com. L.T. sent the following letter to the I.S. To the I.S., copy to all sections of the 4th Int'l:

ON THE CARICATURE OF DEFEATISM:

In my letter to Com. Van (2/1/38), I had admitted the possibility that in the stenographic report (The Case of L.T.) some unfortunate expressions might have slipped in (at the moment I did not have the book at hand). No man who thinks sanely and honestly, besides, will start out to find the reply to the fundamental problems of our policy during war in a brief, verbal remark made during discussions which lasted one week. However, I now see with satisfaction that my reply to Stolberg is transcribed in the report with sufficient exactitude and is in full accord with our programmatic theses. (war and the 4th Int'l)

There is however no need for me to return to this question. Com. w.st. has written on this subject an article in German ("Zu den Aufgaben des Proletariats im Kriege, printed in the New International for May, 1938). I most warmly recommend this article to the attention of all comrades. As the article is not confined to any "internal" polemic, it can and must, in my opinion, be reproduced in all our publications. The excellent article of Com. w.st. shows anew that now, very serious Marxist cadres have grown up among us. This article has completely done away with any necessity of my personally polemicizing against Com. Ver.'s recent writings, where there is nothing but scholasticism and casuistry.

On the subject of Com. w.st.'s article, I allow myself to make one particular remark. W.st. draws an absolutely correct principled difference between revolutionary "defeatism" with respect to one's own imperialist gov't and acts of direct military sabotage in favor of another country (Workers' State, colonial country, etc.). However, it would hardly be correct to include among acts of this type "mass desertion". Desertion of a revolutionary character can only become a mass one under conditions of an enormous influence of the revolutionary party. But such a condition: in the army and country in itself already signifies the approach or the beginning of the revolution. Under these conditions, it would hardly be admissible to cut off the revolutionary vanguard from the mass-army of the latter in the name of

an episodic military aid to a Worker's State or an oppressed country. Concerning "mass desertion", one can say in this case the same thing as in many others: it is either impossible or superfluous and harmful.

I hope that the German text of w. st.'s article has been sent to all sections and will be translated into the different languages.

Jan 26, 1938

Comments of W. St. and I.S.

-T.

6. On the subject of Com. w. st.'s article, the following is a remark he gives us:

"The accompanying text of my article has undergone some slight modifications in style. A note is added, with a reference of Lenin. I discarded the slogan of "mass desertion", after the remark of Com. T. Indeed, if we cannot reproach those soldiers who, lacking all enthusiasm for the cause of "their" imperialism and rather sympathizing with the cause of the non-imperialist "adversary", pass over to the other side, it would be false to make a slogan out of it for the reasons given by Com. Trotsky. - 25/3/38 w.st.

7. The article of w.st. in question will be found in the next number of "IV International" review of the POI, and "New International" for May.

8. Com. Ver. believes that the opinion expressed by Com. L.T. at Coyocan (The Case of L.T.) and especially that expressed by Com. Camille in his letters to the E.C. of the PSR (reproduced in the internal publications of the PSR) are in contradiction to the line followed up till now by our international movement on the war question, and believes that he has found the "key to the enigma" in our theses on war ("War & the 4th Int'l."), adopted in 1934 by the I.S. and published in pamphlets in several languages), theses which, according to him, would permit several interpretations. We reproduce here the essential passages from the criticism of Ver. and the amendments he proposes to make to our theses.

Second Letter of Ver.

After having emphasized his complete accord with points 18, 19 and 20 of the theses (chapter "Defense of Democracy"), Ver. continues:

"But there is a 'but'. There is no preciseness to be found as far as the eventuality of the participation of the USSR in the war on the side of 'democratic' countries and on which, as the theses clearly indicate, we will also find dictatorial and perhaps openly fascist countries. An abstraction is made of the eventual participation of the USSR in this imperialist bloc, and this is a shortcoming.

"It will be objected: 'But the theses devote a major chapter to this question'. Yes, we shall shortly see that preciseness is equally lacking there. The chapter treating of a war between 'democratic' and fascist countries, must contain a point saying that the participation of the USSR in the camp of 'democracy' would change not in the slightest the attitude toward these 'democracies'. This above all in time of war. This would be a most valuable preciseness.

"Let us continue the examination. In the chapter "the USSR and imperialist groupings" we find in point 43:

'The International proletariat will not decline to defend the USSR even if the latter should find itself forced into a military alliance

of revolutionaries

with some imperialists against others. But in this case, even more than in any other, the international proletariat must safeguard its complete political independence from Soviet diplomacy and thereby also from the bureaucracy of the 3rd International" (our emphasis - Ver.)

"Here also preciseness is lacking. What does 'complete independence from Soviet diplomacy' signify? According to one's understanding, interpretations will differ. The concrete aspects of the 'independence' must be insisted upon. We will see that this vagueness becomes apparent in the measure that we analyze these <sup>theses</sup> in pt. 44, following the passage quoted, we read:

" Remaining the devoted and determined defender of the workers state in the struggle with imperialism, the international proletariat will not however, become an ally of the imperialist allies of the USSR. The proletariat of a capitalist country which finds itself in an alliance with the USSR must retain fully and completely its irreconcilable hostility to the imperialist government of its own country. In this sense its policy will not differ from that of the proletariat in a country fighting against the USSR. But in the nature of practical action considerable differences may arise depending on the concrete war situation. For instance, it would be absurd and criminal in case of war between the USSR and Japan for the American proletariat to sabotage the sending of American munition to the USSR. But the proletariat of a country fighting against the USSR would be absolutely obliged to resort to actions of this sort - strikes, sabotage, etc!"

We remain 'the determined and devoted' defenders (very literary), and we do not become the ally of our bourgeoisie because it is the 'ally' of Russia. Let us first note that if there is only one effective Marxist defense of the USSR's sub-structure - the revolutionary Marxist defense - one can mention 36 other ways. Some, to speak only of tendencies within our "Center", think that the only defense, the real defense, the best defense, is to place all our revolutionary emphasis on the overthrow of our own bourgeoisies and that with all the arms war will give us. Others that we must suspend this struggle against the bourgeoisie of the camp in which is found the USSR, so that the camp opposed to that of the USSR gives up. Now return to the paragraph cited which one can interpret in these two ways, as one wishes. Both tendencies can claim for themselves this essential passage of our thesis.

"Thus it says that we 'maintain our implacable hostility to the imperialist government of our own country'. Does this hostility mean that we must put the accent of all our activity on the overthrow of our bourgeoisie or on the defeat of the adversary of countries opposed to the USSR? Camille will interpret it in his way. He 'will maintain' an implacable hostility 'to the democratic government' but will not allow its war strength to be harmed. Better, while maintaining this 'hostility' he will defend it politically and militarily.\*

\* Ver. here alludes to the polemic with Camille. In my letters there isn't the slightest passage permitting Ver. to make such monstrous allegations. My thought has always been that expressed in our war thesis and in w. st.'s article, that is, exactly the opposite of that attributed to me by Ver., who is the one and only author of the "interpretation" in question of our theses on war. As for the two tendencies which confront one another on this question in the "Center", that is, in the U.S., that is equally an invention.

"The part of the thesis dealing with practical actions is still more subject to diverse interpretations. Although the excerpts given by us deal wholly with the policy of proletarians in countries 'allied' to the USSR in case of war, we quote to point out that in the nature of practical actions considerable differences may arise depending on the concrete war situation. What stirs up still more trouble is to take the case of a war between an imperialist country and the USSR. Who will deny that in the case of a war of Japan against the USSR, the proletarians of the imperialist countries have the duty of sabotaging with all their strength the war apparatus of Japan and struggling to increase the strength of the USSR. A concrete example of the attitude to take in a country 'allied' in an imperialist war should have been given. That would have avoided equivocal interpretations.

"the example of the USSR - Japan, given above, is now frequently cited. It is worth nothing in the discussion raised -- after taking a position as categorical as that of the 'Only Road', and especially that of Camille. We think all the examples given and that will be given regarding the correct attitude in Abyssinia, Spain and China are no longer worth-while in justifying the position we should take in an imperialist country allied to the USSR in an imperialist war. It's not a question of sparing cows and Brussels Sprouts! In Spain, it is a civil war with imperialist intervention. In China, a war of national independence.

"But you will say: you polemicize against points lending themselves to more confusion. You separate them from the body of the theses, you don't cite the following passage which is irreproachable. Here it is in its entirety. Even this categorical passage allows two interpretations:

'45. Intransigent proletarian opposition to the imperialist ally of the USSR must develop, on the one hand, on the basis of international class policy, on the other, on the basis of the imperialist aims of the given government, the treacherous character of this "alliance", its speculation on capitalist overturn in the USSR, etc. The policy of a proletarian party in an "allied" as well as in an enemy imperialist country should therefore be directed towards the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the seizure of power. Only in this way can a real alliance with the the USSR be created and the first workers' state be saved from disaster."

"At first sight, this sections deserves no reproach. It is clearly stated that 'every revolutionary', in an 'allied' as well as an enemy country should therefore strive for the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisies and the seizure of power.' Until the publication of 'The Only Road' extract, this part of the thesis appeared clear to us. It is no longer so because the editors of 'The Only Road' will show tomorrow, and Camille has already done so, that one can even fight for the revolutionary overthrow of his own bourgeoisies by a systematic 'political' opposition', without harming the war-strength of countries allied to the USSR. As for us, we understand this point dealing with the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the taking of power in countries 'allied' as well as 'enemies' to the USSR, and the overthrow of this bourgeoisie by the undermining of its war-strength, by revolutionary defeatism and the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war. Thus we see that even the most precise paragraph can

be interpreted differently. Dangerous!

"In our criticism of the chapter 'The Defense of Democracy', we have indicated that our position in a war between 'democratic' countries and fascist is defined by making an abstraction out of the participation of the USSR in the bloc of 'democratic' countries. We consider this a grave shortcoming of the theses.

"In the chapter 'The USSR and Imperialist Combinations', we find: 'We maintain our political independence from Soviet diplomacy and bourgeois governments.' 'We do not become the allies of our bourgeoisie because it is allied to the USSR', 'We maintain our implacable hostility toward the imperialist government and 'We must strive for the revolutionary overthrow of our bourgeoisie.' What is not found are the concrete means to carry out these affirmations which are categorical, but stripped of preciseness -- revolutionary defeatism, and the transformation of imperialist war into civil war is absent. It is found only further on, at the place where it is a question of an imperialist war in which the USSR is not involved. Rather, let's see:

"In the chapter 'Defeatism' in the Imperialist War' we find the following: 59. The transformation of imperialist war into civil war is that general strategic task to which the whole work of a proletarian party should be subordinated during war.'

"Then point 60. 'The revolutionary struggle for peace which takes on ever wider and bolder forms is the surest means of 'turning the imperialist war into civil war.'

"In the chapter immediately following this on 'War, Fascism and the Army of the Proletariat', we find 'the whole revolutionary program of struggle against war is revolutionary defeatism and the transformation of imperialist war into civil war.'

"Thus, in the chapter on war between democratic and fascist countries, and abstraction is made out of the eventuality of the USSR's participation in the democratic bloc, and in the chapter 'The USSR and Imperialist Combinations', irreconcilable, implacable opposition and 'revolutionary overthrow of one's own bourgeoisie' is only spoken of, without once stating that this opposition and this overthrow can be done only through application of the whole program of struggle against war (defeatism, transformation of the imperialist war into civil war).

"To put an end to all confusion, this serious shortcoming must be repaired, otherwise we will see comrades like Canille drag down others to positions which will fatally weaken our political independence and resistance, and that just when imperialist war is launched!

"To our mind, we must make changes in the theses of our Center. Changes, preciseness if desired, which will take into account the most probable hypothesis: an imperialist war into which the USSR will be dragged. It's a matter of successively and clearly defining the attitude of revolutionaries in different countries and in the USSR.

"We will do so at the end of this contribution. But from what already proceeds, we think that workers of countries allied to the USSR can have only the position laid down by L.T. in his reply to Craipeau,

the position of the C.P. in Lenin's time: But just the same, does Craipeau, for example, doubt the proletarian character of the Soviet state in 1918-1923, or at least, to make a concession to ultra-leftism this time, between 1918-1921? In this epoch, the Soviet state maneuvered on the international arena and sought for "temporary allies". At the same time, precisely during this period was defeatism made a duty for the workers of all "enemy" or "temporary allied" imperialist countries."

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After a few generalities and after declaring that "For us, the nature of practical actions brought about by the concrete war situation can under no circumstances hamper the integral practice of revolutionary defeatism in the countries allied to the USSR or to any other country defending a progressive cause." Ver. continues:

#### "ABSOLUTE CONTRADICTION WITH DEFEATISM

"As it was presented to the readers of 'The Only Road', the excerpt cited as particularly interesting and the interpretation given to it not only by Camille but also by those defending it, -- all that is in absolute contradiction with revolutionary defeatism as conceived of by Lenin.

"In his article entitled 'Defeatism in the Imperialist War', July 26, 1915, Lenin wrote: 'Now, when we speak of revolutionary acts in wartime against our own country's gov't, it is indubitable, incontestable that it is not only a matter of wishing this gov't's defeat, but of effectively concurring in it.'

"In the same article we find the following: 'Revolution in wartime is civil war. Now the transformation of the war of a gov't into civil war is facilitated by military reverses, by governmental defeats; On the other hand, it is impossible to contribute to this transformation into civil war if one does not push it towards defeat with the same blow.' (Our emphasis, Ver.)

"These two thoughts of the author of this revolutionary strategy in wartime, and we could cite others, are perfectly clear. We assume that Lenin had not changed his opinion after the revolution on what is the essence of revolutionary defeatism itself.

"If therefore, as com. Trotsky recalls, in his document against Craipeau, -- in 1918-1921, the Soviet state made 'defeatism' a duty for workers of all imperialist countries, 'enemies' or 'allies', this signifies that in Lenin's time the non-degenerated Workers' State would have demanded of revolutionary workers in imperialist countries 'allied' to the USSR, not only 'to desire the defeat of their imperialism, but also, and above all, to effectively concur in it.'

"And if by defeatism is understood to concur in the defeat of one's own imperialism, to transform this governmental war into civil war, the policy of sabotaging the war-machine in 'enemy' countries of the USSR, and systematic political opposition in 'allied' countries is not supporting the destruction of war-strength in those countries 'allied' to the USSR. The latter conception is in absolute contradiction with the very essence of defeatism. It is impossible to wait a single day before beginning to undermine the war-strength of one's own imperialism and to remain neutral, without turning one's back on

the policy of revolutionary defeatism defined by Lenin.

"As we have shown, our theses leave the door open to another interpretation of revolutionary defeatism in a country 'allied' to the USSR during an imperialist war. The excerpt published in 'The Only Road' and its label 'an interesting position' already allow conclusions to be drawn that we must not support the defeat of an imperialist country allied to the USSR. The interpretations of Camille and his defenders in the Brussels federation (PSR) are already manifestations of the abandonment of Lenin's policy.

"It is obviously not yet National Union (L'union sacree). We exaggerate. But once the principle of concurring in the defeat of one's own bourgeoisie is dropped, the end cannot be foreseen.

"In his letter, Camille also tells us that we identify sabotage of the war machine with military defeatism, and systematic political opposition to National Union.

"Sabotage of the war machine is one of the most radical manifestations of this policy. Not to use it in an 'allied' country is to abandon a part of revolutionary defeatism. It is already abandoning a means leading to the defeat of one's own bourgeoisie because it is 'allied' to the USSR. . . ."

After a detailed exposition of what -- according to Ver. -- revolutionary defeatism is and emphasizing that it must be carried on "to the point of sabotaging the war-machine of one's own country", Comrade Ver. proposes to the PSR the following draft:

#### MODIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONS FOR THE THESES ON WAR (DRAFT)

The CC of the PSR proposes to organizations adhering to the Center for the 4th Int'l, the following modifications and additions to the theses on war:

Chapter: The Defense of Democracy -- after point 22.

With the hypothesis that the next world imperialist war takes on the form of a war of democracy against fascism and that the USSR is 'allied' to the 'democratic' bloc, the political attitude to be taken by revolutionaries in the democratic countries and 'allies' of the USSR remains that laid down in the chapter "The Defense of Democracy". Our policy does not undergo any fundamental change because the USSR is the "ally" of the democratic countries. The revolutionary policy to follow in democratic countries "allied" to the USSR remains, as in "enemy" countries, the policy of revolutionary defeatism, that is, desiring and effectively concurring in the defeat of one's own imperialism and profiting by its military reversals to transform this war into civil war, with the seizure of power as the object.

Chapter: "The USSR AND IMPERIALIST COMBINATIONS". Remove the last part of point 44: " . . . But in the nature of practical actions etc. . . ."

And replace this passage by the following: - In the nature of practical acts, there may arise differences brought about by the concrete war situation. In a war of one or several imperialist countries against the USSR, all the workers of "neutral" countries must use all

revolutionary means to sabotage the war-strength of the imperialist countries and strengthen the war-power of the USSR.

In a world imperialist war, and one in which the USSR would be drawn into one of the camps, all workers of "allied" countries must, parallel with their struggle against their bourgeoisie to transform the imperialist war into civil war, fight for the strengthening of the USSR's war-power as well as the progressive camp in a civil war and in colonial or semi-colonial countries fighting for their national independence.

The whole text of point 45 with the addition of the underlined part:

45. . . . .The policy of a proletarian party in an "allied" as well as in an enemy imperialist country should therefore strive for the defeat of its own gov't, desire and effectively concur in this defeat, profit by the military reversals of its own imperialism to transform this war into civil war with the aim of the revolutionary overthrow (Ver. omits the word "revolutionary") of the bourgeoisie and the seizure of power. Only in this way can a real alliance with the USSR be created and the first Workers' State be saved from disaster.

3/1/38 G. Ver..

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9. We extract the following essential passages from a contribution of Comrade Camille to the PSR's internal bulletin:

MUST WE MODIFY OUR THESES ON WAR

....To justify, after the event, his unfortunate intervention, he, (Ver) seeks for so-called deviations of T., Camille etc. -- in the war theses themselves. So as to avoid the dangerous interpretations of which his overworked imagination is the sole author, Ver. proposes modifications to the war theses. There are several things to remark about this: (1.) If enough bad is put into it, the best text can be "interpreted" in the opposite sense. (2) The worst imaginable interpretations by Ver. are not adequate to justify any modifications remaining within the framework of the entire theses. (3) Written several years ago, it is true that the theses need some precisions as a result of the last years' experience, and need a clearer view of the host of problems of the approaching world war. These precisions that the Conference should make will have as their task: (a) To make the relationship between the defense of the USSR and that of colonial and semi-colonial countries -- and in civil wars, defense of democracy-- stand out more clearly. (b) To take account of the aggravated degeneration of the USSR and its consequences as regards the war; (c) To take account of the People's Front experience; (d) To develop the combined nature of the proletarian tasks during the war; (e) To explain in more detail the practical means of carrying out these tasks.

From this angle, the proposed modifications of Ver. are completely insufficient. Besides, there is a series of errors, if not in the amendments, than in the reasons given: (a) In adding the words "effectively concur" (in its defeat) which is not wrong -- Ver. understands military sabotage to be included here. Lenin did not believe that.\*\*\*\* We "effectively concur" (in its defeat) by our revolutionary activity and not by special military means which directly benefit the adversary without the proletarian cause being advanced. We no more want to aggravate economic crises or increase unemployment, because that would create discontent and provoke social disturbances. Military sabotage which is not the immediate by-product of a revolutionary movement of the masses, would not one whit advance the revolutionary cause of the opposing proletarians. The military measures of defeatism (transformation of the imperialist war into civil war) are, besides, of an entirely different order than that of sabotage.

\*\*\*\*During the war Lenin opposed Trotsky's false slogan "Neither victory nor defeat" by opposing to it the slogan of defeat. But Trotsky long ago recognized his error. At any rate, it isn't Ver. who can lean on Lenin against Trotsky. For if Ver. would even read, (or even quote) Lenin, he would have had to state that in "Against the Current" Lenin mocks at caricaturists of defeatism along Ver.'s type. Lenin wrote: "....and revolutionary actions during war-time against one's own government certainly and undoubtedly signify not only desiring its defeat, but even effectively concurring in such a defeat. (for the "discerning" readers this does not at all mean that we must "bomb bridges", organize military strikes doomed to failure, and in general help revolutionaries inflict a defeat on the government.) (Translated from German; my emphasis-C.) As we see Lenin excluded in itself, even as ridiculous, military sabotage as a means of revolutionary defeatism.

It is Ver., by vaunting "military sabotage" as one of the most radical manifestations of this policy" (revolutionary defeatism) who comes into contradiction with Leninism.

Since, however, he believes that to be so essential, why doesn't he include it in his amendment to the war theses? Probably because this "intransigent" wants the organization, in adopting his amendment, to give some sense at least to the form - at the price of evasion. Pretending a desire to avoid all evasiveness, he ends up by courting it, for the amendment allows two interpretations: to concur in the defeat of the imperialist camp, military sabotage being either included or excluded.

Even in the camp of the imperialisms fighting against progressive causes, military sabotage is not a means of revolutionary defeatism, but of the immediate military defense of the "opponent" (USSR, China, etc.)

This card-juggling - whose master Ver. is - can no longer be tolerated. It consists in insultingly insinuating that to reject military sabotage as a means of revolutionary defeatism means "not allowing any damage to the war-strength of the democratic government allied to the USSR..." (and every other affirmation of this type). Nobody said it, nobody meant it. Damage done to the war-strength of even the imperialists allied to the USSR etc...in the course of systematic political opposition to the government and preparation for the revolution, we accept this; we want it; we concur in it. But never, except in a war against the USSR, etc. ... is this sabotage, as well as the final defeat, a final goal to be realized by all means. Moreover, it is worthy of populist and anarchist minds to imagine it to be possible to work, in an inter-imperialist conflict, for defeat other than by revolutionary means, that is, by mobilizing the masses.

Com. Ver. believes the example of the American dockers in a USSR-Japanese conflict "is valueless" because in this example the U.S. is not a belligerent. Would the tasks of the proletariat therefore be fundamentally different for Ver. in time of war and in peace-time? Rather, I think this argument of Ver. is "valueless". (d) We were not for the defense of Abyssinia or China etc. ...because "imperialism hinders or attempts to hinder the development of a backward country," (Economically speaking, the introduction of capitalism in Abyssinia is even "progressive"), but because its victory is a strengthening of imperialism which historically and on the world arena is a reactionary force in relation to socialism for which world economy has been ripe at least since 1914. (e) The same imprecision as regards the USSR, whose economy is "superior to decaying capitalist economy" only in its structure and not its quantitative or qualitative level. We defend the economy of the USSR only for its social base and its structure, and not for its material substance. (f) The formulation of point 22 (addition) is extremely careless for the aim it sets for itself -- "With the hypothesis that the next imperialist world war takes on the form for democracy against fascism---" We haven't stopped ridiculing this manner of posing the question: the "democracies" will stop being even bourgeois democracies; they will have dictatorships as allies; the USSR cannot be described as a "democracy"; imperialist war is not a conflict of political regimes, etc....

While waiting for the PSR's Congress to decide this question, it is important for comrades to draw up their provisional balance-sheet, following the discussion:

FIRST BALANCE SHEET OF THE DISCUSSION ON REVOLUTIONARY DEFEATISM

1) Ver. attempts to revise the Bolshevik conception of revolutionary defeatism: "...sabotage of the whole war machine. That is to say, ...revolutionary defeatism; "not to sabotage the war-machine, then not to carry on defeatism" "...political opposition to the gov't. and prepare for the proletarian revolution. In other words, ...not to carry on defeatism, but to prepare for the proletarian revolution" (excerpts from Ver.'s letter to the EC of the PSR, 11/12/37); "sabotage of the military machine is one of the most radical manifestations of this policy;" (Ver. 3/1/38). For Ver. there is no defeatism without military sabotage. More, he identifies defeatism with military sabotage.

But for Bolsheviks, revolutionary defeatism consists in continuing the class struggle in war, preparing for the revolution. This social, political struggle assumes a military <sup>only</sup> only at its culminating points: armed insurrection, civil war.

Military sabotage, on the contrary, is a measure in defense of progressive causes (colonial and semi-colonial countries, proletarian states, democracies in a civil war against fascism) which, at all times, is a task set in the opposing camp.

2) On the basis of his false conception, Ver. accuses T., "The only Road", the I.S. and Camille in particular of preparing for the integration of the proletariat into National Union in countries allied to the USSR. But since in all imperialist countries (and, let us add, all small capitalist countries assimilated into an imperialist camp), the proletariat must be against national defense and practice revolutionary defeatism, does he believe that the slightest difference in the attitude of the proletariat of these countries must lead, in the last analysis, to National Unity?

Ver. forgets that reactionary (imperialist etc.) and progressive (USSR, China etc.) struggles are mixed in an international conflict and that due to this the tasks of the proletariat are combined and necessarily different to attain the same goal: defeat of imperialism thru the victory of progressive causes and the proletarian revolution. Thus, there is nothing to Ver.'s accusations.

3) Starting out with a false conception of defeatism, ignoring the complexity of proletarian tasks during the war, able to give only badly digested generalities to the discussion, Ver. carries on a necessary discussion in a most dangerous fashion: false interpretations, calumnies -- deliberate or not, it matters little -- the most monstrous accusations imaginable -- based on erroneous conceptions, false interpretations, misunderstandings and abuses.

Months after, he had to admit his partial mistakenness, that he had exaggerated, while throwing the blame for his own confusion and his panicky mind on T. who should have been more explicit; on "The Only Road" which had given an insufficient commentary; on Camille who hadn't explained himself clearly enough\*, all the while repeating and deepening his errors.

The CC of the PSR, instead of setting limits to Ver.'s confusion, instead of condemning Ver.'s methods of carrying on the discussion, instead of deciding on the matter under question, passed a joint vote with Ver. on generalities aside from the question, kept quiet on the debate that had taken place, passed over in silence Ver.'s method and confusion, but fell back, along with Ver., to a question of secondary importance: the publication of a correct citation of Trotsky, with an approving comment -- although too brief -- in "The Only Road." An evasive vote: some (Ver.) condemn the meaning of the citation; others (LL, WD) the utility of its publication although they agree with the meaning. Thus, the CC prolongs the confusion, sanctions unhealthy methods of discussion, permits Ver. to utilize a strategic retreat which he will once again utilize to take the offensive against our program and against Leninist methods.

\* Regarding this, Ver.'s explanations concerning his accusation that Camille would be for the political support of imperialist France allied to the USSR, cannot be accepted. Nothing, absolutely nothing could have allowed Ver. to suppose that by "progressive camp" Camille meant the reactionary camp of France. The imprecision admitted by Camille, and which he was guilty of in his first letter to the EC of the PSR is exclusively related to the term "political support" (to mean: revolutionary support). Ver. is playing hide-and-seek.

Camille  
March 19, 1938

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

By Crux

1. Who can challenge Japan: Great Britain? the U. S.? the Soviet Union? But Great Britain is not ready and she is greatly concerned with the situation in Europe. She avoids every decisive step in Europe in view of the situation in the Far East and avoids every decisive step in the Far East because of the situation in Europe. Her whole Empire is totally weakened by this inner contradiction in the situation. It is absolutely certain that if Japan is victorious, every European country will be driven away from China. That is why Great Britain can't have a policy of permanent agreement with Japan. An agreement with the U. S. against Japan? But that signifies war. The United States is a very powerful country, I must admit, but it is very feeble against Japan because it does not have a base on the Asiatic continent. The only possibility for starting a war with Japan would be through a military alliance with the Soviet Union. That is a question of the future. The entire fleet in the Pacific Ocean is only a preparation for the future conflict. Today Washington can't challenge Japan.

The Soviet Union, more than any other country, is dependent upon the situation in Europe. If France concludes a military agreement with the Soviet Union against Japan, and if it has the support of Great Britain, only in that case could the Soviet Union permit itself to challenge Japan. Then there would be the question of the internal situation. And now there is the new orientation of British policy towards an agreement with Italy and, through Italy, with Germany, towards domination by the four European powers, excluding the Soviet Union. The military danger from Germany and Poland with the support of Italy is very great, and I don't believe that in this situation the Soviet Union will dare challenge Japan. On the contrary, I believe Japan began the new conflict in China with the tacit consent of the Soviet Union. That is, the Soviet Union said, "If you will leave us alone, you can do anything you wish in China." I believe Moscow is satisfied with the situation because it signifies the paralyzing of Japan's military forces against the Soviet Union. All this is not mathematical but a coefficient of hypothetic elements.

Direct military intervention on the part of the U. S. or the European powers is very improbable, if not totally excluded. Therefore, the development in the Far East will depend upon the military forces of Japan and China and upon the internal situation. We must consider this development from a long time perspective. It is absolutely excluded that Japan should not only conquer but also dominate China. Even the conquests of Korea and Manchuria weakened Japan from a military point of view. Manchuria today is not the Manchuria of the beginning of the century when it had a population of but 7,000,000. Now it has 30,000,000, and a peasantry that is accustomed to guerrilla wars. They can be armed at any moment by the foe, Russia or China. China itself is a country of 450 million population -- a very dense population. There is no place there for Japan to migrate. We see that Great Britain has some difficulties in India now. During the decline of capitalism such grandiose conquests as that of China are impossible. It was possible to conquer Ethiopia, but not China. When England is about to lose India, Japan, which is not Great Britain, cannot conquer China.

It is necessary also to take into consideration the internal situation of Japan -- a country pregnant with the social revolution. World diplomats, who are not armed with Marxism, do not know to what degree Japan is now approaching an internal explosion. Take the agrarian situation: half of the population are peasants and have less than half a hectare of soil, on the average. The soldier -- the same peasant and worker -- and the military caste have different attitudes. Then there is the old traditional militarist and the new petty bourgeois elements who are militarized fascists and who wish to establish an "anti-capitalist," anti-socialist regime, and are for the conquest of the whole planet. All these contradictions must explode. The situation in the Far East will lead to a great explosion in Japan, and the resistance of China will be more successful. That is why we can be sure that at the same time that Moscow pushes Japan against China, it helps China resist Japan. Until today China has shown a remarkable capacity of resistance to Japan, but from the military point of view the Japanese are naturally stronger.

Will Japan achieve its immediate objectives? That depends upon whether Japan will limit itself. If she wishes only to force China to recognize the conquest of Manchuria and the domination of the five Northern Provinces by Japanese military agents -- it is possible she will succeed. It is also possible that Great Britain is advising China to yield in order to gain a breathing spell. One can say that politically Nanking is 51 per cent a tool in the hands of London and that, though the latter is pleased with the resistance of China, she fears that this resistance can be broken by Japan and therefore advises China to give way. In this sense, an armistice is possible. There are two parties not only in Japan but in her military ruling caste, and the program of one of the parties, the younger officers, is to go to the limit. The military budget of Japan, in times of peace, is 50 per cent of the total budget. That is one of the reasons for the inner conflict.

If we take the index of industrial production for 1929, the last prosperity year, to be 100, then Japan shows a tremendous growth, from 100 for 1929 to 151 for 1936. For the first months of 1937 it is 157, a growth of 75 per cent from 1929. This is due almost entirely to military enterprises. Contrast the growing military budget to the terrible situation of the toiling masses, especially the peasantry. If we again take 1929 to be 100, we see that for 1936 in the U. S. it is 88, and that it is now 95-97-99 per month. At the same time, in Germany it is 105-118, again because of the military industry, the military budget, rearmaments. I can say nothing about Italy because Mussolini tells us nothing; -- it is a secret of the state: statistics end with the year 1935. In France for 1936, the index was 70, and now -- the beginning and at the same time the end of "prosperity" -- 73-75.

Only in Great Britain is there an indisputable growth, but it is not to be compared with the growth in Japan. Taking 1929 again as 100, in Great Britain the index for 1936 is 116, and for 1937, 120-123. This is due to the introduction of protectionism,

the abandonment of free trade. But it is only a temporary growth because the protected industries will develop to the level where they cover the necessities of the market and it seems that this point is now reached. If we compare this with the Soviet Union and again take the index of production for 1929 as 100; for the year 1930 the index is almost 200, for 1935 almost 300, and for this year about 400 and more. I do not have too much confidence in these statistics and it is possible that if we introduce into these figures the necessary correction of reality -- prices, productivity, etc. -- we will come to the conclusion that these results are doubled by statistical manipulations; but, in any case, the growth is incomparably greater than even in Japan. It would be interesting in this connection to give figures concerning France. Taking the index of production for 1929 to be 100 (it was about the same for 1913, the year before the war), then we find that for 1923 it was 140 (that was the time of German reparations, with its very large payments). We must also not forget that the French won very rich provinces in the war. For 1924 the index was 124, whereas for 1936 it was only at the 1908 figure. In spite of German reparations and the two rich industrial provinces, the industrial level of France is lower than before the war. This year it may reach the pre-war level. That this great victorious capitalist power can't produce at a level it reached before the war is proof that the decline of capitalism is not just a phrase.

It is of the greatest interest to the Soviet Union to involve Japan in a conflict with China, and in order to do this, it must help both Japan and China. Of course, Japan doesn't need an "invitation" from the Soviet Union. You must also realize that official Tokyo diplomacy has not the slightest confidence in anything Moscow says, nor has Moscow in anything Tokyo says. But Japan felt out the ground by taking possession of the Amur Islands even before the invasion of China. Moscow protested, but completely retreated. That gave Japan the assurance that Moscow is not willing or not prepared to engage in a military conflict. Litvinoff threatened Japan, but if you analyze his speech, you can see that Moscow stated it would do nothing to oppose Japan. The bombastic phraseology was only for the Moscow papers -- a concession to the patriotic sentiments of the Soviet workers. But in actuality he said, "If you will limit yourselves to these small thefts and no more, we will be tolerant, and if you direct your forces against China, naturally we will remain quiet."

Thus it assured Japan that it did not mean to make a military alliance with China to oppose her. Japan also foresaw that Russia would help China in an underhanded manner, by sending planes or war materials -- but not an army. Japan considered this situation as a whole and found it possible to invade China. It is funny, but in politics both adversaries speculate on the same thing: Japan believes that, given a long-term perspective, it will become strong in China and that within three to five years it will oppose Russia's intervention in China by military force. On the other hand, Russia thinks that Japan, by being involved in China, has given her a breathing spell.

I don't know if you are aware that we had a big discussion here on the question of China. Eiffel attacked me for an interview on the Chinese-Japanese struggle, in which I spoke of the necessity for revolutionists, without giving up their political independence,

to participate in the fight against Japan. Eiffel opposed this conception. He said, "We must be defeatists in China." To say that in China, which is a semi-colonial country, we can be defeatists is complete political stupidity and even treachery.

It is like saying that we cannot participate in a strike against Ford because it is led by Green. Can we give Green full confidence? No, but we must take part in the strike as the best strikers. Of course, we must prepare for the overthrow of Chiang Kai-shek. If you can, replace him. But if you can't replace him, you must participate in the fight against Japan while politically fighting against him. In Japan, we attack the Japanese militarists for making war, but in China we attack Chiang not for making war but for conducting the war phlegmatically, for not pursuing with the necessary means the confiscation of Japanese industries, banks, railroads, etc. Otherwise, it would be as though we were accusing Green for beginning the strike rather than for not pushing the strike with sufficient militancy. What is important for us is the mobilization of the revolutionary masses under our banner because they are the only historical factor that can assure victory. But we place ourselves totally on the basis of the war and participate in it actively.

2. We can begin with the affirmation that the future military conflict will, in any case, not occur between the "democratic" nations and the fascist ones. At present it may appear that this is not so: on one side we have Germany, Italy, Japan and Poland. (It is absolutely incorrect to call Japan fascist, but for the moment we can accept this vulgar Stalinist characterization). On the other hand, there are England, France, the Soviet Union -- I do not know whether the latter is a "democratic" country but, for the sake of simplification, we can accept that characterization. Alongside this combination, the U. S. cooperates.

But all this is only an optical illusion. Those capitalist countries became fascist in which the contradictions were the sharpest. Italy, Germany, Japan are characterized by the absence of raw materials and the lack of colonies. On the other side, we have countries satiated with colonies or with natural resources, -- countries like the Soviet Union and the United States. Historically it is clear why Italy and not Great Britain became the first fascist state. Germany, Italy and Japan are looking for new possessions. They want to blow up the status quo, whereas England and France defend the legalized robberies. However, England and France defend the status quo only during peacetime. Great Britain, like France, will look for a better partition once war breaks out. It will depend upon the relationship of forces, and not upon the "democratic" form. For Italy the only important question is: will she be victorious with Great Britain against Germany, or with Germany against Great Britain?

Right now it is very difficult to foresee the alignment of the powers in the next war. We don't have the "good old days" of the German, Austro-Hungarian, Italian alliance and the Entente of France and Czarist Russia, with the enigmatic sympathy of Great Britain. Before the war broke out, everybody knew that it would be a war between these two camps -- the rest would have to choose one axis or the other. Even the United States was obliged to choose one of the axes, in spite of its "disinterested neutrality." Even



so, Italy changed sides. Now none of the diplomats knows what the alignment will be: that is not a paradox, but a reality.

An alliance of Hitler-Mussolini? They have nothing to give one another. If war comes between France and Germany, Italy can't go with Germany -- she is a small boat totally exposed to the air fleet and sea fleet. And what help can Germany give her? But why the present alliance? It is only a bluff -- a bluff against Great Britain. Hitler's original plan, the old one, is to win the friendship of Great Britain against France. But Great Britain will not go with Hitler against France. It acts as the arbiter. Great Britain is a small island as exposed to the air fleet as Italy. That is the reason for the tremendous rearmament program. Hitler says to Great Britain: "You are accessible to my air fleet; Italy is your opponent in Africa. We can become reconciled if you will be against the Soviet Union and against France." If Hitler doesn't succeed, if Great Britain, because of her contradictory interests in the Far East, in the Mediterranean, does not go with Germany, she may turn her face to Stalin. There is a possibility that the internal situation in the Soviet Union on the one hand, and the lack of readiness on the part of France for a military alliance with the Soviet Union on the other, may push Stalin into an alliance with Hitler. That is a possibility and nobody can foresee today, at this moment, what will be the actual alignment of powers. That reflects the terrible contradictions of this imperialist epoch.

It is possible that the war in the Far East will be the real beginning of the world war. Intervention of the United States is only possible in alliance with the Soviet Union. The war will begin and will involve more and more new powers. It is probable that the U. S. and Great Britain will be in opposite camps. But the U. S. and Great Britain can also be in the same military camp, and yet Great Britain can be totally defeated by the U. S. To a certain degree that was true in the last war. The United States was in the Entente, yet Italy emerged as a defeated country, France and Great Britain also to a certain extent emerged as defeated countries, and only the United States was the victor. The new war will end in the total disintegration of the British Empire. The new war will signify that, even as the old signified the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The U. S. will then dominate a world of ruins, unless a new factor intervenes -- the proletariat.

3. Economically it is altogether possible that the Russian market can be conquered by the capitalist countries. Productivity in Russia is lower than in the U. S. and the prices of commodities are higher than in the advanced capitalist countries. That is why capitalism can conquer her market. By peaceful economic methods, just by the intervention of cheap commodities, it could abolish the so-called socialist economy. But the question is not only economic, but political and military as well. It is not possible to organize an invasion of the Soviet market by capitalist merchandise without a war, and hence the question is political.

If the new war should end with the victory of the capitalist countries, that is, without any proletarian revolution -- then it is not only possible but inevitable that the Russian market will be conquered. Then not only will the British Empire disintegrate as an empire, but the Soviet Union also would perish as a social

system. As a backward country, it will yield to invasion by the stronger, more developed capitalist countries. I read in "Le Temps" an article, "Realities" which says: "Do you want war? Don't you realize that it will be a war without defeated and without victors, but a prelude to the social revolution?" And one hears in all the speeches of Hitler: "Do you think I am mad? I don't want war for it can only be a war for the benefit of the Bolsheviks. We understand well enough that the next war will produce more powerful revolutions than the last war."

4. The drop in business in the United States is not very important, but the decline on the stock exchange is symptomatically much more important. There were two or three terrible declines on the stock exchange and they signify that the people who direct world business foresee symptoms of a big crisis. Zigzags in business and crises are not antipodes. After this convulsion the business line can go up but it cannot be a sure line, only a hesitating line, and then a new terrible crisis, more terrible than the crisis of 1929. All this has its connection with the armaments programs. In Europe, in Japan and to a certain degree in the U. S., the new prosperity is based on the rearmament program. In the U. S., Roosevelt also has the possibility to attempt by New Deal methods to use the armaments program for conjunctural purposes.

In Europe "prosperity" is completely tied to the rearmament program. After the big slump in New York two or three weeks ago, the London press said, referring to the reaction of business in the U. S.: "We can't understand it; why are they so nervous?" Ten days later there was a slump in London. This proves that it is not an accident but that there is an organic reason for the slump, and that reason is absolutely clear. With the growth in population and technique you nevertheless have the same level of buying power of the masses -- contradictions sharper than before the war. Rearmament programs create only a fictitious prosperity. These programs will be completed in Germany, France, and Great Britain in the next two or three years -- they can't continue them any longer. It is not the ordinary budget but an extraordinary financial effort. In one year the stock exchanges become nervous, and they ask, like a young innocent girl, "What's the reason?" She pretends that she does not know what has happened, but she knows very well what has happened.

The approach of the new crisis will create an impossible situation for the Comintern and a good situation for us. All the contradictions will become sharper -- the Peoples Fronts will crash and there will be only realities, and we are a party of realities. Only we can give a real appraisal to the workers of what is happening. Only we must explain the situation to the working masses -- not only sociologically but as it is lived and felt by them. That is what we lack. We can give a good explanation as Marxists, but not in terms that the masses live and feel. But we will learn.

5. I received today a very interesting statistical table concerning the conflicts and strikes in France in 1936-1937. The year 1936 I will cite by months, beginning with January, quoting the figures in round numbers. In January 9,000 workers were involved in the strikes, then 12,000, 13,000, 14,000 and in June 1,830,000. Then follows 180,000, 160,000, 135,000, 66,000, 55,000, 43,000. These are the official figures, which do not

include figures for agriculture and probably diminish the number of workers on strike. The trade unions gave higher figures. But the general tendency is clear. Blum promulgated his social legislation, which is based on the two million on strike. In the second half of the year 1936, we had sit-down strikes: in June we had 9,000 plants occupied by workers, including practically all the important industries. Then we had 600 plants occupied, later 200, etc., diminishing every month until in December there were but 79 plants occupied by workers.

Blum accomplished the job: he calmed the workers by giving them some reforms, which could have been given them by any government under such conditions. But with Blum it was accomplished by compromise and betrayal. In the first month of 1937 we see that only 9,000 workers were on strike, in February 11,000, in March almost 13,000. This shows a growth, not an important one but possibly it indicates a new tendency. We don't have figures for the last months. But what we have signifies a turbulent situation socially and psychologically -- an infallible symptom of a pre-revolutionary situation. Moreover, there is the growth of the Socialist Party from 100,000 to 200,000; the C. P. from 40,000 to 300,000, and the Communist Youth from 15/20,000 to 100,000. The paper "Populaire" increased its circulation from 100,000 to 300,000; "L'Humanite" from 150,000 to 400,000.

After his effort in social legislation, Blum proclaimed a "pause." He was very tired from his effort and his need for a rest is very clearly explained by the growth of the strikes. He used that "pause" in order to stop the legislative machine. This "pause" continues until today. At the same time we have the official devaluation, unofficial inflation and a terrible rise in the cost of living. All that was gained by the victorious strikes and by social legislation is wiped out by the rise in the cost of living. The standard of living is thus lower than before Blum -- wages having gone up 25 per cent whereas costs of commodities rose 35 per cent. A new explosion is absolutely inevitable.

The tremendous machine of the S. P., the C. P. and trade unions is powerful enough to stop the movement of the masses and create a pause, but it can't annihilate the logic of the situation and the activity of the masses. Thus we will have in France a very turbulent period, especially if the inflation continues, and this is almost assured. That is why I evaluated the situation two years ago as a pre-revolutionary situation. One cannot foretell precisely, but the general direction is absolutely clear. I think that even a defeat in Spain can have a revolutionary effect in France because the workers will say: "We will not suffer another defeat." However, the question of a revolutionary party remains open. We have an organization that is capable of giving correct slogans and knows how to estimate events, but it is not a mass organization.

6. It is very difficult to see what is going on behind the scenes now, but we can assume that Germany can't have the same interests as Italy in Spain. Germany's greatest interest is to gain the friendship of Great Britain; that is the fundamental line of Hitler -- even if it has to be at the cost of Italy. The interests of Italy and Germany are absolutely not identical. Italy understands that it can't have Spain as its booty because Great

Britain will never permit it. That is why both camps came to the conclusion that they must either begin a war or come to a compromise. It is very interesting that two days ago there was a cable in the press about the coming session of the Cortes in Valencia. There are now in Valencia more and more parliamentary deputies from the Right. Mauera, for example, was in France all during the civil war and now he is returning to be a parliamentary deputy. And Pirteto, too. I believe they were sent by France and Britain in order to prepare a reconciliation. The war will be stopped in order to give the Spanish people the possibility of "self-determination" -- some fake elections will be held as a pretext for an armistice. Franco has accepted this proposition and if the armistice is realized, it would be difficult to begin the war. It would be an armistice not only for the evacuation of Italian and German troops, but in order to stop the war with fictitious elections.

7. Italy can't enter into a war with Russia. Italy is a sea animal, Russia a land animal. Germany is not ready; if she were ready, she would have attacked during the weeks of the beheading of the Red Army. The shooting of the generals created uncertainty and uncertainty is not an element that makes for strength. Germany will be ready in two or three years.

8. I had a very interesting correspondence with Andres Nin -- I will publish it. On every question the P.O.U.M. utilized the conceptions of the Bolshevik-Leninists for opportunist purposes. This is the first time I hear that they claim that it did no good calling for soviets as the workers didn't build them. As to the question of soviets -- here is its history: In 1931, at the beginning of the revolution, I wrote that I believed that it would not be advisable to begin with the slogan for soviets. During grandiose strikes, as in Russia in 1905, strike committees are built, but the workers didn't understand at that time that it was the beginning of soviets. At present the word, soviet, signifies the Soviet Government. The worker who is involved in a strike cannot understand what connection that has with a soviet. The Socialists and Anarchists would oppose it as the dictatorship of the proletariat. My opinion, therefore, was that it was necessary to create mass organizations but not to give them the name of soviets. Instead to name them juntas, a traditional Spanish name, and not so concrete as soviet. But instead there was superimposed an artificial organization, not representative of the wide masses, with delegates from the old organizations: Anarchists, 3 members; Socialists, 3; and delegates from the C.P. and the P.O.U.M. And they superimposed the same relationship in every town.

Revolution is a very dynamic process and the political sense of the masses develops to the left and the bourgeois classes to the right. During one month the situation changes rapidly. The revolution in its development sweeps away the old organizations, the old conservative parties and the trade unions. The new leadership in every plant, in every factory, is younger, more active, more courageous. The old organization becomes the greatest brake upon the revolution. It was absolutely necessary to build juntas -- or we can call them soviets; we know what we mean -- that's the only way to give the revolution a unified expression.

As to the necessity of unification, our fight with the P.O.U.M. was not over unification -- but over the question, will the policy unify the bourgeoisie or the new creative elements

from the proletariat? It is not a question of a mathematical unification--it is a class question, not an administrative one. How can they say that the workers didn't build soviets? They built committees everywhere and these committees took over industry. It was only a question of unifying these committees, of developing them, and there would have been the Soviet of Barcelona.

October 1, 1937

CRUX

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THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN QUESTION

(Stenog.'s note: This is a very rough draft of discussions held with Crux, and uncorrected by the participants.)

June 2, 1938.

QUESTION: What would be the tactics of the Bolshevik-Leninists in Czechoslovakia in face of the aggression from Fascist Germany? Where do these tactics differ from those pursued, for example, in Spain and China?

CRUX: Why is the question especially put for Czechoslovakia? We can ask the same about France or any other country. I believe that Czechoslovakia is a small country and in the case of war her existence would be directly threatened. But the difference between Czechoslovakia and France lies in the fact that France has colonies. It is an imperialist country. Czechoslovakia has no colonies. But this difference is only apparent. Czechoslovakia is an imperialist country in every respect. It is a highly developed country with finance capital in a leading position in a very concentrated industry, the very important war industry. This is why Czechoslovakia is a developed capitalist country, but not only that.

In Czechoslovakia we now have a population of about 15,000,000. It is not a big country. For European conditions it is a medium country. Of this 15,000,000 population there are only 6,000,000 Czechs. The official state statistics record the Czechs and Slovaks together (they are different nations). This reckoning them together is done only to give a false impression. The Slovaks numbering about 3,500,000 feel like oppressed people and fight for autonomy. Then the Germans, the Sudeten Germans, number 3,500,000, and the Hungarians almost 1,000,000. 700,000 to 800,000 are Ruthenians (really part of Russia). Then there are Polish people and Jews, but in small numbers. You see that they have 6,000,000 Czechs and 9,000,000 of different minorities who are oppressed by the Czechs -- severely oppressed. In a national and economic direction the Czechs have different privileges and during the last crisis the pressure on the minorities became terrible.

You see that if they don't have external colonies they have internal colonies and the relation arithmetically between the Czechs and the internal colonies is approximately the same as with France and her colonies, the same six to nine. Now the Stalinists wish to force these 15,000,000 people to defend democracy but they

do not speak of the fact that the Czech democracy is one of the shabiest in this epoch when all democracies have doubtful status. These national minorities under the national oppression of Czech democracy should no more defend democracy than the Algerians or Morroccans or the Hindus in their relation to England. Now if we question Czechoslovakia as a "democracy" for 6,000,000 --then for the 9,000,000 it is a machine of oppression.

These general statistics are necessary as an introduction to the political questions. In the first period with the creation of Czechoslovakia after the war, the bourgeois classes of the minority nations looked with hope toward the new Czechoslovakian state. They became patriotic. Hungarians, Germans, Ruthenians, Slovaks all became patriotic for the following reasons: first, it was more profitable to be in the camp of the victors and furthermore the situation in Germany was very bad from the point of view of the bourgeoisie. From this point we have the paradox that the German minority looked for aid not to Germany but to Prague. Secondly, the situation in Germany was very disquieting. In Hungary we even had a soviet republic in 1919 and it was not clear whether the counter revolution was stable.

That was the reason why the German bourgeoisie became Czech patriots. The bourgeois class in this respect is more flexible in that it subordinates its national sympathies and antipathies to its economic interests. It was not so with the workers. It was possible to unite the workers of different nations in Czechoslovakia only by separating the workers as a class on the basis of their class interests, that is, on the basis of revolutionary policy, which meant irreconcilable opposition to the state. This was the only possibility in order to have a united proletariat in Czechoslovakia. But thanks to the national petty bourgeois prejudices and false policies determined by these prejudices and the interests of the workers' higher strata, the proletarian party was divided into national camps. We have had a Czech social democracy, a German social democracy, German trade unions and Czech trade unions. Then these trade unions were divided by the Czechs to correspond to different political parties, but that is a secondary element of the whole picture.

Now the situation has changed since the conquest of power by Hitler. Germany became a solid, strong state with a population of 68,000,000 or so and the German bourgeoisie of Czechoslovakia, oppressed to a certain degree, began to put its hopes and its patriotism not in Prague but in Berlin. The reasons for this are entirely clear. It is a large arena for capitalist development; it is German, the same language, the same language, no national oppression; a surer existence. It is a stronger state. But what is very important is that this turn of German capital to Germany attracted the German petty bourgeoisie and not only the petty bourgeoisie but also German workers and German social democrats. Why? Because the German workers can hope for nothing in Czechoslovakia. They see that the dominant bourgeoisie is supported by the Czech trade unions. They are democratic (patriotic) and the German workers, who are oppressed doubly as a class and as a nationality, cannot become Czech patriots.

Moreover in Czechoslovakia there is no longer a revolutionary party because the Stalinists also are patriots. They say to the 9,000,000: "You must support the Czech government." They can

deceive the Czech workers but it is not so easy with the German workers. By this democratic-patriotic policy, they, like the social democrats of the Second International, transformed the German population into cannon fodder for fascism and we see in the latest cables that Henlein has had the greatest success in the elections. He fully dominates the Germans. It is a classical example of the fact that the People's Front policy brings about fascism. Not only the Sudeten workers but the lower classes of the cities could be won against the state, but People's Front democracy-patriotism divides the workers according to national lines and transforms them into cannon fodder. That is the situation in Czechoslovakia.

Now in time of peace as in time of war, what must be the policy of the proletarian party? Naturally irreconcilable opposition to the state, the bourgeoisie and to advance the slogan that the main enemy is in our own country - the ruling class. One can say that this policy would help Hitler. The same could be said of France or any other country. But Czechoslovakia is even now a prisoner of Hitler. On the map, since the Anschluss, Germany forms a pincers upon Czechoslovakia. She has no access to her allies to the west, and is a country which must import food, wheat, etc. It is a country which, from the military point of view, is doomed to catastrophe. Czechoslovakia can be saved only through a revolution in Europe including Czechoslovakia and Germany. If we can theoretically accept the defeatist position of the working class the working class can serve the military purposes of Hitler. It can add to his advantage at first. But that is a question only of the military map. It is a question not only as to where the military lines will be formed during the war but it is a matter of the fate of nations and peoples.

Czechoslovakia can be saved from fascism only by revolution and revolution can be provoked in Germany only by the revolutionary attitude of workers in other countries, because the strength of Hitler consists in this that "we were vanquished", "we have no colonies", "we are the oppressed country", "in all other countries the workers support the bourgeoisie". In Czechoslovakia the People's Front policy furnished Henlein with his army. The People's Front policy in France and in Czechoslovakia is the best service which can be rendered Hitler. If we had a revolutionary party it would sap the ideology of the fascists insofar as it could affect the workers. On the other hand, a revolutionary policy has a contagious nature. Imagine in Czechoslovakia that we have a revolutionary policy and that it leads to the conquest of power. It would be 100 times more dangerous to Hitler than patriotic support of Czechoslovakia. That is why it is absolutely obligatory that our comrades follow a defeatist policy.

In China we do not have an imperialist country but a backward country which is being changed into a colonial country by Japan. (I forgot to add that Czechoslovakia is a partner of a world corporation of imperialist countries. If it doesn't have colonies, it has loans from Britain. These loans are possible because of Britain's colonies; likewise with military support from France. It is a link in the imperialist chain.) China is an isolated country and with the imperialists it is only a question of China's division. There is no analogy between China and Spain.

In Spain we have a civil war between two groups of the bourgeoisie. Because the workers do not have an independent policy we see the victory of fascism. It is a civil war in one capitalist

country. It is a different kind of situation. It is important in this respect that on the internal scale of a state there can be a fight between two parts of the ruling class as to what form of rule is best. But whether in the fascist or democratic form they exploit the people. In this sense it is a fight between fascism and democracy. But when two countries enter into war with international complications, it can never be a war between democracy and fascism. The war is always for colonies, etc. That is why it is absolutely stupid to say that Czechoslovakia would enter into war to save democracy. If Czechoslovakia is victorious it is likely that the military clique will dominate the oppressed minorities which would become very rebellious during the war. It can be victorious only as an absolutist military machine.

For Czechoslovakia what is important is not its economic-political-military salvation. What shall be the slogan? The United Socialist States of Europe. For Czechoslovakia this is a burning question. The United Socialist States of Europe can be organized only by an independent working class policy and that independent working class policy cannot support the bourgeoisie.

QUESTION: What should be the policy of the Bolshevik-Leninists when the government sent troops to the German region? Would a revolutionary party fight against it?

CRUX: It is a question of practical possibilities. If we can do it, if we have the strength, of course we fight against sending troops into the German region.

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"FOR" THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL? NO! THE FOURTH  
INTERNA TIONAL!

Dear Comrade,

The proclaiming of the Fourth International seems "prema-  
ture" to you. You consider that it is more "modest" and more  
accurate to retain the name, "Movement for the Fourth Inter-  
national". I cannot agree with this at all. This name seemed  
pedantic, unfitting and slightly ridiculous to me even two  
years ago when it was first adopted. The experience of the  
last two years has fully proved it a mistake. The best proof  
lies in the fact that it has not been accepted at all. No one  
calls us by this name. The bourgeois press, the Comintern,  
Social-Democrats, all speak in one voice simply of the Fourth  
International. No one sees the little word "for". Our own  
organizations with minor exceptions act likewise, calling them-  
selves sections of the Fourth International. This is so, in  
any case, with the French, the Germans, the Russians, the  
Americans, the Mexicans, the Cubans and others. Only  
Sneevliet and Vereecken have fashioned their banner out of the  
little word "for". But this very fact best emphasizes the  
mistake in the old name, a name which to the overwhelming  
majority proved absolutely impracticable.

You are completely in accord with me that the Fourth  
International is being built only by us, that no other group-  
ing is capable of fulfilling or will undertake the fulfilling  
of this task. On the other hand, I least of all am inclined  
to close my eyes to the fact that our International is still  
young and weak. But this is no reason for renouncing our  
name. In civilized societies a person carries one and the  
same name in childhood, in adulthood, and in old age and this  
name merges with his individuality.

To you the little word "for" seems an expression of  
political "modesty". To me it seems an expression of in-  
decision and lack of self-confidence. A revolutionary party  
that is not sure of its own significance cannot gain the con-  
fidence of the masses. The circumstance that class enemies  
as well as wide circles of workers already refer to us as the  
Fourth International, shows that they have more confidence in  
this "firm" than some of the sceptics or semi-sceptics in our  
own ranks.

It seems to you that the name Fourth International will  
prevent sympathetic or semi-sympathetic organizations  
from approaching us. This is radically wrong. We can attract  
others to us only by correct and clear policy. And for this  
we must have an organization and not a nebulous blot. Our  
national organizations call themselves parties or leagues.  
Here too, it could be said that the "proclaiming" of a  
Revolutionary-Socialist Party in Belgium makes it more  
difficult for sympathetic or semi-sympathetic groupings to  
approach us. If the principle of "modesty" is to be observed,  
our Belgian party, for instance, should have been called,

"the movement for a Revolutionary-Socialist Party." But I think that even Comrade Vereecken would not agree to such a ridiculous name! Why then in our international organization should we apply principles different from those in our national organizations? It is unworthy of a Marxist to have two standards: one for national politics and the other -- for international.

No doubt in Belgium, as in any other country, groups could arise sympathetic to us but who are not yet ready today to enter formally into our ranks. We must be ready to establish friendly relations with them, and if they wish, to include them within the framework of the Fourth International on the basis of sympathetic organizations, that is, with a consultative vote.

You point to the fact that we have not as yet made a theoretical analysis of the latest stage of imperialism, etc. But if this is an argument against "proclaiming" the Fourth International, it is no less an argument against the existence of national parties. Again two standards! But the Fourth International as a whole is undoubtedly much better equipped theoretically and to a much greater degree assured against vacillations than any of the national sections separately.

The relation between theory and practice bears not a one-sided but a two-sided, that is, dialectic character. We are sufficiently equipped theoretically for action; at any rate much better than any other organization. Our action will push our theoretic work forward, will arouse and attract new theoreticians, etc. The Fourth International will never spring from our hands ready made like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. It will grow and develop in theory as well as in action.

Let me remind you that the Communist League was created by Marx-Engels before they wrote the Communist Manifesto. That the first International was created before the appearance of the first volume of Capital. The Second International-- before the publication of all the volumes of Capital. The Third International existed during its best period without a finished program, etc.

The historic process does not wait for "final," "finished," "exhausting" Marxian research. We had to take a position on the Spanish revolution without awaiting Marxist studies on Spain. The war will demand an answer from us irrespective of the fact as to whether or not our theoreticians have issued one, two, or three volumes of research work. Just as war cannot be postponed until the discovery of the most perfected weapon, so the revolution and the Fourth International cannot be postponed until the appearance of the most perfected theoretic work. Theory is very important. But pedantic fetishism of theory is good for nothing.

The paradox lies in the fact that those who call themselves "for the Fourth International" in reality carry on an ever-sharpening struggle against the Fourth International.

In the example of Sneevliet this is not clear. He is "for" the P.O.U.M. and "for" the London Bureau and in order to retain his equilibrium he is, in addition, "for" the Fourth International. We have no need for such confusion. The policy of Sneevliet only compromises the Fourth International in Holland as well as internationally. In Spain Sneevliet's policy took the form of direct strike-breaking at the most critical moment. And all this is covered up by the little word "for"! Vereecken's policy is only 51% of Sneevliet's policy. The question stands not very much different with Maslov. All of them are "for". In reality they all carry on a struggle against the basic principles of the Fourth International, furtively looking to the right and to the left in search of such allies as can help them overthrow these principles. We cannot permit this at all. We must devote the greatest attention to all the vacillating and immature working class groupings that are developing in our direction. But we cannot make principled concessions to sectarian-centrist leaders who want to recognize neither our international organization nor discipline.

"That means you want a monolithic international?" someone will say in holy fear. No, least of all that, I will reply calmly to this suspicion. The entire history of the Fourth International and of each of its sections shows a constant, uninterrupted and free struggle of points of view and tendencies. But as our experience testifies, this struggle retains a sane character only when its participants consider themselves members of one and the same national and international organization which has its program and its constitution. We can, on the other hand, carry on a comradely discussion with groups who stand outside of our organization. But as the experience with Sneevliet and Vereecken indicates, the discussion inevitably assumes a poisoned character when some leaders stand with one foot in our organization, the other -- outside of it. To allow the development of such a regime would be suicidal.

Because of all these considerations I stand completely for calling ourselves as we are called by the workers and by class enemies, that is, the Fourth International!

Coyoacan, D. F.  
May 31, 1938

L. Trotsky