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**AGAINST
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REVISIONISM**

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Against Pabloist Revisionism

This document, adopted by the 25th Anniversary Plenum of the Socialist Workers Party, November 1953, is submitted as a contribution for international discussion among Trotskyists.

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The draft resolution of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International on "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism" sets out to bring up-to-date the Trotskyist appraisal of the Soviet Union, the Kremlin bureaucracy and the Stalinist world movement especially in the light of the events following Stalin's death. However, its method of analysis misrepresents the real state of affairs and leads to political conclusions diverging from traditional Trotskyist views.

I. Three Periods of the World Revolution

This can be seen, first of all, in its manner of breaking up world historical developments since 1917 into three main periods: the period of revolutionary rise from 1917 to 1923; the period of revolutionary ebb from 1923-43; and the period of revolutionary resurgence on a higher level since 1943. This division provides the fundamental framework for the resolution and serves as the starting point for a revision of our conceptions on the nature and role of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

According to the resolution, the third period has created a relationship of class forces on a world scale and in the Soviet Union which requires a new appraisal and approach to Stalinism. This period has already had two phases. The years from 1943 to 1947 represent a transition from the second to the third period, partaking of the features of both.

This was the time when the Soviet bureaucracy appeared to reach the peak of its power. The world revolutionary rise was still not powerful enough to permit the bypassing and engulfing of Stalinism. The Kremlin and its agencies were able to restrict and control the revolution, except for Yugoslavia. The deals with imperialism, the right turns, the betrayal of the revolution continued the former era; the Yugoslav revolution prefigured the new.

But since 1947 the old equilibria have been definitively broken and cannot be regained. The new international revolutionary rise disrupted the equilibrium between the world working class and imperialism. The aggravation of the crisis of the capitalist system and the

crushing supremacy of American imperialism has upset the equilibrium between the different imperialist powers. These international changes combined with the domestic changes have broken the equilibrium of social forces in the Soviet Union and undermined the objective foundations of the ruling caste.

The victory of the Chinese revolution marked the turning point in this world transformation and ushered in a new and higher stage, "basically marked by a relation of international forces favorable to the revolution and evolving on a global scale more and more favorably for the revolution. The revolutionary wave spreads from country to country, from continent to continent. It has recently reached the Soviet Union itself and the buffer zone." (p. 33)

This revolutionary wave of global dimensions and unlimited duration, will continue to mount higher, despite minor refluxes, up to the war. The war itself "will coincide not with an ebb but with a new leap forward of the world revolution." (p. 19) This will continue until

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the end of the Third World War. Nothing can long withstand this all-engulfing revolutionary torrent. It will sweep all established forces into its vortex; both imperialism and Stalinism will crack up and perish in the process. The victory of the world revolution is henceforth assured. Such is the line of development projected in the resolution.

If this is really so, it will have to be recognized that we have entered upon a qualitatively different epoch in which all previous political values would have to be re-evaluated. The political ideas, revolutionary strategy and organizational perspectives of the vanguard, would have to be revised to bring them into line with the qualitatively transformed world reality and its main trends of development.

II. Changes in Stalinism

The resolution undertakes to do this in connection with Stalinism and draws some extremely far-reaching conclusions in respect to it. Let us summarize them.

The fundamental historical, world and national conditions for Stalinism have disappeared. It has irretrievably entered upon its period of decline.

1. The dynamic of the world relationship of forces evolving favorably to the revolution has now struck the Soviet Union, undermined the positions of the bureaucracy, upset its stability and already promoted the disintegration of Stalinism in a number of unforeseen ways.

2. "The objective foundations of the dictatorship are in the process of rapidly disappearing." The relationship of forces between the Bonapartist bureaucracy and the masses is shifting in favor of the latter. The pressures exerted by these changing conditions and by the demands of the masses is more and more determining the Kremlin's course and policies.

3. The post-Stalin regime is no longer able to rule as before; it is instead obliged to liberalize itself and make more and more concessions to save its rule. This tends toward the liquidation of the heritage of Stalinism.

4. These developments release centrifugal forces which differentiate and split up the ruling caste.

5. The changes in the Soviet Union since Stalin's death constitute the relaxation of the Kremlin's brake upon the Communist parties. Its tight hold over the buffer countries and upon the Communist parties in capitalist countries is being loosened. These are developing new relations with the Kremlin in the direction of greater independence from it while oppositional ideas and anti-Stalinist tendencies more and more manifest themselves.

6. "Caught between the imperialist threat and the colonial revolution, the Soviet bureaucracy found itself obliged to ally itself with the second against the first." This enforced alliance with the colonial revolution is mediated through Mao's regime with whom it must share direction of Asian Communism.

7. The Kremlin is less and less able to conclude deals with imperialism at the expense of the revolution. Its room for maneuvers with imperialism and against the

revolution is diminishing all the time. "This new situation restricts more and more the capacity of counter-revolutionary maneuvers by the bureaucracy." Not only are its capacities for sell-outs decreasing, despite its intentions, but the practical effects of its diplomatic maneuvers and Popular-Front experiments with certain sections of the colonial bourgeoisie are more and more restricted and ephemeral. Moreover, "the revolutionary tide which the Soviet bureaucracy is no longer capable of smashing and arresting is even being nourished by the methods of self-defense applied by the bureaucracy . . ." (p. 20)

8. The Kremlin's capacity for repressive measures likewise grows more restricted. It is less able to proceed to repressions and purges at home, or to stamp out opposition in the buffer countries, because of the drastic shift in the relation of forces.

9. Just as the bureaucracy must liberalize its dictatorship, so the Communist parties, despite right oscillations here and there and now and then, tend to radicalize their policies. This is the dominant tendency. In countries where the CP's are a majority in the working class, they can under pressure of the masses be led to project a revolutionary orientation counter to the Kremlin's directives.

III. To What Degree Have the Fundamental Conditions for Stalinism Disappeared?

To arrive at these far-reaching conclusions on Stalinism the resolution has to present a picture of the world situation which is not in accord with reality and to take partial and limited changes for decisive and fundamental ones. Thus the resolution states on page 3: "The fundamental conditions under which the Soviet bureaucracy developed, namely, the ebb of the revolution, the isolation of the Soviet Union, and the backward conditions of its economy — these conditions have disappeared."

Let us examine the post-war world and see to what degree these sweeping assertions conform to the real state of affairs. We are here dealing with matters of fact. Let us analyze each one of these three fundamental conditions to see to what extent they have vanished.

I. The Development of the World Revolution

The international revolution has undoubtedly experienced a considerable resurgence since 1943. The Second World War generated a revolutionary wave of greater scope, intensity and persistence than the First World War. The Soviet victory over Nazism, the revolutionary victories in Yugoslavia and China, the extension of nationalized property into the buffer states by bureaucratic-military means, the spread of the colonial revolution have all dealt hard blows to world capitalism and enormously strengthened the anti-capitalist camp.

However, this trend in the world situation has been combined and criss-crossed with another. The immense

revolutionary movement which has produced such transformations in Eastern and Central Europe and in Asia, came to grief in Western Europe during this very same period. The Soviet bureaucracy was chiefly responsible for this reversal and betrayal of the European revolution.

This has generated a series of opposite effects in the unfoldment of the world revolution. The proletarian offensive was curbed, the working class became weaker, Western European capitalism was rescued, and became relatively stabilized for a period of years. This has enabled the imperialist counter-revolution directed by the U.S. to take hold of these countries and use them as drill grounds and springboards for its war preparations and prospective attacks upon the anti-capitalist countries and revolutionary forces.

Thus the revolutionary process since World War II has experienced an uneven and contradictory development. While the revolution moved forward in a number of backward countries, triumphed in Yugoslavia and China, it has undergone set-backs in a number of the more advanced countries. The victories for the revolution represent gains for the working class and oppressed peoples. But they must be considered in connection with the recession of the revolution in Western Europe and its effects in order to arrive at a more balanced and accurate reckoning of the progress of the revolution.

Had the revolution succeeded in one or more of the highly developed industrial countries, from Germany to Italy, along with these victories in certain backward countries, that would have sealed the fate of capitalism in Europe and Asia and pressed the Soviet bureaucracy to the wall.

The Kremlin is well aware of the threat to its dominance implicit in the European revolution. That motivated its efforts to block and crush that development which continues up to this very day (French General Strike).

The prevention of an independent socialist workers power arising in Western Europe is an indispensable condition for preserving the rule of the Soviet bureaucracy. The Kremlin can, up to a certain point, tolerate and maneuver with revolutions in the colonies and the backward countries. But it dreads the extension of the proletarian revolution into Western Europe because that means the sentence of death for it.

A rounded review and realistic resume of the net result of the march of the international revolution from 1943 to 1953 leads to this conclusion. With all its great achievements and greater potentialities the failure of the revolution to conquer in one of the major industrialized countries has thus far prevented the revolutionary forces of the working class from growing strong enough to overwhelm the Kremlin oligarchy and give irresistible impetus to the disintegration of Stalinism. There has not yet been such a qualitative alteration in the world relationship of class forces.

Up to date the counter-revolutionary intervention of the bureaucracy itself in world politics has forestalled the objective conditions for such a consummation. It caused

the revolution to recede in Western Europe, weakened the working class in relation to its class enemy, and facilitated the mobilization of the world counter-revolution. The struggle between the forces of revolution and counter-revolution is still inconclusive, and far from being settled. This very inconclusiveness, which it strives to maintain, at the present time works to the advantage of the Kremlin.

2. The Isolation of the Soviet Union

This first factor is directly connected with the second: the encirclement of the Soviet Union by world imperialism. The post-war development certainly succeeded in loosening and unsettling the imperialist encirclement to a certain extent and breaking through the previous tight isolation of the Soviet Union. The linking together of the countries from the Elbe to the Pacific, however much they may be bureaucratically governed and oppressed, is a strong bulwark to the USSR. The anti-capitalist states now embrace one-third of mankind but they confront a combine of imperialist powers centralized under U.S. hegemony being openly mobilized against them.

The failure of the revolution to break through to victory in Western Europe, which would have radically altered the balance of class forces throughout Europe and Asia, has permitted imperialism to reassert its encirclement and intensify its pressures against the Soviet Union on all planes.

This isolation is felt in the economic, political and military fields in varying degrees.

Despite all their achievements, the industrial capacities of the states in the Soviet bloc is far below that of the capitalist states. This unfavorable balance could be rectified only with the inclusion of the industrial complex of Western Europe. But this is now cut off in large part by the economic blockade which is an element in the isolation of the S.U.

The moves being made by the Kremlin to curry favor with the bourgeois governments of France and Italy, and its maneuvers around the German question, testify to its attempts to overcome its isolation.

Instead of attracting workers in the advanced countries, the Kremlin's policy helps to repel them and thus aggravates the social isolation of the S.U. from the class forces which alone can guarantee its defense.

Finally, the U.S. is engaged in forging a military ring around the periphery of the Kremlin-dominated territories, and exerts unremitting pressures from all directions upon it.

The Soviet bureaucracy must reckon with this at all times both in its domestic and foreign policies. The looming menace of A and H bomb attack determines its plan of production. This takes first place in the strategic plans of the Soviet General Staff. The menace of imperialist encirclement and aggression determines the policies of those Communist parties under the Kremlin's control.

Before the last World War the Soviet bureaucracy could and did maneuver between two opposing blocs of

imperialist powers. Today its capacity to exploit the inter-imperialist contradictions is extremely restricted. The Soviet Union won in the Second World War through an alliance with the strongest sector of world imperialism. In a new war the Soviet Union, its satellites and China would have to fight against a coalition of all the imperialist states.

How, then, can it be so unqualifiedly asserted in the resolution that the isolation of the S.U. has disappeared? The isolation has been modified and mitigated, but not at all removed. The pressures of the imperialist environment weigh upon the entire life of the Soviet peoples. The Soviet workers, with memories still fresh of the last war, fear the outbreak of a new one. This is still a potent factor in restraining them from open conflict with the bureaucracy for fear of aiding imperialism. Thus, the very encirclement of the S.U. which the policies of the Kremlin serve to sustain, and even augment, remains one of the factors in maintaining its grip upon power.

3. The Development of Soviet Economy

Marked advances have been made in Soviet economy, especially since 1947. However these have been extremely uneven. Agriculture lags far behind industry, far behind the needs of the mass of the Soviet people.

Soviet advances have led to an improvement in the living conditions of its citizens, especially in urban centers. They have still greater hopes and expectations of betterment in their material conditions, which the post-Stalin regime has had to take into account. The new rulers have made certain concessions in the sphere of consumption and promised still more.

But the question at issue is this: has there been so drastic a change in the Soviet economy as to eliminate the objective material basis for the bureaucracy? That would entail the production of consumers' goods and food in sufficient abundance to guarantee necessities to everyone, satisfy the demands of the working people, and thus eliminate any need for bureaucratic arbiters to decide the distribution of the available products.

Has Soviet economy, with all its indubitable successes, reached that point, or even approached it? The citing of general production figures and their global comparison with those of other countries will not help here. The decisive point is not how much more is being produced than before, but is enough being produced now to take care of the basic demands of the people?

The facts are that the rise in the economy has sufficed to provide a minimum for most workers, to eliminate famine conditions, and ease some economic tensions in the sphere of consumption. But side by side with the general improvement, there have been considerable increases in consumption for the more favored layers. From the aristocrats of labor up to the tops of the bureaucracy there is an inclination to grasp for more. Malenkov is compelled to give a bit more bread and other articles to the masses. But at the same time the Kremlin makes sure to provide more new cars, refrigerators, television sets; etc.

which are exclusively within the reach of the upper layers of Soviet society.

All this accentuates the contradiction between the rulers and the ruled, heightens social inequalities, and makes the situation more intolerable to the workers. There is a sharpening conflict between the working class growing in numbers and skills and the bureaucratic guardians of privilege.

The economic and cultural backwardness is in the process of being overcome. But to assert that this has already taken place is to falsify the real state of Soviet economy today.

This does not at all mean that the bureaucracy can or will perpetuate itself in power indefinitely. That depends upon further developments of the world revolution which can definitively remove the hostile pressures of world imperialism, and not simply temporarily ease them, and overcome the scarcity of consumers goods by placing the industrial resources of more advanced countries at the disposal of Soviet economy. It depends even more upon the development of the deepening conflict between the bureaucracy and the masses. The Soviet people will not wait for the elimination of the economic roots of the totalitarian bureaucracy in order to embark upon a mortal struggle against it. As Trotsky pointed out, the social conflict can explode into political revolution as a result of the intensification of antagonisms to the boiling point. "Economic contradictions produce social antagonisms, which in turn develop their own logic, not awaiting the further growth of the productive forces." (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 48).

Thus a sober analysis of the world situation and its development during the past decade discloses that the three major objective factors responsible for the rise of the Soviet bureaucracy have not been changed in a fundamental sense but only to a certain extent. The Kremlin bureaucracy has to operate today under new but not decisively different circumstances. Its further life-span will depend upon the struggle of the living forces in the world arena and in the Soviet Union over the next period and the emergence in this struggle of a Trotskyist party capable of leading the Soviet masses in insurrection against the ruling caste.

IV. The New Relations and Role of the Soviet Bureaucracy

Proceeding from its wrong and one-sided estimation of the fundamental conditions in which the bureaucracy finds itself, the resolution says that the bureaucracy has acquired such new relations with imperialism, the world working class, the colonial revolution, the buffer countries and its own people that these substantially change its policies and activities and their results. The Soviet bureaucracy is objectively playing a different role than in its past.

a. The Kremlin, Imperialism and the World Revolution

This is purportedly to be seen in respect to imperial-

ism. The resolution correctly affirms that "the global balance of the Soviet bureaucracy's international policy is a reformist one, because the bureaucracy aims not to overthrow world capitalism, but simply to maintain the framework of the status quo." It has played this role of an agency of imperialism not only from 1923 to 1943 but from 1943 to the present. "It is more correct than ever to say today that the domination of imperialism subsists over half of the globe only thanks' to the role played by the bureaucracy and its agencies."

However, the resolution contends, the victory of the Chinese revolution "marked the opening of a new phase in the world situation in which the Soviet bureaucracy finds itself." (p. 10) This new situation has the following features. It "restricts more and more the capacity of counter-revolutionary maneuvers by the bureaucracy." And "the practical effects of these attempts (to utilize the inter-imperialist contradictions, to gain the support of certain bourgeoisies in colonial and semi-colonial countries, to arrive at a temporary and partial agreement with imperialism) become more and more limited and ephemeral . . ."

The actual relations between the bureaucracy and imperialism are highly contradictory. On one hand, the Kremlin has to take the necessary measures to safeguard its own positions and domain from imperialist penetration, aggressions and attack.

But the policies and methods it employs to achieve this end serve to aid imperialism and weaken and discourage the working masses, thereby undermining the defense of the anti-capitalist countries and the Soviet Union.

Neither the counter-revolutionary imperialist nor the revolutionary forces fundamentally aim to preserve the existing state of affairs. Both of these irreconcilable antagonists, for opposing reasons, are driving toward a showdown which brings them into ever sharper collision.

Moscow comes forward in this contest of class forces as the foremost defender of the international status quo, and therewith a key conservatizing factor in the world situation. It does not aim to aid the revolution or to overthrow imperialist rule. It is anxious to maintain the present division of the world between its own power and that of imperialism and to arrive at a new deal on that basis.

This is consciously formulated in the conception of "peaceful co-existence between socialism and capitalism" repeated by the new Kremlin leaders and echoed by the Stalinist parties. This is more than a theory; it provides the main guiding line of an active policy which predominates the diplomacy of the Kremlin and the conduct of its agencies.

The Kremlin exerts its utmost influence to preserve even the prevailing cold war status quo as a lesser evil. It aims to uphold this by acting simultaneously on two fronts: against further aggression by imperialists on the one side and against any disruption of the present equilibrium by eruptions and expansion of the revolutionary movement. For fear of provoking retaliation from imperialism and becoming involved directly in war, the bureaucracy will hamstring revolutions and permit them

to bleed to death. The cases of North Korea, Iran, and Malaya are instructive in this respect.

Moscow gave the North Koreans supplies enough to drag out the war but not enough to win, even when its armies were sweeping the invaders toward the sea. Whereas Washington did not hesitate to intervene with full force and openly in Korea, Moscow stayed discreetly within its own preserve. Then when MacArthur approached the Yalu, the Chinese were forced to enter the war even though they had just come out of a prolonged civil war. The narrow caste interests and protective fears of the Soviet rulers obliged the Asian revolutionists to bear the brunt of the anti-imperialist fight.

As the pressures from imperialism mount, the Kremlin's disposition is to gain time for itself at the expense of the world working class and the struggles of the colonial peoples. This explains the conduct of the Tudeh Party in Iran which refrained from launching a fight for power at the peak of its mass support and thereby permitted the military coup d'etat which overthrew Mossadeq and restored the Shah. The Kremlin's anxiety to prevent the upsetting of the equilibrium in this sensitive spot and avert the risk of precipitating war accounted for this triumph of the counter-revolution in Iran.

The supposition that the cold war between Western imperialism and the Soviet Union plus the mounting pressures of the mass movement restrains or prevents the bureaucracy from committing deadly treachery is not confirmed by recent events. Quite the contrary. The French CP's behavior in the August 1953 General Strike shows how the Kremlin's agents will let a revolutionary opportunity pass by and ruin it. The Kremlin can stab the workers in the back, not only when it is in open alliance with the imperialists, but also when it is seeking an alliance with them. The treachery may be more devious but its effects are as real and disastrous.

The inevitable outcome of all this maneuvering with imperialism and against the revolution will be the same as before the Second World War. The maneuvers will not avert the war. But the imperialists will be helped to strengthen their positions and make advances while the revolution is crippled and the workers are thrust back and disoriented. Unless the workers in the advanced capitalist countries undertake a revolutionary offensive of powerful proportions, the imperialists will be enabled to unleash the war at a time and under conditions most advantageous for them.

The bureaucracy hates and fears the world revolution and strives to head it off, restrict, control, subvert and strangle it. But it is not omnipotent. It cannot do what it wants, in the way it wants, when it wants.

But this does not mean that the Kremlin has abated its hostility toward the world revolution or altered its treacherous attitude toward it. This can be seen even in the victories of the revolution in Yugoslavia and China. These occurred against the Kremlin's advice and in defiance of it. The Kremlin was obliged to accommodate itself to the accomplished fact.

The limits to this accommodation depend upon how closely the development of the revolutions touches its most vital interests. The Kremlin went along with the Yugoslav revolution up to the point where Yugoslav influence over the Balkan countries threatened to create an alternative pole of attraction. Then the Kremlin turned mercilessly upon it.

To what degree can it be maintained, as the resolution does, that the Kremlin is now obliged to ally itself with the colonial revolution against imperialism? It has had to back up China and North Korea up to a point. The victories for the revolution in Asia have so far been no direct threat to the Kremlin's domination, even though it has had to acquiesce in the co-direction of the Asian Communist movement with Mao. On the whole they have worked to the immediate advantage of the Kremlin. China has broken the imperialist encirclement in the Far East and kept the U.S. forces tangled in the Korean war. This drained China and tied up the United States at minimum cost to Moscow.

So long as the Kremlin can use this or that sector of the colonial movement for its own ends, it will do so. But it remains a very perfidious ally in the best circumstances. It has already been pointed out that it deliberately withheld military deliveries that could enable the North Koreans to win. The current seven-year civil war in Indo-China stems back to the Stalinist coalition politics in 1945-46 which handed French imperialism the positions for fighting the national independence movement. Most recently, the Kremlin sabotaged the revolution in Iran.

It is true that world conditions militate against the Kremlin's consummation of any lasting deals with imperialism or its bargains with the national bourgeoisie. But the objective consequences of its attempts to maintain the status quo or arrive at such agreements have much more than "limited and ephemeral" practical effects. Its maneuvers help block the advance of the revolutionary movement and adversely affect the world relationship of forces.

The bureaucracy together with its agencies is not simply a passive reflector and acted-upon object of the world relationship of forces; the bureaucracy acts and reacts on the international arena as a potent factor in shaping the latter. For example, the Kremlin's whole postwar policy toward Germany, the key country in Europe (its participation in the division, its regime over East Germany, its diplomatic maneuvers regarding West Germany), aid capitalist reaction and facilitate the imperialist objectives. Can the effects of its attitude toward this one country be classified as "limited" and "ephemeral" whether these are assessed from the angle of the European revolution, the German workers, the march toward war or the defense of the anti-capitalist states?

Not only is the vanguard miseducated by this minimizing of the pernicious results of the Kremlin's course but it is disarmed in the struggle to dispel illusions about Stalinism among the workers in order to break them from Stalinist influence.

The resolution says on page 20: "the revolutionary tide which the Soviet bureaucracy is no longer capable of smashing and arresting is even being nourished by the methods of self-defense applied by the bureaucracy..." Both parts of this statement are one-sided and misleading. The fact that the Soviet bureaucracy couldn't "smash and arrest" the Yugoslav and Chinese revolutions where the revolutionary tide broke through its dikes, doesn't wipe out the fact that elsewhere, by and large, the bureaucracy succeeded in turning the revolutionary tide in the opposite direction. This has influenced the relationship of forces for an entire period.

Nor do its "methods of self-defense" necessarily "nourish" "the revolutionary tide," even where the revolution has come to power. The Kremlin's "methods of self-defense" drove Yugoslavia into the embrace of imperialism and has made China more and more dependent economically upon it. It is not clear just what is specifically meant by "methods of self-defense" which can nourish the revolutionary tide. Does that refer to supplying arms to China and North Korea? Or to its action in defense of the Soviet Union in case of attack? But even in these instances "its methods of self-defense" do not in all respects coincide with the self-defense of the workers' movement and can even go counter to it.

We have always recognized that when the bureaucracy defends the Soviet Union against imperialist attack, it can under certain conditions give an impulsion to revolutionary struggles in capitalist countries. It will be obliged to do this still more in the event of the Third World War. But now when it is seeking a modus vivendi with imperialism or trying to create rifts amongst the capitalist nations, its "methods of self-defense" do far more to drain than to swell the revolutionary wave.

In several places there is the implication that the bureaucracy, faced with the war-danger, will have to be more tolerant of independent revolutionary developments and refrain from proceeding against them. For example, the resolution says that the Kremlin's preparations for World War II "was accompanied by a halt of mass purges." Actually, the purges were part of Stalin's preparations for war. He aimed to eliminate all potential centers of opposition to the regime. The beheading of the Soviet General Staff, which led to the military fiasco in Finland, showed to what lengths the bureaucracy can go in preventive measures against even potentially independent forces precisely when war loomed.

Later, the resolution attempts to explain the campaign against Yugoslavia on the ground that "it was above all able to indulge in such a counter-revolutionary attitude because the preparations for the capitalist war were only in their preliminary stages . . ." etc. This will not hold water. The break took place at a time of high tension between the USSR and the capitalist world. But the overriding caste interests of the Kremlin took precedence over the practical need of defending the USSR although that meant alienating the one country with morale and armed forces reliable and powerful enough to furnish genuine aid for that purpose.

b. The Significance of the Events in the Soviet Union Since Stalin's Death

The Kremlin regime has been characterized by our movement as a regime of crisis. The parasitism of the bureaucratic caste continuously conflicts with the productive relations established by the October Revolution. As the product of a political counter-revolution arising from the delay of the world revolution and the backwardness of Russian economy and culture, the totalitarian bureaucracy could maintain its power only by repressive measures directed against the Soviet masses. The extension of the Kremlin's rule over the buffer zone countries, the Yugoslav and Chinese revolutions, and the growth of Soviet economy and culture have confronted the bureaucracy with many new acute problems. As a result the objective factors for a mass uprising against the bureaucratic power are ripening in the Soviet Union. The working class especially, which has grown considerably in numbers, culture, skill, and social power, is becoming impatient with insistent demands for continual exertions and sacrifices, enforced by the bureaucratic apparatus and its agencies. The privileges of the bureaucracy appear ever more monstrous, unjustified and intolerable in their eyes.

The bureaucracy is extremely sensitive to this developing danger. The new rulers face on a higher level, and under different and more difficult circumstances, the resistance and resentment of the masses against the relentless pressures exerted upon them which Stalin periodically encountered. Stalin coped with these situations not by purges alone. He resorted also to temporary relaxations and propaganda campaigns centered around promises of concessions, improved living conditions, and a happier life. As Trotsky pointed out, "Stalin is compelled from time to time to take the side of 'the people' against the bureaucracy — of course, with its tacit consent." (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 271)

Stalin's death unquestionably released a flood of hope among the people that with the death of the dictator they would get a new deal. The bureaucracy had the twofold problem of reestablishing the hierarchy of the top command, while preventing the masses from intervening in the situation with their own demands and independent actions. The inheritors of power hastened to create the impression that the masses would get a genuine new deal as a gift from the top. They promised a series of political and economic concessions: a broad amnesty, the revision of the criminal code in 30 days, no more purges, more consumers' goods, etc.

It would seem that the political concessions would be easiest to make since unlike improved living conditions, they do not require large-scale economic reorganizations. However, these have yet to materialize. There has been another large reduction in prices, the sixth since the war. But a genuine improvement in living standards first necessitates a drastic readjustment of the economy, and above all, a tremendous increase in agricultural production, which has remained stagnant for many years.

The bureaucracy is aiming to do this by raising the incentives of the individual peasant and the well-to-do members of the collectives.

At the same time the bureaucracy had to decide quickly who would assume the role of principal arbiter and purger-in-chief to remove all ambiguity on that score and forestall any moves by the masses to take advantage of fissures in the bureaucratic apparatus. This was the meaning of Beria's downfall which has been followed by a purge of his associates in the various Republics.

These developments proved that the bureaucracy cannot devise new methods of rule. It may make concessions but must maintain intact at all times the mechanism of repression which guarantees its regime. Between the totalitarian methods of bureaucracy and the democratic methods of working-class power there will be no intermediate methods of rule. A new power and new methods of rule can come into being only through forces outside the bureaucracy and in opposition to it, through the overthrow of Bonapartist rule by the masses.

The Trotskyists base their revolutionary perspectives upon the maturing contradictions between the bureaucratic set-up and the working masses which will lead the latter toward a forthright challenge to the totalitarian dictatorship. The East German events prefigure the developments within the Soviet Union in this respect. We must analyze the concessions in the light of the nature and position of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the developing contradictions within Soviet society.

The resolution, however, exaggerates the changes in the objective situation, endowing them with an automatic propulsion which obliges the bureaucracy to liberalize itself, introduce new methods of rule, liquidate the heritage of Stalinism, suppress its most hideous and characteristic features, and deliver more and more concessions.

The resolution states: "That regime (Malenkov's) can now maintain itself only by suppressing — temporarily or definitively — the most hideous aspects, that is to say, the most characteristic ones of the regime." It does not specify which one of these "hideous aspects" has been eliminated or is about to be. The privileges? The police regime? The relentless squeeze on the workers in production? The national oppression? Concentration camps? Purges? The implication is that "the terror of Stalin's epoch" is on its way out. But there were fluctuations in the application of this terror during Stalin's day too. The difference now seems to be that the diminution of terror under the Malenkov era is a growing trend, the most distinctive feature of "the decline of the Bonapartist dictatorship."

The essential liberality of the new regime is only underscored by the next prognosis that "It is not excluded that before falling, the Bonapartist dictatorship will suddenly, once again have recourse to the bloodiest terror." This signifies that terror has become not an essential but an exceptional, episodic and incidental expression of the bureaucratic rule.

To reinforce its contention that the post-Stalin regime is compelled not only to do away with the most terrible

traits of Stalinism, but to placate the masses to an ever-increasing degree, the resolution exaggerates the scope of the concessions. It refers to a broad amnesty which seems to have died a-borning since it was not mentioned at the last session of the Supreme Soviet in the decrees submitted for approval. It speaks of the revision of the penal code which was promised within 30 days and still remains to be promulgated seven months after.

The liberation of the doctors was originally interpreted as an irreparable blow to the system of frameup trials and purges. But since then Beria's purge and trial has been announced. It takes the condemnations of police arbitrariness for good coin, setting aside the fact that verbal criticism of police excesses were not unknown under Stalin. Indeed, the GPU was purged several times during Stalin's regime.

It regards the stress upon collective decision as a definitive dismissal of the cult of the chief. But this is only a transitional stage between the demise of the former chief and the elevation of a prospective replacement. During his rise to power, Stalin likewise counterposed the collectivity of the Central Committee against the "aristocrats," that is, the Bolshevik leaders most popular amongst the masses.

As we have pointed out, this does not mean that no concessions have been made or that they amount to nothing. They are largely economic in character. What Malenkov has done is to dramatize the gradual improvement in living standards since 1947 and even expedite them. But even in the sphere of consumption the Kremlin will be unable to satisfy the demands of the masses. It will give to one section of the population at the expense of another. While offering new incentives to the peasants, it does not increase the general level of workers' wages, and it takes care to increase the privileges of the bureaucracy itself.

How should the concessions be judged? Concessions are of genuine value if they open opportunities to the masses for self-action which can then be used to further their own aims. The new regime has not yet offered the slightest opening of that kind and it is not difficult to understand why. The totalitarian government cannot tolerate the least freedom of action for the workers which would weaken its stranglehold upon them.

The resolution occupies itself with dubious speculations about the centrifugal forces which are cracking the monolithism of the ruling group and generating differentiations within the party and its leading circles. It says that the monolithism of the Bonapartist type is being ruptured beyond repair under pressure from other segments of the bureaucracy and the masses. The Beria purge is adduced as evidence of this growing disunity.

There is no doubt that the death of Stalin upset the regime's stability, set a swarm of centrifugal forces into motion, and provoked a crisis which has still to be overcome. The transfer of power, in a tyranny is always a delicate operation containing dangers. Having lost its old personal center, the bureaucracy as a whole is impelled to seek, create and rally around a new one as the

principal point of support to safeguard its privileges and regulate its internal conflicts. That is the principal reason for the elevation of Malenkov and the speedy removal of Beria.

The resolution makes much of the heterogeneity of interests amongst the various layers of the bureaucracy: the material ground-work for its growing differentiation and conflicts. It refers in addition to the ageing top layer of the bureaucracy as presumably not so much concerned with increasing privileges as conserving them. This overlooks the fact that even at the top the bureaucracy steadily renews its personnel and at all levels its appetite for privileges grows with eating, especially in a country which has far from reached the living standards of the Western world.

The bureaucracy as a social layer is stratified according to its conditions of life, its positions of power, scope of privileges, etc. which give rise to jealousies, rivalries and clique contests of many kinds. But as the sole commanding and favored stratum, it is united against the bulk of the population by common bonds of material interest. It is the sole force in the Soviet Union and buffer countries which is armed and organized.

The bureaucratic caste cannot tolerate any deep divisions of policy within its ruling circles for any length of time or permit any crack in its repressive apparatus which the masses may utilize for their own purposes. It hides them and hastens to cement them as promptly as possible. Since it has no constitutional or democratic ways of resolving internal conflicts, it resorts to the method of purges. The purge is a weapon directed against the bureaucracy itself from on high as well as against the people. It is an indispensable mechanism of Bonapartist rule.

Will the purge method be more and more shelved as the liquidation of Stalinism proceeds, as the resolution implies? Apart from a vague reference to the changing relationship of forces, the resolution brings forward no evidence for this. In fact, the opposite would be indicated. If antagonisms within the bureaucracy deepen, it would seem that purges to resolve them would be in order. If opposition is growing among the people, it would seem that the commanding caste would be obliged to resort to its time-honored methods of repression. Trotsky observed that "the more the course of development goes against it, the more ruthless it becomes toward the advanced elements of the population." (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 277)

Now it appears, according to the resolution, that the more the course of development goes against it, the more lenient and conciliatory the regime must become.

The resolution revises Trotsky's basic concept of the Soviet Thermidor which viewed the Stalinist bureaucracy as representing the first stage of bourgeois restoration. The privileged caste, viewed qualitatively in the structure of Soviet society, is a bourgeois-minded formation still confined within the integument of the remaining conquests of the 1917 Revolution, nationalized property, planned economy. By its position in Soviet society, the

inherent tendency of the caste *as such* is anti-Soviet, restorationist. This orthodox Trotskyist view has been dumped by the authors of "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism." The concept of the counter-revolutionary stage of Soviet *Thermidor* has been liquidated, surviving in the document only as a vestigial phrase — a "reduced" number of *Thermidorians*, "old revolutionary militants of the pre-1917 vintage." (Section 11) As a substitute for Trotsky's basic sociological concept, we are given an impressionistic view of the psychology of the "tops of the bureaucracy," who, we are assured, "are in their majority no longer a young and rapacious social layer, striving to *conquer* privileges in the field of consumption in the midst of prevailing poverty, the majority constitutes a layer of men of mature years or heading into old age, attempting to *conserve* the best possible living standards for themselves." (Section 11) In line with this superficial view, the document sees "reflexes of capitulation and desertion to the bourgeois camp" (under the impact of "signs of proletarian awakening") confined to "very limited layers of the bureaucracy."

By dumping the orthodox Trotskyist concept of the caste as in essence representative of the tendency toward capitalist restoration, the development of which can be followed in a wealth of forms in Soviet life, the Pabloites open the road to the completely revisionist concept that the bureaucracy can right itself. This is not explicitly stated, but certain conclusions in the resolution flow from this revisionist premise. For example, that in place of the "reinforcement of restorationist tendencies within the peasantry and the bureaucracy" the opposite development "is the more likely . . ." (Section 15) The document emphasizes the new revisionist position (and also its confusion): "*The coming decisive battle within the Soviet Union will not be waged between the restorationist forces aiming to restore private property and the forces defending the conquests of October. It will be, on the contrary, waged between the forces defending the privileges and administration of the bureaucracy and the revolutionary working-class forces fighting to restore Soviet democracy upon a higher level.*" (Section 15)

In opposition to this view, which opens the road to capitulation to the bureaucracy, we emphasize the orthodox Trotskyist position: *The coming decisive battle within the Soviet Union will be waged between the restorationist tendencies in the country represented by the Stalinist bureaucracy as such and the regenerative tendency represented by the revolutionary working-class forces. On one side will appear the bulk of the bureaucracy, defending its privileges and police rule and thereby the tendency to restore private property; on the other, the proletarian vanguard leading a political revolution that will sweep out the usurping bureaucracy, restore Soviet democracy upon a higher level, and thereby directly align the Soviet regime once again with the world socialist revolution.*

The proposition that no significant segment of the bureaucracy will align itself with the masses against its own material interests does not mean that the bureaucracy

would not manifest deep cleavages under the impact of an uprising. Such disorganization, disintegration and demoralization was observable in East Germany. But the function of a revolutionary policy is to organize, mobilize and help lead the masses in their struggles, not to look for and even less to bank upon any breaks in the bureaucracy.

In its whole treatment of the events since Stalin's death and the new course of the Malenkov regime, the resolution lays down the political premises for a reappraisal of the nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the kind of action the workers must take to overthrow it. While it does not spell out these revisions, it opens the door for others to do so, as we shall see later.

c. The Kremlin and the Communist Parties

The resolution states that the Kremlin's rigid grip on the mass Communist parties is weakening. It gives three reasons for this deduction: the growing power of the mass movement exerted on these parties, the loosening of their relations with Moscow, and uncertainty about the Kremlin's authority and policy in recent months. No specific evidence is cited to substantiate this speculation, although the development cannot be ruled out in advance in specific cases. Such has certainly been the case with the Yugoslav and Chinese CP's. But there are no overt signs of a similar occurrence elsewhere yet.

To buttress this point the resolution cites the Kremlin's inability to reestablish any International since 1943. Actually Moscow finds any International more of a liability than an asset. It wishes to keep the CP's separated and to control them by other means.

This alleged relaxation of Kremlin control is associated with "the penetration of ideas opposed to the interests of the Kremlin bureaucracy within these organizations; and a process of modification in the hierarchical, bureaucratic relations previously established." That is how the disintegration of Stalinism is beginning. Vague as these observations of tendencies are, they seem to point to the growth of new ideological currents and organizational relations within the shell of the CP's which will apparently continue inside them until the reformed and rebellious parties become strong and independent enough to throw off the Kremlin's stranglehold. Does this not project the perspective of such reformed Stalinist parties escaping the Kremlin's clutches and proceeding on the road to revolution?

This conclusion receives reinforcement from the assertion that the mass Communist parties are forced to radicalize their policies more and more. This is the fundamental and inescapable course of their policies.

The resolution grudgingly admits "the possibility of the mass Communist parties to carry through temporary turns to the right within given conditions, so long as the mass pressure has not reached its culminating point." (p. 35) The direction of Stalinist policy in such parties is thus made to depend in the last analysis on the degree of mass pressure exerted upon them.

Up to now there has been no such direct correlation. The history of the French CP is instructive. From 1929-1933 when the workers were not yet energetic it pursued an ultra-left line. In 1936 when the mass movement reached its height the CP took a People's Front line. In 1944-47 at the crest of the revolutionary wave generated by the war the Stalinist leaders disarmed the workers and helped de Gaulle restore the capitalist regime. In 1952, when the workers had relapsed into passivity thanks in large measure to the previous gyrations of Stalinist policy, it summoned the Paris workers into the adventure of the anti-Ridgway demonstration. Finally, in August 1953 during the General Strike the CP remained passive and maintained its "National Front" mixture of opportunism and sectarianism without radicalizing its policy an iota.

This record shows that, far from coordinating their line with the rise in mass pressure, this mass CP ran counter to it. The diplomatic needs of the Kremlin got the upper hand over the demands of the masses. This does not mean that the CP can get away with anything at any time. It too must adjust itself, like other mass parties, to the radicalization of the masses, more in words than in deeds. But in and of itself the pressure of the masses does not suffice to push the CP closer to the revolutionary road.

The conception that a mass CP will take the road to power if only sufficient mass pressure is brought to bear is false. It shifts the responsibility for revolutionary setbacks from the leadership to the mass, according to the following reasoning: if only there had been more pressure, the CP could have been forced to drive for power. The interaction between the insurgent masses and the leadership is thus reduced to the simple equation: maximum mass pressure equals revolutionary performances, however inadequate, from the CP leadership.

Actually, the pressure of the workers in the 1953 French General Strike was formidable enough to start the offensive for power. But it was precisely the momentum of this mass power and its implications that caused the CP leadership to leap away in fright from it and prevent its organization. In this not unimportant case, instead of radicalizing Stalinist policy, the heightened mass pressure had a different effect. Obviously, there is not a direct but a dialectical relationship between the two factors.

Yugoslavia and China show that under certain exceptional conditions the leadership of a Stalinist party, caught between extermination by the counter-revolution and an extremely powerful revolutionary offensive of the masses, can push forward to power. This can be repeated elsewhere under comparable conditions, especially in the event of a new world war.

But it would be unwarranted to generalize too broadly and hastily on this point. It should be remembered that while the Yugoslavs marched to power, the CP's in other countries remained subordinate to the Kremlin and facilitated the work of the counter-revolution. Two Communist parties, the Yugoslav and Chinese, met the test in one way; the others in a directly opposite manner.

The specific conditions which forced the Yugoslav and Chinese CP's onto the revolutionary road must be analyzed and understood. Both parties had been in conflict with the existing regimes and operated illegally for long years. Both fought prolonged civil wars during which the leadership and cadres were selected, tested and hardened and their forces organized. The Chinese CP had armed forces of its own for years before launching the struggle for power. The domestic capitalist regimes were exceptionally weak and imperialism was unable to intervene with any effectiveness.

In any case, as the Manifesto issued by the Third World Congress declared: "The transformations which the Stalinist parties might undergo in the course of the most acute revolutionary crises may oblige the Leninist vanguard to readjust its tactics toward these parties. But this in no way relieves the proletariat from the task of building a new revolutionary leadership. What is on the agenda today, is not so much the question of a projection of a struggle for power under exceptional conditions in this or that isolated country, but the overthrow of imperialism in all countries as rapidly as possible. Stalinism remains obstacle number one, within the international labor movement, to the successful conclusion of that task."

d. The Kremlin and the Buffer Zone

The exposition of the contradictions inherent in the postwar expansion of Stalinist domination over the buffer zone countries: the resistance of the native CP's which have acquired their own state interests and material base against the dictates of the Kremlin; the clash between the regime and the peasants; the conflict between the regime and the workers — this is in general correctly delineated.

There are, however, three main points of difference to be noted.

1. The National Question

First is the neglect of any treatment of the national question in the resolution, although this is one of the most explosive issues in the Kremlin-subjugated domains. There has long been bitter resistance to the autocratic Russification of the Ukrainians and other minorities. The extension of Moscow's rule, its plundering, overlordship and Russification has provoked no less intense national feelings in the buffer zone.

The political revolution against the Moscow despotism can not be visualized without the rekindling of the national independence movement in these areas. This demand will be one of the keenest weapons against the Kremlin overlords. Yugoslavia has already shown how powerful a factor of rebellion this resistance to national oppression can be.

The program for the political revolution must therefore include slogans for a free and independent Socialist Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, etc., just as we continue to call for an independent Socialist Ukraine. In

East Germany, split by joint agreement of the Big Three, this demand takes the form of the reunification of the German nation on a Socialist basis. The unity of the German people, and above all its working class, is indispensable for the promotion of the European revolution. Even though this demand was raised by the demonstrators themselves and was called for by the entire situation, it was missing from the IS declaration on the East German events.

The omission of such a slogan in both the resolution and the IS statement requires explanation. Is the present bloc of anti-capitalist states under Kremlin dictatorship to be regarded as a solid and untouchable entity which the demand for independence disintegrates? Actually the struggle for socialist independence undermines the grip of the Kremlin, helps unify the revolutionary forces, increasing their striking power against imperialism.

This omission is all the more glaring in the light of its inclusion in the Third World Congress Manifesto. "Long live the independent Socialist Republics of Poland, of Czechoslovakia, of Hungary, of Rumania, of Bulgaria and of the Ukraine! Down with the Stalinist dictatorship."

2. The East German Events

Second, in place of the dubious hypotheses advanced in the resolution on possible variants of development, the revolutionary perspectives for the buffer zone countries should be based upon concrete events from which lessons can be drawn and applied. This means that the treatment of the overthrow of the Kremlin autocracy and the disintegration of Stalinism must take the East German uprising as its point of departure.

This uprising demonstrated in life how the political revolution against Stalinism originates and unfolds. A correct appraisal of the East German events has the utmost importance for our movement because it provides the opportunity to check our program with the actual events and see whether and in what respects it was verified and wherein it requires correction and amplification. Important divergences in appraisal are equally significant.

Briefly, what did the East German uprising reveal?

1. It showed that the working class was the initiating and decisive force in leading the people to revolt.

2. It disclosed the colossal power and potentialities of the workers' movement which united all currents of labor opinion in massive protest. Virtually the entire working class opposed itself to the regime and all its agencies, beginning with the SED.

3. The unpopular government was sprung into mid-air without any support amongst the people. Its main props, the party, the police and the top bureaucracy, crumbled and collapsed under the impact of the uprising.

4. The advanced workers broke in action with the government party, the SED.

5. They evinced determination to overthrow the regime, not to reform it. This repudiation and rejection

was implicit in the demand for "a metal-workers government." The sum total of the other demands were incompatible with the continuance of the dictatorship.

6. The general mass political strike, sparked by immediate economic demands and directed against the government, became the means for mobilizing the masses and pitting them against the regime.

7. The Trotskyist program of the necessity of political revolution against Stalinism by a mass uprising was vindicated and adopted in action by the insurgent workers.

8. The unarmed and unsupported masses had to fall back. They felt the need for the formation of a revolutionary leadership and a party to organize the next stages and link it up with the struggles in the West and the buffer zone countries.

9. The events exposed and underscored the utterly counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism.

a. It required a series of repressive measures, mixed with minor concessions, to save and prop up the battered regime. Armed force and police actions against the most militant and conscious elements had to be used to subdue the insurgents.

b. The occupying Soviet troops rescued the regime and pushed back the revolution.

c. The Stalinists launched a despicable slander campaign against the workers as "fascists."

d. The SED undertook a purge of its personnel who proved weak and conciliatory.

Contrast the above appraisal with the aspects stressed in the IS resolution written after the East German uprising. The resolution singles out three points.

a. Special economic conditions caused the resistance of the masses to culminate in open revolt. (Actually, they touched off the rebellion which had profounder causes.)

b. This revolt accentuated "the new course" which includes an improvement in economic conditions for all layers of the people and a softening of the atmosphere of extreme tension in the mass organizations.

c. This new course is designed to strengthen the grip of the Stalinist parties by making them more flexible, less rigid.

This is the sum total of the principal lessons drawn by the resolution from the East German uprising!

3. Entrism Into the CP in the Buffer Zone Countries

Third, the resolution recommends an application of the entrism tactic toward the Communist Parties in the buffer zone countries. In these countries, "our forces must seek to realize their tasks, which are in general similar to those we have in the Soviet Union, through an entrism tactic toward the CP, while remaining prepared to join quickly any other mass organization which may appear at the beginning of the upsurge." (p. 28)

The question naturally arises why the resolution does not make a specific entrism proposal for the CP of the Soviet Union, if the tasks are "in general similar." This

becomes still more puzzling when we are given as one of the motivations for entrism in the buffer zone countries, that "the more the outbreak of the revolutionary rise is retarded, the more will the young generation awaken to political life. This generation will have known no form of political organization other than the CP and the latter will tend to become the natural arena in which the leadership of the new revolutionary rise will develop."

Several young generations have already awakened to political life in the S.U. knowing no other party than the CP. If this becomes a decisive criterion, the entrism tactic should be applied there above all places. Why doesn't the resolution call for it? Why is such a glaring contradiction permitted?

Can it be because the Transitional Program opens no door for an entrism tactic toward the CP USSR? It insists on the contrary that the Soviet masses must be mobilized to rise up against the bureaucracy under the leadership of the Soviet section of the Fourth International.

But the way is being paved to get around this in stages. In quoting the Transitional Program the resolution drops out the above clearly-stated programmatic conclusions. It substitutes the vaguer proposition that "the conditions are being created for the reconstitution and the upsurge of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party." There is no explicit reference to entry but it is not excluded.

In addition, the resolution prescribes an entrism tactic for the buffer zone countries which is so motivated as to apply with greater force to the USSR. Such an entrism proposal is fundamentally different from any other adopted by our movement in the past.

Up to now the Trotskyist movement has practiced three types of entry. The first involved reformist or centrist parties which, under the impact of events, gave rise to a significant leftward-moving tendency. A Trotskyist grouping or party may temporarily give up its organizational independence to enter such a movement to promote the crystallization of a principled revolutionary tendency and augment its own forces in the process. The size of the party is not of decisive consideration in an entry of this kind, which is a temporary detour on the road to the construction of the revolutionary party. It serves the two-fold purpose of gathering forces and if possible, disposing of a centrist rival on the arena of the class struggle. This was the sort of entry the Trotskyists carried through in the Socialist Party of the United States in 1936.

The second type of entrism involves parties enjoying the allegiance of the working class in its entirety, like the British Labor Party. Trotskyists enter such a movement because within it is concentrated the political life and development of the decisive elements of the class. Basing themselves in their activity on the contradiction between the socialist aspirations of the working class and the capitalist-minded party bureaucracy, the Trotskyists articulate the fundamental interests of the ranks, give them leadership and programmatic expression, and

collect the forces for the revolutionary party in subsequent stages of the struggle for socialism.

The third type of entrism has been developed since the Third World Congress. It essentially represents an extension of the second type to the Stalinist parties enjoying a considerable mass base in the capitalist countries, such as France or Italy, or fighting a civil war for power as in Indo-China.

Here the Trotskyists base themselves upon the contradiction between the urge of the masses for the conquest of power and a fundamental social change and the policies of the CP bureaucracies subservient to the Kremlin, with the aim of directing the movement into revolutionary channels. Because of the monolithic character and bureaucratic regime of these parties which does not permit opposition tendencies to operate, this entrism encounters great difficulties and complications and must be of a special kind. This tactic remains in the experimental stage and must be carefully checked at every point to assess the results.

The entrism proposal so lightly introduced into the resolution for the buffer zone countries is of an altogether different type. It involves entering a party that holds state power and is the direct and principal oppressor of the working masses. The fundamental antagonism within these countries, as in the Soviet Union, is between the organized and armed bureaucracy, ruling through the CP, and the unorganized and disarmed working class. To go into the CP is not to acquire closer contact with the best elements of the working class but to become identified with the bureaucracy in the eyes of the most militant workers. A party member is forced to become an instrument of oppression in the day-to-day friction between the bureaucratic regime and the working class.

A revolutionary worker would seek to make contact with the discontented workers repelled by and from the CP in as prudent a manner as possible.

The resolution does not proceed from the existing antagonisms between the workers and the Stalinist regime and the revolutionary impact the development of these antagonisms is bound to have, proposing organizational forms in preparation for that day. Instead it bases itself on the static concept that Stalinist workers will continue to remain in the CP while the Social Democrats will remain in the Social Democracy. Or on the conservative concept that the youth will flock into the sole party they see at hand. The revolutionary wave which, according to the resolution, is spreading from country to country and continent to continent will evidently engulf everything except the traditional parties. It will engulf Stalinism, but leave the CP's intact. There is something wrong here. One effect of powerful revolutionary uprisings is to break the ties of the workers to their traditional organizations, disrupt the old parties, and lift up from obscurity the most revolutionary elements.

The East German uprising did not reinforce the SED or bring workers closer to it. It dug an unbridgeable gulf

between the rebellious advanced workers and the SED. It prepared the conditions for creating a new leadership and bringing forth a new party which alone could guarantee the victory in the succeeding stages.

It is wrong to prescribe a blanket policy of entry in general. An entrism proposal for any country has to be justified by a concrete analysis and appraisal of the specific combination of circumstances in the given country (the party to be entered, its relation to the working class, the Trotskyist forces available, the real possibilities, etc.).

The resolution, however, motivates its general prescription for entry by the conciliationist concept that the leadership of the workers' insurgence in the buffer zone countries will necessarily come out of the CP's. This notion that the parties of the ruling bureaucracy will produce the leadership to overthrow the regime directs the workers away from reliance on their own forces and the formation of their own instruments of struggle. Since entry is a tactical, not a principled question, a Trotskyist group might enter a given CP in the buffer zone to take advantage of a serious crisis within it. But its decision would be predicated on the specific favorable conjuncture for such intervention, and not on illusory general characteristics of these parties.

An entrism tactic may be dictated in regard to the Yugoslav and Chinese CP's which led revolutions. To this day the leaderships have to lean to some extent upon the masses and appeal to their self-action to undertake some of the uncompleted tasks of the revolution. The bureaucratic stratum is not yet petrified and is not regarded by the workers as an instrument of foreign domination. They still believe the CP's can be the vehicle for their revolutionary aspirations.

It should be noted that the Third Congress Manifesto explicitly calls for the formation of new parties in the USSR and the "Peoples' Democracies." "At the same time the Fourth International resolutely supports all proletarian movements of opposition to the police dictatorship of the Soviet bureaucracy and fights for the constitution of new Bolshevik-Leninist parties in these countries, parties which will take the leadership of the necessary political revolution for freeing socialist development from its bureaucratic shell." *There is no such call in the present resolution.* A shift in position has been introduced without explanation.

V. How the Line Is Being Applied

The recent writings by Pablo and Clarke on the East German uprising and the events in the Soviet Union since Stalin's death show how the line of the resolution is being applied, how it distorts the real situation, disarms the FI and would disorient its ranks.

As the first proletarian revolt directed at the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy and its agents, the East German uprising possesses immense significance for the entire world working class, and especially for its Trotskyist vanguard which alone heralded and worked

for this line of action. What does the declaration issued by the International Secretariat during this gigantic mass movement do and 'propose'?

1. Instead of exposing and denouncing the Kremlin and East German Stalinist leaders as mortal foes of the workers and heads of the counter-revolution, the IS statement plays up their concessions and assures that these will continue. "They have been obliged to continue along the road of still more ample and genuine concessions to avoid risking alienating themselves forever from support by the masses and from provoking still stronger explosions. From now on they will not be able to stop halfway . . . They will be obliged to dole out more concessions . . ." This is tantamount to telling the workers that they can expect ever-greater concessions from their oppressors, not that these will be limited to the minimum and withdrawn unless the workers exert their full powers of resistance and follow through to the end.

2. Instead of warning that the Stalinist apparatus will inflict repressions and stop at nothing to defend their dictatorship, the IS statement promises a general and growing attitude of appeasement of the masses by the Stalinists.

3. There is no clear call for the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy through the organization, strengthening and consummation of the uprising.

4. Instead of a program specifically adapted to the conditions and needs of the East German workers, a general program for the political revolution in the Soviet Union and all the "Peoples' Democracies" is put forward.

5. This program raises the slogan for "real democratization of the Communist Parties" as though these organs of the police regime could and should be transformed into vehicles for the revolutionary actions and aspirations of the masses. At the very time they are breaking in action with this party, the Stalinist workers are directed to seek its reform.

6. By implication, since this program is presented as applying to the Soviet Union as well, the slogan to democratize the Communist party would be on the order of the day for the CP USSR too. This would be a direct break with the established position calling for the formation of a Trotskyist Party in the Soviet Union.

7. On the other hand, while there is a demand for the legalization of other working class parties, there is none for the formation of a new revolutionary party around the Trotskyist program.

8. There is no call for the withdrawal of the Soviet occupying troops which shot down workers and served as the ultimate prop of the shattered regime.

9. Although demonstrators themselves put forward the demand, there is no slogan for the reunification of Germany on a Socialist basis. The need for unity is concentrated instead upon the solidarity of the Soviet Union and the "Peoples' Democracies" as a bloc. The resolution concludes with acclamation for "the socialist rebirth of the Soviet Union, the 'Peoples' Democracies'

and the international working class movement." Wouldn't the German workers also care to hear acclamation for the socialist reunification of their own divided country?

10. While the Stalinists slander the workers as "fascist hirelings," the statement cavalierly observes: "The Soviet leaders and those of the various 'Peoples' Democracies' and the CP could no longer falsify or ignore the profound meaning of these events."

Where is the revolutionary spirit of irreconcilable combat to topple a powerful and perfidious enemy in such a line? It is not designed to focus the attention of the masses upon the need for a new revolutionary leadership. At the very time when the workers are in revolt, it is permeated with a conciliatory attitude toward the bureaucracy.

Clarke's article on the East German events in the March-April issue displays equally conciliatory features. He plays down the counter-revolutionary intervention of the Kremlin as well as of its puppet regime. He takes careful note of the moderate conduct of the occupying forces but fails to point out their counter-revolutionary function in rescuing the regime and blocking the workers' bid for power. He does not bring forward the inescapable necessity for the mass uprising to get rid of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Nor does he assert the need of a revolutionary party in order to lead such a mass uprising to victory.

Much is made of the split in the bureaucracy, although no definite conclusions are drawn from this development. It is clear that the SED bureaucracy became panic-stricken and differences set in on how best to handle the situation and that the movement found sympathy and support among certain elements in its lower ranks. This happens in every revolutionary uprising and it would be wrong to deny or ignore such developments.

But the question is: what place and significance do they have in the process of the revolution? They are not and cannot be the decisive factor or the central line of the struggle. The IS preoccupation with these subordinate aspects of the struggle tends to shift the axis of revolutionary strategy from the mobilization of the workers as an independent class force relying on their own strength and organs toward reliance for leadership from elements within the bureaucracy. The excessive attention given to the differentiations and splits within the bureaucracy, the embellishment of their concessions, the failure to stress their repressive and counter-revolutionary role, can be explained only by illusions that, under pressure from below, a section of the Stalinist leadership will head the movement for the liquidation of Stalinism, at least in its earlier stages.

There is a sharp break with the traditional Trotskyist concept of the decisive role of the independent mass movement under its own revolutionary leadership.

Pablo's article on "The Post-Stalin 'New Course'" in the March-April issue proceeds along similar lines. He grossly exaggerates the scope and significance of the Malenkov concessions. He says that in addition to meas-

ures effecting an improvement of working conditions there has likewise been an extension of "the democratic rights of the masses," with less labor discipline and speed-up for the workers under the dictatorship.

He does not prescribe any limits to the concessions. On the contrary, the bureaucracy will have to quicken and extend them. "In reality events will oblige them, as is being demonstrated in Eastern Germany, and partly in Czechoslovakia, to quicken and extend the concessions to keep the impatient masses in the other buffer zone countries and in the USSR itself, from taking the road of action."

This is leading to the liquidation of the entire Stalinist heritage. "The dynamic of their concessions is in reality liquidatory of the entire Stalinist heritage in the USSR itself, as well as in its relations with the satellite countries, with China and the Communist Parties. It will no longer be easy to turn back . . . once the concessions are broadened, the march toward a real liquidation of the Stalinist regime threatens to become irresistible."

He thereupon raises the question: "what form will it (the march toward a real liquidation of the Stalinist regime) then take?" "Will it be that of an acute crisis and of violent inter-bureaucratic struggles between the elements who will fight for the status quo, if not for turning back, and the more and more numerous elements drawn by the powerful pressure of the masses?"

Pablo does not answer the question but the very posing of the question in this tendentious manner implies the answer.

In his article in the January-February issue Clarke introduces other variants. He writes: "Will the process take the form of a violent upheaval against bureaucratic rule in the USSR? Or will concessions to the masses and sharing of power — as was the long course in the English bourgeois revolution in the political relationship between the rising bourgeoisie and the declining nobility — gradually undermine the base of the bureaucracy? Or will the evolution be a combination of both forms? That we cannot now foresee."

The inherent and unavoidable need for the mass uprising against the Kremlin bureaucracy, he offers simply as one of several variants of development of a "political revolution." That is not all. He then counterposes the diametrically opposite variant of the progressive reform of the bureaucracy. These are two mutually exclusive variants of "political revolution." The one insists upon the political expropriation of the bureaucratic rulers by the Soviet masses; the other, as Clarke tells us, envisages the "sharing of power."

The idea advanced by Clarke that the Kremlin bureaucracy is capable of "sharing power" with the Soviet people challenges both the program of political revolution for the Soviet Union as well as the Trotskyist concept of the nature and role of this parasitic caste. This idea runs counter to reality.

The bureaucracy needs its totalitarian apparatus of terror and repressions precisely because it cannot share

the power required to maintain its privileges, income and unbridled rule. Its police regime acts to oppress the masses, keep them politically expropriated, and deprive them of the slightest chance of intervening in political life. It leaves the masses no alternative but to take the road pointed out by the Transitional Program.

Clarke does not say by what ways and means the Kremlin despots will "share power" with the masses. Through what existing governmental and party institutions can the bureaucrats share power? Through the completely bureaucratized party? Through the secret police or the Army? The masses will gain a say in the country again only through the revival of their own mass organizations which will signalize, not the "sharing of power" with the Kremlin gang, but the inception of the political uprising against it.

Pablo and Clarke see in both the German uprising and the post-Stalin developments the emergence of a deepening conflict between the stand-patters and a leftward-moving wing within the bureaucracy which tends to tear it apart into contending factions. In the showdown the reform elements appeal to and lean upon the masses; the masses in turn, it is implied, should back them up and look to them for leadership. This is presumably the beginning of the path to socialist regeneration, which is already discernible in "the New Course."

This shifts the axis of the development of the political revolution away from the self-action of the masses and focuses it upon the rifts inside the bureaucracy. Thereby the Trotskyist concept that the extension of the world revolution will inspire the Russian workers to rise up on their own account and overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy gives way to a different concept. The changed international and internal situation, coupled with mounting pressure from the masses, unlooses forces within the bureaucracy itself which work toward the liquidation of Stalinism. The transformations emanate from on top as an outcome of the mass pressure from below.

The working class is transformed into a pressure group, and the Trotskyists into a pressure grouping along with it which pushes a section of the bureaucracy leftward toward the revolution. In this way, the bureaucracy is transformed from a block and a betrayer of the revolution into an auxiliary motor force of it.

Such sweeping conclusions on the changing characteristics of the Kremlin dictatorship and the dissolution of world Stalinism have a logic which is bound to assert itself. If the objective processes are marching along so fast and so far, then an equivalent reorientation must be effected by the revolutionary vanguard if it is to be on top of the unfolding events. A general turn would have to be made toward the Communist parties and into the Communist parties to help along the disintegration already proceeding at an accelerated rate and take full advantage of the transformation and impending breakup of Stalinism.

The conclusion of Pablo's article on "The Post-Stalin 'New Course'" envisages such a perspective for the immediate future. Pablo writes: "What is now clear is that

the decline of Stalinism in the form of the iron grip of the Soviet bureaucracy over the Soviet masses, the buffer zone countries, the Communist parties, is henceforth speeded up, and that the renovation of socialist democracy in all these countries, as in China, as well as the renaissance of the international workers' movement is now on the order of the day." How is this to be accomplished? "In the years visible ahead, the junction of the ideas and forces of the Fourth International with the revolutionary elements until now organized or influenced by Stalinism will realize in part this first stage of this renovation."

Isn't this a signpost toward a general entry into the Stalinist movement?

The recent writings by Pablo and Clarke go beyond the stated positions of the resolution on "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism." But the point to be emphasized is that the resolution contains, or at least indicates, the political premises for their more extreme conclusions. These premises are not clearly and fully expressed in all respects. But they are there.

Tendencies conciliatory toward Stalinism have begun to emerge in several Trotskyist organizations. These have recently culminated in splits in the United States and Ceylon. A resolution on Stalinism must take cognizance of this dangerous development and guard against any ambiguities from which it can draw sustenance. For example, the question of the political revolution against the Kremlin bureaucracy is now in dispute. How does the resolution treat this problem?

In citing the Transitional Program for the political revolution in the Soviet Union, the resolution stops short of the following: "Only the victorious revolutionary uprising of the oppressed masses can revive the Soviet regime and guarantee its further development toward socialism. There is but one party capable of leading the Soviet masses to insurrection — the party of the Fourth International!"

These categorical statements leave no room whatsoever for different interpretations of what is meant. However, they are replaced in the text of the resolution by two vaguer propositions that: "*The conditions are being created for the reconstitution and the upsurge of the Bolshevik-Leninist party in the Soviet Union*" and later on: "The task of smashing the dictatorship and the privileges of the bureaucracy, the task of a *new political revolution in the Soviet Union* remains more burning than ever."

This may well have gone unnoticed and uncriticized if an attempt had not already been made by Clarke to substitute new concepts of the political revolution for the established positions. The ambiguities in the resolution lend themselves to such revisions whereas the clear and unmistakable terms of the Transitional Program preclude them.

Complete clarity and precision on all these questions are indispensable to arm the movement for effective revolutionary intervention in the mounting crisis of world Stalinism.

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