

THE CRISIS
OF THE
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL:
HOW IT OPENED
IN 1951

by Stephane Just

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Part III, Chapter One, of
"The Fortieth Anniversary of the Foundation
of the Fourth International:

More than a Century of Struggle
for the Workers' International"

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THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Over a Century of Struggle for the Workers' International

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Part III, FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

by Stephane Just.

Chapter 1 The Crisis of the Fourth International Opens

The IIIrd World Congress was held in September 1951. It adopted documents which the French section characterised as "confused and contradictory". These documents placed the Fourth International round the axis of the perspective of the Third World War; a war of a coalition of the imperialists under the leadership of the USA against the USSR, the so-called "People's Democracies" and China.

THE REVISIONIST CENTRE BECOMES THE CENTRE FOR LIQUIDATING THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The perspective of a Third World War was a possible, though not an uplifting one. In any case, such a war would show that the proletariat had to pay for the delay of the world revolution at an enormous price. The responsibility for this belonged to the policy of the social-democracy and of the reformist apparatuses, but especially to the counter-revolutionary policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy and its international apparatus. The documents of the IIIrd Congress concealed the political function of the Kremlin bureaucracy and its international apparatus; the defence of the bourgeois order on the international scale.

To be sure, imperialism was preparing for war, but in a relation of forces between the classes which was extremely favourable to the proletariat as a result of the revolutionary wave at the end of the war. To be sure, imperialism was preparing for war against the USSR, but the most effective counter-revolutionary instrument at its disposal was (and remains) the Kremlin bureaucracy and its international apparatus. Far from re-stating this fundamental truth, which would have meant counter-posing, in the classical way, the class

struggle of the proletariat, the advance towards the revolution and the
ution itself, to the preparation of the IIIrd World War, the documents
IIIrd World Congress, by their confusion and their contradictions, gave
Pablo the means to develop his orientation. The Third World War was
inevitable. For example, we can read in Thesis XVIII, for which the
voted:

"Even though the counter-revolutionary character of the bureaucracy re-
mains unchanged, in its betrayal of workers' revolutions which it hand
over to imperialism, and in strangling independent proletarian movement
the possibility which it has to fulfill this role with success is deter-
mined, not by its subjective desires or intentions, but by an objective
revolutionary situation, which it becomes more and more difficult to de-
stroy or to contain within rigid bureaucratic channels or under police
control, because of its vast scope and its intensity. The developments
in Jugoslavia and in China are only an anticipation of events to come in
the event of an international civil war."

Here is a fine sample of confusion and contradictions. We start by re-affirm-
ing "the counter-revolutionary character of the Kremlin bureaucracy". That
is the "Trotskyist" part of the thesis. But we finish saying that this
"character" is a pure abstraction. "The ~~subjective desires or intentions~~" of
the Kremlin bureaucracy have no importance, because "it has no longer the
possibility of fulfilling this role with success", taking into consideration
the "vast scope and intensity of an objectively revolutionary situation".
As if the class struggle and its concentration in the proletarian revolution
and civil war is not precisely the confrontation of social and political forc-
es; a struggle between the forces of the revolution and of the counter-revol-
ution. As if, in an "international civil war", the Kremlin bureaucracy and
its international apparatus would not fight on the side of counter-revolution,
if they were not destroyed.

"Neutralising" the Kremlin is a first step. The second step is to enroll it
under the banner of the "revolution in all its forms". The power of the "ob-
jectively revolutionary situation" sufficed in itself. From then on the con-
struction of revolutionary parties and of the International had no meaning.
It remained for Trotskyist ~~inhabitants~~ inhabitants and organisations only "to integrate
themselves deeply into the mass movement", with this mass movement and that

of the parasitic bureaucracies finally being identified...

In June 1951 the leadership of the SWP elaborated a rather light-weight "contribution to the discussion of international perspectives". Very timidly, this contribution demanded that certain points about Stalinism should be strengthened, and about the necessity for re-affirming that "the crisis of humanity is the crisis of revolutionary leadership". Unfortunately, Clarke - at that time the representative of the SWP in Europe - far from defending the contribution of the SWP before the International Executive Committee, and then at the IIIrd World Congress, burnt it. It was not the custom of the SWP that such matters should remain there. None the less, it appears that there was no follow-up until 1953, an indication of the difficulties with which the leadership of the SWP was confronted. At the IIIrd World Congress, the amendments which the French section presented were not even submitted to the full session. And the few other amendments which were put into the documents of this Congress/^{only}re-inforced their "confused and contradictory" character. What is more, in a letter to a militant of the SWP, Sam Gordon, who was living in London and had openly criticised the ambiguities of the documents of the IIIrd World Congress, James P. Cannon wrote even on June 4, 1953:

"I was surprised and disappointed at your impulsive action in regard to the Third World Congress Documents. We accepted them as they were written. When they try to tell us now that we don't understand them, we do not reply by saying that we reject the resolutions. We say, rather, that we reject any special interpretation of them that is not clearly stated in the written language."

None the less, a serious analysis of the documents of the IIIrd World Congress, the reading of "Where Are We Going?", of "The Coming War" and innumerable publications of the International Secretariat suffice to illuminate these documents. And especially, between the IIIrd World Congress and 1953 the liquidatory revisionism of the Fourth International had made terrifying progress, which fully justified the characterisation by the PCI of the documents of the Third World Congress. In February 1952, it was the report of Pablo, at the Xth Plenum of the International Executive Committee, which extolled "entrism sui generis" and clarified the "ambiguities" in the documents of the IIIrd World Congress. About the attempt to destroy the PCI Cannon

wrote to Gordon, in the same letter, in the following terms:

"We were flabbergasted at the tactics used in the recent French conflict and split, and the inconceivable organisational precedent established there. That is why I delayed my answer to Renard so long. I wanted to help the IS politically, but I didn't see how I could conscientiously sanction the organisational steps taken against the majority of an elected leadership. I finally resolved the problem by just ignoring that part of Renard's letter. But I am not very proud of the fact that such an evasive course seemed to be imposed by circumstances." (See "Trotskyism v. Revisionism", New Park, Vol. 1, pp. 120 - 1)

The leadership of the SWP was to characterise the methods of the International Secretariat thereafter as "Comintern-ist".

In 1953 the positions which the International Secretariat of the Fourth International took in relation to the revolutionary movement of the proletariat of East Germany and the General Strike in France in the August, demonstrated that a qualitative transformation had taken place, as the undertaking to liquidate the SWP, the British section and the Bolivian section had already shown, coming shortly after the attempt to liquidate the French section. From being a revisionist centre, the International Secretariat had become the centre for liquidating the Fourth International. It intervened as a flank-guard for the Kremlin bureaucracy.

An Event of the Highest Importance in the World Class Struggle

The great events in the world class struggle are the tests which enable us to decide whether a qualitative modification of the place and role of this or that workers' organisation in the class struggle has taken place. The tendencies to reformism, to adaptation to the bourgeoisie, to the defence of the bourgeois state, existed within the parties which made up the Second International from the time that they were founded. It was only in August 1914 that what had only been more or less developed tendencies appeared as having become the dominant characteristics of the Second International, each social-democrat in party taking the side of its own bourgeoisie in the first world imperialist war. The Second International was bankrupt.

From 1923 onwards the parties of the Third International, the Communist Parties, were more and more closely subjected to the Kremlin bureaucracy. More

and more the Third International and the Communist Parties became the instruments of the counter-revolutionary international policy of the Kremlin. None the less, it was only several months after the capitulation without a struggle of the Communist Party of Germany before the rise to power of Hitler - and because there was no reaction in the Communist Parties composing the Communist International, which without exception approved the policy of the Comintern which had led to his capitulation - that Trotsky concluded that there had been a qualitative transformation, that the Communist International had definitively passed over to the side of the maintenance of the bourgeois order on the international scale and that it was necessary to construct the Fourth International.

An event of the highest importance from the viewpoint of the world class struggle took place in 1953. The first chapter was written in the political revolutions against the parasitic bureaucracies. It was verified in the European class struggle that the social revolution and the political revolution are two indissoluble components of the proletarian revolution.

The programme of the Fourth International, the necessity for the Fourth International, and therefore the justification for its foundation, received a startling justification. If the Fourth International had fulfilled its historic mission, it would without doubt have opened a very wide road to the masses, because its programme alone corresponded to their immediate needs, because only the banner of the most intransigent struggle against imperialism and the parasitic bureaucracies, essentially the bureaucracy of the Kremlin, the banner of the Fourth International, could point out to them the road to victory.

But the "leadership" of the Fourth International took up the position of flank-guards of the Kremlin bureaucracy. It had already put in hand the destruction of the strongest sections of the International. Consequently the Fourth International and its sections did not keep their rendezvous with history. What is done is done. None the less, we can and we should understand what an impact the Fourth International could have had, weak to be sure, insufficiently rooted, but united and rising to the level of its historic mission in such a situation. Instead of which, the "leadership" of the Fourth International aligned itself behind counter-revolutionary forces: it supported them and provided them with a "left" cover.

The ^{re-}percussions of this state of things cannot be completely measured, but they were considerable, both during the course of the class struggle in general and during that of the construction of the revolutionary parties and of the International which is indispensable to the victory of the proletariat. They make themselves felt still today. Let us remember that the crisis of human civilisation is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership, that in the last analysis its solution depends on the subjective factor. The "leadership" of the Fourth International obstructed the road which it should have opened, the road which the masses could not take spontaneously, the road which leads to the construction of revolutionary parties and the International. How can anyone fail to understand that this treachery has been a major source of confusion and, ultimately, of disarray for thousands and thousands of militants who were ready to form the vanguard of the proletariat, as much in the capitalist countries as in those which suffer the oppression of the parasitic and counter-revolutionary bureaucracies, including that of the Kremlin, to whom only the Fourth International could provide a programme and a banner?

The Characterisation of the Document: "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism"

The founding declaration of the International Committee (November 23, 1953) laid down:

"We consider as having forfeited its power the International Secretariat of the Pabloist usurpers, which is devoting its activity to the revisionism of Trotskyism, the liquidation of the International and the destruction of its cadres."

Good. It still was necessary to spell out what was meant by that.

The imperturbable "International Secretariat" convened a pseudo-"World Congress", which was held in July 1954. The Congress voted for the document "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism" and ratified the Pablo-ite positions. A document of the Socialist Workers' Party adopted in November 1953 on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the party pointed very precisely at the revisionist and liquidationist centre of the document "Rise and Decline of Stalinism":

"The resolution revises the fundamental concept of Trotsky about Soviet Thermidor, which saw in the Soviet bureaucracy the first stage of the

bourgeois restoration. The privileged caste, considered from a qualitative point of view in the structure of Soviet society, is a petty bourgeois formation, confined at this stage in the superstructure of the conquests of the revolution of 1917 which still exist, the nationalisation and planning of the economy. By its position in Soviet society, the bureaucracy as such has anti-sovietism as an inherent tendency, has restorationism. This orthodox Trotskyist conception has been abandoned by the authors of the "Rise and Decline of Stalinism". The concept of the counter-revolutionary stage of the Soviet Thermidor has been liquidated and survives only as a trace in the phrase: 'a 'reduced' number of militants, products of pre-1917' (para. 11). In the place of the fundamental sociological concept of Trotsky, they give us an impressionistic description of the psychology of the "tops of the bureaucracy", which, they assure us, no longer represents in its majority a young and greedy social layer, fighting to conquer privileges in the domain of consumption in a situation of generalised poverty; for the most part they are men of middle age or age-ing, who try to preserve the best possible conditions of life". (Par. 11)

With this same superficial conception, the document sees "reactions of capitulation and desertion into the camp of the bourgeoisie (under the impact of "signs of a revival of the proletariat"), which touch only "very limited layers of the bureaucracy".

In abandoning the orthodox Trotskyist conception of a caste which, in its essence, represents the tendency to capitalist restoration, the development of which can be followed in a multitude of forms in soviet life, the Pabloites open the way to an entirely revisionist conception, according to which the bureaucracy can regenerate itself. This is not explicitly affirmed, but certain conclusions in the resolution flow from this revisionist premise. For example, in place of "reinforcement of the restorationist tendencies within the peasants and the bureaucracy", it is the opposite tendency "which is the most probable" (Chapter 15). The document reinforces the new revisionist position (and also the confusion in it):

"The decisive battle which announces itself in the Soviet Union will not be waged between restorationist forces aiming at restoring private property and the forces which defend the conquests of October. It will on the contrary, take place between the forces which will defend the

privileges and domination of the bureaucracy and the revolutionary working class fighting to restore soviet democracy at a higher level."
(Chapter 15)

In opposition to this position, which opens the road to capitulation to the bureaucracy, we re-affirm the orthodox Trotskyist position: 'The coming struggle in 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 forces of the revolutionary working class. On the one side, we shall see the majority of the bureaucracy defending its privileges and its police power and, thereby, the tendency to the restoration of private property; on the other hand, the proletarian vanguard will lead a political revolution which will sweep away the usurpatory bureaucracy, restore soviet democracy at a higher level and in that way relate the soviet regime once again to the world socialist revolution.'

To consider that a very small fraction of the bureaucracy will line up on the side of the masses against its own material interests does not mean that the bureaucracy will not experience deep cleavages under the impact of the revolutionary wave. Such disorganisation, disintegration and demoralisation have been visible in East Germany. But the role of revolutionary politics is to mobilise and help in the leadership of the masses in their struggles, not to wait and still less to base itself on this or that split in the bureaucracy.

In the manner in which the resolution deals with the whole period of the events after the death of Stalin and the new policy of the Malenkov regime, the resolution lays the foundations of new political premises for a new appreciation of the nature of the bureaucracy and of the kind of action which the workers ought to undertake in order to overthrow it. But even if these revisions were not written in black and white in the resolution, the door was opened for others to do so, as we shall see later."

THE QUESTION OF THE LEADERSHIP

Protected by the so-called "Fourth Congress of the Fourth International", the Pablo-ite "I.S." betrayed the Fourth International and its programme in

the name of the Fourth International. But neither the Fourth International nor its programme were bankrupt. The programme had received a striking confirmation. The reaction against the treachery and the liquidationist activity of the Fourth International sprang up from the Fourth International itself, from its strongest sections. The continuity of the Fourth International, through the International Committee of the Fourth International, was assured. From that point of view, there could be no comparison with the Second and Third Internationals.

In 1914, apart from the Bolshevik Party, all of the constituent parties of the Second International lined up each behind its own bourgeoisie. In 1933 every one of the parties of the Third International protected the policy of Stalin, the practical content of which was: "rather Hitler than the German revolution". There were social reasons for the bankruptcy of the Second and the Third Internationals. The bureaucracy of the parties of the Second International, resting on a narrow workers' aristocracy, had established a symbiosis with the bourgeoisie and its State apparatus. It fed itself on the crumbs of imperialism and joined the ranks of bourgeois politicians. The bureaucracies of the Communist Parties had become projections of the apparatus of the bureaucracy of a powerful workers' state, the bureaucracy of the Kremlin. Materially and politically the apparatuses of the Communist Parties depended and depend always on that of the Kremlin, if not in a police sense.

But there was nothing like that in the Fourth International. There was no social basis for a bureaucracy which integrated itself directly or indirectly in bourgeois society or in dependence on a degenerated workers' state. The betrayal by the "International Secretariat", to be sure, was the product of the enormous social pressures which bore down on the Fourth International and on its organisations, all the more so because they remained feebly implanted within the working class.

But the social pressures are not enough to explain the treachery of the "leadership" of the Fourth International. On the contrary, we need to explain this treachery from the fact that this "leadership" showed itself to be too weak to resist these pressures, because of the theoretical and political inadequacy of the leaders of the International and of its sections at the time. Remaining at the centre of what was and still is the crisis of

the Fourth International is the problem of the selection and formation of national leaderships and of the international leadership.

It is enough to appreciate the theoretical and political armament which Trotsky bequeathed to the Fourth International, and to see ^{what use} the leaders of the Fourth International and its sections made of it, to understand this. For example, Trotsky used this armament to write the Manifesto, "Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution" in May 1940. This was not a collection of prophecies, which history merely had to prove correct, even to apply. It was an analysis, a perspective, an orientation which would permit the Fourth International, in the course of the Second World War, to orient itself and to struggle for the revolution and for its own construction. Without going into the enormous mistakes which the sections made in the course of the war, it is enough to contrast the Manifesto of 1940 with the theoretical and political productions of the leading bodies of the Fourth International, ^{from} the European Conference of February, 1944 to the first post-war international Conference in April 1946 and the IIInd World Congress of April 1948, to see the degree of theoretical and political confusion and disarmament of the leaders of the Fourth International and of its sections, a disarmament which had its repercussions at all levels. It is not a matter of "Don't shoot the pianist: He is doing his best". It is a matter of stating the facts. The strength of the principles and the programme of the Fourth International imposed itself despite this. None the less, the consequence could only be disarray and confusion at all levels.

The most effective example is certainly that of the IIIrd World Congress. From 1950 onwards, a majority of the leaders were aware that Pablo was developing revisionist positions within the International Secretariat itself. In reaction against this and in order to oppose it, Germain-Mandel wrote his "Ten Theses". But Mandel and the other members of the International Secretariat capitulated before Pablo. To what can this be attributed, except to theoretical and political weakness, to the disarray of the members of the "International Secretariat"? The attitude of the leaderships of the SWP and of the other sections cannot be explained in any other way, as much in respect to the confused and contradictory documents of the IIIrd World Congress as in respect to their attitude to the French section. All alike they were unable to answer the problems which the class struggle was

posing on the world scale, as well as in their own countries, to the problems of the construction of the Fourth International and of its sections.

In these conditions, the reaction of the French section, that of the SWP and of the British section, and then the formation of the International Committee prove the strength of the principles, the programme and the tradition embodied in the Fourth International. None the less, the formation of the International Committee did not provide in and of itself a solution to the profound causes which had permitted the development of revisionism in the leadership of the Fourth International and the change in the "International Secretariat" from being a centre of revisionism to being a centre of liquidationism.

The Weakness of the Leadership of the SWP

The documents which were at the origin of the formation of the International Committee, or which resulted from it, are marked by the same theoretical and political weaknesses. What strikes the reader is, in the first place, their inability to take account of the processes of the class struggle on the world scale since the revolutionary wave which arose from the war, as well as the class relations which resulted from it. It is obvious that these documents did not appreciate in their full depth the crisis of the world imperialist system, the delicacy of the equilibrium which had been achieved on the international scale, and the power and ^{international} unity of the class struggle of the world proletariat in its diversity. The document of the SWP, which we have already quoted, declared:

"The international revolution has without doubt experienced a considerable rise since 1943. The Second World War has engendered a revolutionary wave of a size, an extent and a duration much greater than the First World War. The Soviet victory over Nazism, the victories of the revolution in Yugoslavia and in China, the extension of nationalised property into the buffer states by bureaucratic-military methods, the spread of the colonial revolution, have each inflicted heavy blows of the capitalist world and greatly strengthened the anti-capitalist camp.

None the less, this tendency in the world situation is combined with and intersects with another. The immense revolutionary movement which has brought about these changes in Eastern Europe, in Central Europe and in

Asia, failed in Western Europe during this same period. The Soviet bureaucracy was the principal cause of this turning back and betrayal of the European revolution.

This has produced a series of contradictory effects in the development of the world revolution. The proletarian offensive has been broken. the working class has been weakened, Western European capitalism has been rescued and relatively stabilised for a few years. This is what has permitted the imperialist counter-revolution, led by USA, to take hold of these countries and to use them as bases and spring-boards for its war preparations and for the attacks which it is planning against the non-capitalist countries and the revolutionary forces.

In this way, the revolutionary process, since the Second World War, has been subjected to an unequal and contradictory development. While the revolution was going forward in a number of under-developed countries and triumphed in Jugoslavia and China, it was forced to retreat in a certain number of advanced capitalist countries. The victories of the revolution represent a gain for the working class and oppressed peoples. But they must be considered in relation to the falling back of the revolution in Western Europe, and to its effects, in order to arrive at a more balanced and exact appreciation of the progress of the revolution.

If the revolution had resulted in one or several advanced industrial countries such as Germany or Italy, this, added to the victories in certain backward countries, would have sealed the fate of capitalism in Europe and in Asia and have forced the Soviet bureaucracy back into a

The Kremlin is perfectly aware of the threat which the European revolution implies for its rule. This is what has motivated its efforts to block and wipe out the developments of it which are taking place today (the French General Strike).

To prevent the rise of an independent socialist workers' power in Western Europe is an indispensable condition for maintaining the rule of the Soviet bureaucracy. The Kremlin can tolerate up to a certain point the revolutions in the colonies and the backward countries and manoeuvre in relation to them. But it fears the extension of the revolution in

Western Europe because this means its death sentence.

Making a general review and drawing a balance sheet of what the advance of the ^{international} revolution has won between 1943 and 1953 leads to this conclusion. Despite its considerable achievements and its still more considerable possibilities, the fact that the revolution has not been able to conquer in any of the principal industrial countries has, up until now, prevented the revolutionary forces of the working class from becoming strong enough to overthrow the Kremlin oligarchy and to give an irresistible impulsion to the disintegration of Stalinism. This qualitative modification in the world relations between the class forces has not yet taken place.

Up to the present, the counter-revolutionary intervention of the bureaucracy in world politics has held back the objective conditions for its realisation. It has led to the retreat of the revolution in Western Europe, has weakened the working class in the face of the class enemy and encouraged the mobilisation of world counter-revolution. The struggle between the revolutionary and the counter-revolutionary forces has not yet ended, far from it. And precisely this uncertain situation which the Kremlin does its best to maintain today works in its favour."

This kind of accountant's balance of the development of the world revolution is deeply anti-dialectical and cannot give an account of it in a living, that is, a real way. It is true that the proletarian revolution was contained in the advanced capitalist powers of Europe. The state apparatuses were reconstructed. Capitalist production was got going again. A new division of labour was instituted. A world market was reconstituted. With the political help of the bureaucracy of the Kremlin, the economic, military and political power of USA permitted the imperialist system to be restructured.

But, we must repeat, USA did this at the price of accepting the burden of all the contradictions of the system, of incorporating them within its own contradictions, of a gigantic parasitism which undermined the foundations of the capitalist system in USA itself. Particularly, if US imperialism succeeded in imposing a certain unity on the world imperialist system, it did not succeed in changing the relation of forces between the classes, as

these resulted from the revolutionary wave at the end of the war. The balance of the system as a whole and in particular in Europe remained particularly unstable and fragile, though fluctuating. To be sure, "the revolution had not conquered in one or more of the most developed industrial countries, such as Germany or Italy, in parallel with its victories in certain backward countries, which would have settled accounts with the capitalist regime in Europe and Asia and overthrown the bureaucracy of the Kremlin", but, far from "becoming weaker", from being weakened in relation to its class enemies, the proletariat became considerably stronger, socially and politically, without decisive class battles being joined. The analysis in the document of the SWP shows a failure to understand the unity of all the world relations - without their ceasing to be diversified - following the Second World War and the revolutionary wave which it raised.

The revolutionary wave of the end of the war was contained, but it strongly re-inforced the world proletariat and brought together class relations very closely in Europe and the world. The unquestionable crisis of the bureaucracy of the Kremlin and of its international apparatus, which was already revealing itself so clearly in the years 1950-53, had no origin other than this. US imperialism strained both the relations between classes in the capitalist countries and the social antagonisms in USSR and Eastern Europe, when it undertook the cold war, starting from class relations that were unstable and favourable to the working class.

While this resolution did re-affirm the bourgeois character of the Kremlin bureaucracy, it wrote:

"It is true that world conditions militate against the conclusion of any enduring agreement of the Kremlin bureaucracy with imperialism or of its puppets with the national bourgeoisie."

In reality, the Kremlin bureaucracy and its international apparatus had to maintain and tighten their links with imperialism, and especially with US imperialism, in consideration of the relations between the classes on the world scale. Counter-revolutionary co-operation with imperialism became more and more the dominant feature of the entire national and international policy of the Kremlin, of its international apparatus and the satellite bureaucracies. Not only did the possibility of manoeuvre between two rival imperialisms, as before the Second World War, no longer exist, but

that of utilising the movement of the masses under strict control to exert pressure on imperialism and to make it relax its grip were likewise becoming more and more exhausted. Furthermore, the Kremlin bureaucracy and the satellite bureaucracies were under the obligation of pleading with imperialism for the means to relax the growing social and political contradictions in USSR and the countries of Eastern Europe.

The political power of the Kremlin bureaucracy reached its zenith at the end of the Second World War, and permitted it to negotiate the division of the world into zones of influence, dealing with US imperialism on a basis of equality. This political power was declining. The parasitic bureaucracies were more and more openly coming up against the masses of USSR and of the countries of the East. The bureaucracy of the Kremlin was deeply divided. Its international apparatus was shaken. The antagonisms between the bureaucracies were sharpening.

The International Committee was Incapable of Arming the International Theoretically and Politically

In what respect was the analysis of "Rise and Decline of Stalinism" revisionist and mystificatory? The document of the SWP, as we have seen, substantially answered this question, by pointing out that it believed that the social nature of the Kremlin bureaucracy and its place in the world class struggle had changed, under the pretext that the power of the working class was growing. In that document, the Kremlin bureaucracy became, like the Communist Parties, a factor, and, in the last analysis, the principal factor, in the struggle against and victory over imperialism. The dialectic of the class struggle gave place to vulgar evolutionism.

On the contrary, the closer and closer unity of the world class struggle led to a "purification" of relations between the classes on a world scale. The character of the Kremlin bureaucracy, of its international apparatus and of its satellite bureaucracies, as an agency of the bourgeois counter-revolution, on the international scale including the USSR and the countries of the East, became clearer. This was a result of the urgent and unchanging need for the proletarian revolution in the West and in the East alike. At the same time as the growing force of the proletariat, socially and politically, in the countries which remained within the framework of the capitalist mode of production, made more and more difficult the destruction of the relations of production which were born from the October revolution and have been spread to the Eastern Europe, like the production relations derived from the Chinese Revolution.

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But the dialectic of the class struggle, far from preventing the conclusion of any lasting agreement between imperialism and the Kremlin bureaucracy, on the contrary, exerted a pressure towards lasting counter-revolutionary collaboration between imperialism and the bourgeoisie (whether national bourgeoisies or not), the Kremlin bureaucracy, its international apparatus and the satellite bureaucracies. The political weakening of the Kremlin bureaucracy obliged it to subordinate itself more closely to imperialism, while it was less and less in a position to overthrow the production relations derived from the October revolution. This has led to a situation of permanent and insoluble crisis. But the crisis does not mean that the problem disappears. On the contrary, the crisis of the parasitic bureaucracies compels them to fight all the harder against the proletariat and the threatening revolution, supporting imperialism and supporting itself on imperialism.

The weakness of the analyses of the International Committee lay in that this unity of the world proletarian revolution, which is not only historic but immediate, and which dominated all world relations and the alignment of social forces, was dissolved and replaced by an analysis based on sectors, on statements of fact and a balance of gains and losses.

In reality, even though the text of the SWP which we have just quoted defends the principled and programmatic positions of the Fourth International, the enormous pressure of US imperialism on the American masses, the enormous difficulties of the SWP and its retreat to the ground of the national "reality" are manifested in the text. It is obvious that the meaning and importance of the revolutionary movement in East Germany and of the General Strike of August 1953 in France had not been understood, a few months after these events, from the viewpoint of the unity of the proletarian revolution in Europe and in the world. And we have to say that at that time it was the SWP which set the tone within the International Committee of the Fourth International. While the International Committee fought for the defence of the principles and the programme, it was none the less unable to arm the International and its sections politically, any more than the International Secretariat had been able to do so before the Third World Congress. In other words, the International Committee was unable to undertake the role of leadership.

The International Committee was to reveal its extreme political weakness on another, still more decisive level. As we have seen, it had announced that "the International Secretariat of the Pablo-ite usurpers had forfeited its power". It announced

that it represented the vast majority of the Trotskyist forces of the International. It summoned all the leaderships of the sections of the Fourth International to make contact with it, as the representative of the Trotskyist programme. In a certain sense, the International Committee was announcing itself as a new leadership of the Fourth International. And what then?

In fact, matters remained where they were. No initiative was taken to organise, for example, a world congress of the Fourth International, open to all sections of the Fourth International, with the crisis of the Fourth International and Pablo-ite revisionism on the agenda, proceeding to an analysis of the world situation, opening a new perspective and forming a new organisational framework within which the Fourth International could function. No political or organisational offensive was undertaken against the "deposed International Secretariat of the Pablo-ite usurpers". During this time, the latter took advantage of the formal legality of the Fourth International and convened in peace the pseudo-"Fourth World Congress of the Fourth International".

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE AND THE PREPARATION OF THE PABLO-ITE CONGRESS

Thus, on January 26, 1954, Leslie Goonawardene wrote to J.P.Cannon, in the name of the Central Committee of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Ceylon):

"Our opinion is that the calling of a world congress of the Fourth International by a provisional committee formed by a majority consisting of the American, British and Swiss sections, would be a catastrophe for the whole of our movement. We understand the documents of the provisional committee as meaning that they are preparing a separate and rival world congress (to that of the IS). If that happened, the consequences could be incalculable. It could decisively render the forces of Trotskyism impotent, in a decisive period of world history."

J. P. Cannon replied in a letter dated February 23, 1954:

"For our theory and practice, organisational measures, important as they may be, in and by themselves, flow from and are subordinate to political principles and aims. Without agreement on the latter, it is usually completely useless to count on real co-operation in the former. Political disagreements, of course, do not exclude such organisational compromises as are necessary to ensure the normal

functioning of the movement while disputed questions are under discussion, prior to a decision with the informed participation of the membership. As past experience shows, however, the efficacy and even the possibility of such organisational compromises are usually determined both by the extent of the differences and the good will of both sides.

Do the necessary conditions for such a compromise now prevail in the Fourth International? Or if, as we are convinced, they do not prevail, can they be imposed by the intervention of responsible organisations, such as yours, which have not yet taken a definitive position on _____ of either of the contending factions? We are open to conviction on this point, and ready to consider any proposals put forward in good faith.

I feel obliged to state at the outset, however, that in my opinion the prospects for the success of your endeavour, in the given state of affairs, are not very good. At any rate, there should be no illusions of a quick solution by a single action. Realism must compel us to _____ that, as the result of a long chain of circumstances, the Fourth International stands on the brink of a definitive split. The most that could be realistically hoped for now is that a counter-process might be set in motion. Manoeuvres along this line will do no good; but honest proposals, which conform to the realities of the situation, can count on our co-operation.

Our willingness to encourage any sincere effort in this direction even at this late hour must also be taken together with the distinct understanding that our political position cannot be compromised; and that the necessary discussion, now just at its beginning, cannot be summarily shut off or stifled by any administrative decisions on the part of anybody. Eventual decisions by a Congress must come after the decision, not before it."

Later on, he wrote:

"The hour is late; but in my opinion the present drift toward a definitive international split, signalled by the holding of separate Congresses, can possibly be arrested, and the definitive split prevented or delayed, on certain conditions."

Later again, he wrote:

"... the orthodox Trotskyist fraction (has not) yet projected an international congress; and I believe that it will refrain from doing so until the discussion

is completed and all the sections - not merely the leading committees but the organisations as a whole - have had adequate time and opportunity to study and discuss the questions in dispute and make their decisions.

The Pablo-ite IEC, on the contrary, has simultaneously announced the exclusion of all its opponents, including ten of the elected members of the IEC, and set a date for the holding of the "Fourth Congress". These cannot be recognised as anything but deliberate actions, designed, first, to split the movement and then to formalise the split by a so-called Congress. In order to prevent or, at least, delay, the definitive split, your first demand, therefore, should be for the postponement of this announced Congress of the Pablo-ite faction. The SWP, on its part, has already suggested to the International Committee of the Fourth International that it defer action on a formal Congress, and will repeat the suggestion once again."

J. P. Cannon developed a whole series a series of pertinent considerations:

"I must tell you frankly that I think the LSSP entered on a dangerous path when it adopted its resolution condemning the publication of our Open Letter, in advance of taking a position on the political questions in dispute. Unless the LSSP radically changes the political line expounded in its press, it will be compelled to recognise - and that in the very near future - that its line is contrary to the line of the Pablo-ites and very near to, if not identical with, the line of the SWP. Meanwhile, your action gave objective political support to the Pablo-ites and more in their favour than all the stereotyped resolutions of the Pablo-ite hand-raisers.

I have the definite impression that your action was motivated by the conception that the formal unity of the international movement is the most important consideration at the moment, and by your sincere desire to maintain this unity. If my impression is correct, your action contained a double error. Formal unity is not our first, nor even our second, principle; it is not the most important question in the present situation; and your action did not serve the cause of unity anyway.

The first concern of the "old Trotskyists" has always been, and should be now, the defence of our doctrine. That is the first principle. The second principle, giving life to the first, is the protection of the historically-created cadres against any attempt to disrupt or disperse them. At the best, formal unity

stands third in the order of importance.

The cadres of the "old Trotskyists" represent the accumulated capital of the long struggle. They are the carriers of the doctrine; the sole human instruments now available to bring our doctrine - the element of socialist consciousness - into the mass movement. The Pablo camarilla set out deliberately to disrupt these cadres, one by one, in one country after another. And we set out, no less deliberately - after too long a delay - to defend the cadres against this perfidious attack. Our sense of responsibility to the international movement imperatively required us to do so. Revolutionary cadres are not indestructible. The tragic experience of the Comintern taught us that." ("Trotskyism versus Revisionism", Vol. 2, pp.94ff.)

The Central Committee of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party was to adopt, later on, a declaration about the text "Rise and Decline of Stalinism". It made proposals about the ^{postponement} report of the Pablo-ite Congress and the preparation of a common Congress. In the course of the meeting of the International Committee on May 11, 1954, the Committee voted for the following resolution on these points:

"The International Committee notes with satisfaction the political declaration of the LSSP on the Pablo-ite IS document: 'The Rise and Fall of Stalinism', which was adopted unanimously by its CC on April 24, 1954, and characterised as 'leading to a fundamental revision of the positions of Trotskyism in relation to Stalinism but also denies to the Trotskyist movement all justification for its own independent existence.'

The International Committee records its fundamental agreement with this resolution of the CC of the LSSP, and considers it an essential step forward towards the realisation of the political regrouping of the immense majority of the International on the basis of the Trotskyist Programme."

J. P. Cannon wrote in another letter to Leslie Goonawardene, dated May 12:

"We note that your proposal for a Congress postponement was rejected, and announcement is made of the decision to proceed with the previously scheduled Congress of the Pablo-ites. As stated in my letter of February 23, such a Congress can only be a congress of a faction. Its results can only be to formalise the international split, and put an end to the possibility of setting in motion a process which might lead to the formal re-unification of the movement. The

Trotskyist forces organised in the International Committee have no intention of attending or recognising this so-called congress, organised and arranged without their participation."

Cannon explained, in a letter to Farrell Dobbs dated June 5:

"I think it will be better to ignore the Pablo-ite gathering and give it no publicity whatever in our press...

Our reference to the 'Pablo-ite faction', which we have used up till now, and which is also used in Murry's article this week, has been correct for the whole period from our November Plenum up until the present time. But if the scheduled gathering of the Pablo-ites declares itself to be the Fourth Congress, further references to them as 'a faction of the Fourth International' would be inappropriate. Thereafter they should be designated simply as secessionists, but not as a faction of the Fourth International; and in no case as the Congress, IEC or IS of the Fourth International.

After the Pablo-ite Congress, it will be time for the Trotskyist groups to begin an international discussion of new documents of their own on the world situation. It would be a good idea for those concerned to consider the questions to be dealt with in the resolutions and assign the writing of drafts. Once acceptable drafts are approximately agreed upon, they could be published in the International Bulletin and in our Internal Bulletin and a discussion opened preparatory to a real Congress to reconstitute the bona fide Trotskyist Fourth International."

The Responsibilities of the Leadership of the SWP

On July 14, 1954, Farrell Dobbs informed J. P. Cannon:

"We have defeated the Pablo-ites in the political struggle since publication of the Open Letter. As a result a three way division was manifested at the rump congress: the Pablo-ite liquidators, the Germainist conciliators who have made political concessions to Pablo, and the Ceylonese to whom Pablo has made political concessions.

The rump congress made contradictory decisions. In proclaiming itself as the "Fourth Congress", it moved in the direction of a split. The political concessions to the Ceylonese, on the other hand, implied moves ^{tion} in the direction of unity. These decisions of an opposite character were intended to bind together

the contradictory forces at the rump congress in order to hold them together. The Ceylonese could not be induced to go along with Pablo without political concessions. The Cochranites on the other hand would probably have split if the rump congress had not been proclaimed the 'Fourth Congress'.

We now face the question: shall we insist that the act of proclaiming the "Fourth Congress" consummates a definitive split, or shall we accept the Ceylonese proposal to form a parity commission for the organisation of a joint discussion and preparation of a joint conference?"

In fact, the Pablo-ite Congress proclaimed itself to be the "Fourth World Congress of the Fourth International" and ratified the document "Rise and Decline of Stalinism", seasoned with a few amendments, and the document, "Our integration in the real movement of the masses", which developed the the Trotskyist organisations, as well as the following resolution: "On the Unity of the International Trotskyist Movement":

"The Fourth World Congress declare that it believes the re-establishment of the unity of the Trotskyist movement possible and desirable.

With this object, it decides:

1. To address all the groups which were members of the Fourth International at the time of the IIIrd World Congress and which have not subsequently taken part in the IVth World Congress, to invite them to re-establish the unity of the international Trotskyist movement, within the framework of the centralised world party which is the International:
2. When unity has been re-established, a plenum of the IEC will be called, to give them proportional representation in all the leading bodies of the International. This plenum will then decide to convene an international Conference and to open a new international discussion:
3. In the event that these groups decide that unity cannot be re-established until after a preceding conference and discussion have taken place, a commission of the new IEC will be ready to examine with them the forms of common organisation of such a discussion and such a conference, nine months at least after the closure of the IVth World Congress:
4. A commission of the new IEC will contact these groups immediately after the World Congress has been held, to explain and to defend the present resolut-

ion".

J. P. Cannon restrained somewhat the enthusiasm of Dobbs, when he replied on July 16, 1954:

2. "It is not quite correct to say that we have defeated the Pablo-ites in the political struggle since the publication of the Open Letter, but we have certainly made headway."

But he replied to the questions which Dobbs posed, in the following way:

5. "I agree, of course, with your position that if the Pablo-ites want to negotiate about unity, or any steps possibly leading towards it, they will have to deal directly with the International Committee, and give up their round-about approaches...
6. An agreement with the Pablo-ites to form a parity commission with representatives of the International Committee, to jointly arrange a discussion in preparation for a prospective joint congress, would in itself be a big gain for the Trotskyists, regardless of whether such a parity commission eventually arrived at a joint congress. The discussion will decide that, and there will be plenty of time. If we are able, through a jointly-edited Bulletin to reach some of the undecided and misinformed people, who have been deliberately kept in ignorance of the issues, we will be bound to gain something in any case.
7. If such a parity commission is agreed upon, it will not be necessary for us to present any ultimatic formulations at its first meeting. The fact of the agreement for a parity commission would speak for itself. A little later, if it appears that there is a prospect of the Pablo-ites agreeing to a formal parity commission, I would suggest some formulations which the International Commission representatives can use to let the Pablo-ites save a little face without yielding anything essential to them"

Tactical questions are of great importance. None the less, the reader may ask himself: is this ^{really} the way to carry on a struggle against a revisionist centre? All the evidence shows that the LSSP was playing a double game. It did not even hold the balance equally between the International Committee and the "International Secretariat" - which ^{even} then would not have been acceptable. To be sure, they condemned revisionism "in principle". To be sure, they were for postponing the Pablo-ite World Congress. To be sure, they were for a "parity commission" to pre-

pare a common congress. But they took part in the Pablo-ite Congress, which they regarded as the "Fourth World Congress of the Fourth International". They accepted the documents which were proposed. They fudged up with Pablo the proposal for a "parity commission" in the conditions defined by the resolution quoted above, which committed Pablo to nothing whatever. How can we fail to draw the conclusion that they covered Pablo, that they were "His Majesty's Opposition"?

How could Cannon and the leadership of the SWP, who bore down with all their weight on the International Committee of the Fourth International, have shown themselves to be so innocent?

The crisis of the Fourth International, which took form in 1950 was first and above all the crisis of the leadership of the Fourth International. It was to make the International Secretariat into the liquidationist centre which the International Committee so justly denounced. But, if it took form, if it developed, if the International Secretariat became the liquidationist centre, the reason is that the other leaders showed themselves to be incapable of shouldering the tasks which history laid upon them. This is true, in particular, for the leadership of the SWP, the responsibility of whom was also a particular one, because of the particular place which the SWP occupies in the history of the Fourth International. Its leadership abdicated its international responsibilities, up to the moment when in 1953 the SWP itself was directly involved. After the formation of the International Committee, it equally failed to undertake the new responsibilities which fell to its lot.

Let us agree that the proposals of the LSSP had to be taken into consideration from a tactical point of view. Let us agree that a Congress organised by the International Committee would have been premature and inadequate. Was it not all the more necessary to organise and to open the political discussion inside as well as outside the International Committee, and to draw the critical balance-sheet of the first fifteen years of the existence of the Fourth International. They should not have restricted themselves to establishing the fact that the International Secretariat had become the centre for liquidating the Fourth International. They should have analysed the causes and laid down a line of construction or reconstruction of the Fourth International, at the same time as they analysed the world relationships and opened a perspective of politically re-arming the sections of the International Committee. None of this was done. The International Committee restricted itself to re-stating its principled positions. This was indispensable, but it in no way sufficed to struggle against and to overcome the liquidationist centre or to construct or re-construct the Fourth International.

The "parity commission" of the pseudo-"Fourth World Congress" had no reality. The LSSP continued to belong to the Pablo-ite "International Secretariat", which, in return, permitted it to conduct a deeply opportunist policy in Ceylon without the slightest interference. The "International Secretariat" carried forward its policy of liquidating Trotskyist organisations throughout the world. For example, it tried to destroy the POR in Bolivia and liquidated the great possibilities of constructing powerful sections of the Fourth International which existed in Latin America. It continued to prostitute Trotskyism and the name of the Fourth International. It grew stronger as an obstacle to the construction of the Fourth International and its sections.

From time to time, the International Committee published "declarations" about this or that important event. There was no Congress. There was not even a real conference until 1963. The International Committee confined itself to playing the role of a liaison committee between the Trotskyist organisations which denounced Pablo-ism. During this time, the "International Secretariat" continued to function as if it were the Fourth International, holding "International Executive Committees" several times a year and, at regular dates, "World Congresses" with all the ritual.

Passive as the International Committee may have been, its existence none the less presented a number of problems to the Pablo-ite "International Secretariat". It particularly forced upon the "International Secretariat" the use of a certain language and certain formulae of "Trotskyism". On the other hand, the development of the world class struggle and of world relations, which did not obey the schemas of the IIIrd and IVth Congresses, These had necessarily to be modified, and certain of the themes of Pablo-ism had to be reworked in form.