

Stalin Has Signed the Death Certificate of the Third International

Open Letter To the World Proletariat

Ed. Note.—Turbulent conditions in France occasioned by the fall of the cabinet, new aggressions by Italy against Abyssinia, generally the growing tenseness in the world, daily driving humanity nearer to the new imperialist holocaust, make it imperative that the working class be armed with a revolutionary policy before its outbreak. The following appeal of the International Secretariat of the International Communist League with which the Workers Party has established fraternal relations is in basic agreement with the statement of the National Committee of the W. P. on the Franco-Soviet Alliance printed in the last issue of the New Militant, and sheds valuable light upon many of the questions being asked by the workers in connection with these epoch-making events.

Stalin together with the renegade Laval has signed the death certificate of the Third International. Today, there is not a single worker, even the most politically backward who is unaware that the Soviet bureaucrats have just publicly, decisively betrayed the international proletariat. For the first time Stalin has openly said what is, i.e., in full view of the entire world he has repudiated revolutionary internationalism and passed over to the platform of social patriotism. He has informed his lackeys in France of his open betrayal through the medium of a bourgeois minister, who is himself a traitor to the working class in his own country. The hired bureaucrats of French Stalinism have immediately drawn from it all the necessary conclusions, and Vaillant-Courtourier (an editor of l'Humanite, organ of the French C.P.—Ed.) in his article adds ignominy to betrayal.

While the proletarian masses mobilize themselves on the revolutionary road, while the peasant strata are seething and are vigorously intervening in the political struggle, while the petty bourgeoisie, directly hit by the economic crisis which is steadily deepening, is becoming radicalized as a whole, this bureaucrat has the audacity to write that there is no longer any room for the independent activity of the proletariat in its revolutionary struggle against its own bourgeoisie, that all efforts are to be averted and that to save off the invasion of the U.S.S.R. nothing remains except to place faith in French imperialism. Crawling on his belly he consummates the betrayal of his master.

In the eyes of everyone the Third International has become the diplomatic agent of Stalinism loaded down with blunders and crimes, which has just openly taken the decisive step on the road to civil peace.

Brest-Litovsk and the Franco-Russian Pact

The Stalin-Laval pact rests on the same plane as the Brest-Litovsk peace. The Soviet government enters into a military alliance with an imperialist government not at its own whim, but in order not to be annihilated. In any case, that is its only justification. The Brest-Litovsk peace was a defeat; while the Franco-Russian pact has been proclaimed for all those who care to listen a great victory for the U.S.S.R. It is unnecessary to attempt a comparison between the relation of forces in 1918 and at the present time. The facts speak for themselves. Whatever the differences in the world situation and in the relationship of forces, the Franco-Soviet treaty from the standpoint of principles and politics rest entirely upon the same plane as the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Should, then, the Communists and Socialists vote in parliament for the ratification of the Franco-Soviet agreement? And this too regardless of the question of whether or no Soviet diplomacy was really forced to sign this treaty?

Let us recall the historic example of Brest-Litovsk. The German Social Democrats voted in the Reichstag for ratifying it, claiming that since the Bolsheviks had accepted it there was no reason whatever for their opposing it. The Bolsheviks replied to them, "You swine. We are objectively compelled to negotiate in order not to be annihilated, but as for you—you are politically free to vote for or against, and your vote implies whether or not you place confidence in your own bourgeoisie."

If we allowed that the Soviet Government is really compelled to conclude a military alliance with French imperialism, the proletariat of the latter country does not at all have to do so. By their votes in parliament the Socialist and Communist deputies are not called upon to express themselves upon the reason and motives for the action of the Soviet government but solely upon the reasons and motives of the Laval-Laval government. If they vote confidence in it, they are the same swine as

the German social democrats of 1918.

Only yesterday, Thorez and Co. (leader of French C.P.—Ed.) swore that "We love our country, but we cannot countenance national defense under the capitalist regime." If this formula has any meaning it implies that we cannot confide to the hands of our bourgeoisie the task of defending "our country" (which besides is not "ours"). Today we are told, "with throbbing hearts we shall make common cause with our bourgeoisie in the defense of the U.S.S.R." We want to know, "how is it that the French bourgeoisie which is not good enough to defend 'our deeply loved country,' proves itself good enough for the defense of the U.S.S.R.?" This is the nub of the question. There can be no middle-of-the-road. The very same people will be obliged to proclaim, "with throbbing hearts we shall make common cause with our bourgeoisie to defend our people against the barbarism of Hitler, because the French people has the right to call for the same sacrifices on the part of its heroes as the Russian people."

There is nothing new in the new position of the Communist Party. It is social-patriotism.

Has the War Danger a National Address?

"But the immediate danger comes from German fascism," it will be said, "so it is necessary to make a bloc against it." Such an argument suffices for this or that diplomatic combination of the Moscow government. But this conception has nothing in common with Marxism. We have always maintained that the danger of war is the inevitable product of world imperialist antagonisms. German fascism as well as the dangers of war are the products of the colossal productive forces of German capitalism that seek for outlets, and that must seek for outlets, whatever the political regime of the country. The most progressive capitalist regimes of Europe are stifling within the framework of the national state. France is marching hand in hand with fascist Italy and with quasi-democratic England against fascist Germany.

Have we forgotten that the revolutionary activity during the last war consisted precisely in denouncing the propaganda of the allies who spoke in the name of democracy against the Prussian junkers and the Hohenzollerns? The old catchwords are being refurbished to camouflage imperialist antagonisms by means of sham conflicts between political systems.

On this road one quickly arrives at the idealization of French democracy as such counterposed to Hitler Germany.

Here again, there is no middle-of-the-road. We repeat: "It is the policy of social patriotism."

The conception of the "aggressor" is very handy for the feudal work of diplomacy, but it is fatal or the orientation of the proletariat. To checkmate the alleged aggressor France protects Mussolini, allowing him a free field for action in Abyssinia, and also as regards Austria. And it is precisely the tightening grip of Italy on Austria which may fan to white heat German nationalism and lead to the outbreak of the war. Involved here are the permanent antagonisms which are deepening and sharpening. On the other hand their inevitable explosion and the preventive measures of the capitalist states can and must cause the catastrophe.

Social Patriotism Is Driving the U.S.S.R. to Ruin

We will be told in answer, "All this may perhaps be true, but isn't it necessary all the same to save ourselves from the most immediate danger which is the very same Hitler Germany?" Let us observe first of all that only yesterday the Comintern advanced in Germany the slogan of "national liberation" which is impossible without a war. Today the Communist International wants to defend the Versailles status quo in order to escape war. He is lost who abandons the position of the class struggle and of the international revolution and who begins to seek safety outside of the revolutionary struggle against one's own government in one's own country. Today the betrayal will be covered by the plea of the need to "save peace," tomorrow when war breaks out nevertheless, the betrayal will be perpetuated in order to save democracy or to save the U.S.S.R. But neither peace nor democracy nor the U.S.S.R. can be saved by the surrender of the French proletariat.

If after Germany has been annihilated for the second time, France, Italy and England turn against their temporary ally, does anyone believe that it will be possible on the spur of the moment to sever at a single stroke the proletariat from the bourgeoisie which, with the aid of the working class parties will have succeeded in raising itself as the master of the nation, and that has gagged and demoralized the

Announcement of Betrayal!

"And now I answer a question that has been put to me: 'In case of such a war launched by Hitler against the U.S. S. R., would you apply your slogan: transformation of the Imperialist war into the civil war?'"

"Well, no! because in such a war it is not an imperialist war that is involved, a war between two imperialist gangs, it is a war against the Soviet Union."

Extract from a speech by Maurice Thorez, leader of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France, delivered in Paris on May 17, 1935, and reproduced in the party's official organ, l'Humanite of May 24, 1935.

working class through civil peace? To fritter away the only capital we possess, the revolutionary independence of the proletariat, in return for precarious, equivocal, and unstable diplomatic combinations would be tantamount to walling up the avenue to the revolutionary future. The basic crime of reformism lies precisely in the fact that chasing after the shadows of reforms, it castrated the proletariat by class collaboration. This policy is ten times, one hundred times, a thousand times more criminal at a time when it is a question not of a peaceful period of parliamentary combinations but of a war which concentrates all the instruments of oppression and destruction in the hands of the bourgeoisie and leaves the proletariat only its sole and only weapon: its political independence, its hatred of the bourgeoisie, its revolutionary will.

Moreover, who has the right to declare that the docile submission of the French proletariat to its own bourgeoisie must inevitably frighten German fascism and force it to retreat? Not only would this be a gratuitous assertion but just the contrary would prove the case in the long run.

The League of Nations and Blum's Faith

Leon Blum and Co. lament that the communists do not sufficiently conform to the statutes of the League. Yet the C.A.P. (National Committee of the French Socialist Party—Ed.) as early as January elaborated its famous program which proclaims the necessity of destroying the bourgeois state and of opposing to it the interests of the working people including the interests of the country. What is the League of Nations? It is also the mechanism of the bourgeois state, or of several bourgeois states, acting jointly, and at the same time antagonistic to one another. If the mechanism of the bourgeois state deserves only to be destroyed how can anyone stake the hopes for a better future upon the League of Nations which is the by-product of this very same mechanism?

The Betrayal of Stalin And the Crises in the U.S.S.R.

The U.S.S.R. participated actively at Geneva in the elaboration of measures against terrorism and terrorists. The assassination of the King of Yugoslavia was the reason for this incident. We, Marxists, have always been the opponents of individual terrorism, but we have also assumed the defense of national terrorists against imperialist oppression. This elementary tradition has now been abandoned, the U.S.S.R. has taken its place in the sphere of national struggles as the pillar of the established order and of the status quo.

In the light of the Stalin-Laval communique, the international working class is beginning to gain a better understanding of why Stalin undertook a new persecution of the Bolshevik-Leninists and of the Zinoviev group. Before finally delivering the Kremlin to the bourgeoisie he found it necessary to overwhelm and exterminate all those who might raise their voices in protest.

Stalinism to the Rescue Of Social Pacifism

The enemy is Stalinism! But the point in question is not to forget or overlook reformism. The treacherous policy of the Stalinists provides them with tremendous support. From now on Blum and Paul Faure (leaders of French S. P.—Ed.) openly spread the idea of the defense of the "national soil" because these phillistines themselves, likewise, do not approve of "unconditional" defense. This stupidity of wishing to "condition" the defense of the national bourgeoisie or of the proletariat state is clear to everyone. If our country as it is, is worthy of being defended, it must be defended no matter what the origin of the war may

be: it would be absurd to punish "our country" for the idocy of Laval and his colleagues. To us, it is the class character that is decisive and not the policy of the government. We are committed to oppose the war budgets of the most democratic governments of the bourgeois states, and we are pledged to defend the U.S.S.R. despite and against Stalin and his infamy.

But the absurdity of the "conditional" defense of the bourgeois state, bears, nevertheless, a grave political meaning. Were Blum to render to the bourgeoisie all that the latter demands, he would be unable to differentiate himself from Herriot, or even Louis Marin. He would lose the confidence of the working class, and become a cipher. By resorting to pacifism right up to the outbreak of the war he retains the possibility of rendering a double service to the bourgeoisie during the war; a large section of the working class will say to itself: "If this tried and true pacifist now joins the ranks of 'civil peace,' it is because the war has been foisted upon us, it is because the defense is just." In order to be able to achieve this mission Blum must reject as invalid the orders of Stalin. This perfidious game is enormously facilitated by the social patriotic turn of the Stalinists.

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It is the doctrine of Jauresism that democracy or the democratic state ("the bourgeois mechanism") envisages constant improvement of its fate and advances slowly but surely toward socialism. Viewed in this perspective the League of Nations must naturally have its place to regulate the international relations of the democrats.

Today not only Pivert and Zyromsky (prominent "lefts" in the S. P.—Ed.) but also Blum and Paul Faure are obliged to recognize the necessity to overthrow and destroy the mechanism of the bourgeois state. Under these conditions how can they maintain their faith in the League of Nations?

The same question presents itself on the subject of disarmament. Zyromsky expresses his regrets at the sight of his newly acquired friend Litvinov abandoning the slogans of disarmament in favor of collective security. The very same Zyromsky refuted in his last article, "social pacifism" in domestic policies, i.e. the hope of settling the social question amicably. Zyromsky is unable to understand that external social pacifism is the reverse side of the coin of internal social pacifism. If the bourgeoisie allows itself to be disarmed in order to secure peace it will be at the same time disarmed in the struggle against the proletariat. We find here the same contradiction as in the question concerning the League of Nations. We have at least the verbal recognition of the need for the proletariat to arm itself and to gain powerful strongholds in the bourgeois army in order to lead to the victory of the internal class struggle. At the time one busies oneself with securing peace under the capitalist regime through general disarmament. Why then make a revolution against a humanitarian bourgeoisie which will be disarmed through a covenant of the League of Nations?

The solution of this enigma is quite simple. These people haven't the slightest confidence either in a revolution or in the destruction of the mechanism of the bourgeois army. Moreover they demonstrate this by reiterating the slogan "disarm the fascist leagues." Zyromsky is unaware that this famous revolutionary demand is the most stupid incarnation of social pacifism.

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Must We Support Alliances Useful to the Workers Gov't?

In refutation it will be said, "Yet you Bolshevik-Leninists yourselves recognize the right of the Soviet government to conclude alliances with imperialist states for its immediate safety. Is it then not our duty as the French workers to support these alliances insofar as they are useful to the workers' government?"

No, never! We have already pointed out why the German socialists were duty-bound to fight against the Brest-Litovsk peace although it was absolutely necessary for the continued existence of the Soviets at the given moment.

Let us take this very same question more concretely and more practically. Revolutionary defeatism doesn't at all imply the sabotage of the sham national defense by an active minority. It would be absurd to attribute to revolutionary workers the idea of blowing up bridges and railroads, etc. etc. . . . in case of war. The revolutionary workers, insofar as they are the minority, participate in the war as the slaves of imperialism who are conscious of their enslavement. At the same time they prepare through agitation the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war.

Should the U.S.S.R. succeed in securing the military assistance of the French bourgeoisie in the event of aggression on the part of German imperialism (which is by the way by no means certain) this assistance supplied by the bourgeoisie in power will in no way be hindered by the fact that the revolutionary minority will continue to fulfill its duty in incessantly preparing for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, whatever may be the military assistance of the imperialist general staff (and it will always be precarious, equivocal and perfidious).

The revolutionary repercussions which will be engendered in Germany by the revolutionary movement in France will provide another sort of effective assistance for the salvation of the U.S.S.R. as well as for the development of the world revolution.

Should the revolutionary movement in France, in the event of

war, gain such force as to directly threaten the military machine of the bourgeoisie and imperil its alliance with the U.S.S.R., it would imply that the French proletariat is capable of seizing power at the height of the struggle. Should they perhaps be restrained in such a situation? Let them say it. Will we run the risk of defeat? Obviously. Revolution, like war, carries risk with it since danger is the essential element in it. But only wretchedness from an international situation which is brimful of mortal dangers without incurring any risks whatever.

Thus revolutionary defeatism does not prevent the Soviet government on its own responsibility from profiting by such and such a pact or this and that imperialist military assistance. But these fleeting transactions cannot and must not in any way commit the French and the world proletariat whose task is, above all during the time of war, to prepare for the liquidation of imperialism through the victorious revolution.

The Pact is the Consequence of the Defeats Of the World Proletariat

The pact indicates weakness and not strength on the part of the U.S.S.R. This new treaty is the product of the defeat in China, in Germany, in Austria and Spain.

Since the world revolutionary factor has been weakened, the government of the U.S.S.R. found itself forced to adapt itself to the imperialist factor. That is the only correct formula for the Franco-Soviet treaty.

The Kremlin bureaucrats, who see only the strengthening of the U.S.S.R., thereby posit the independence of the workers' state from the world working class movement: the more defeats the latter suffers the stronger becomes the international position of the U.S.S.R. These are the statements of charlatans—they must be nailed to the pillory.

But if because of annihilation of the proletariat in a number of countries the Soviet government is compelled to fraternize temporarily with the oppressors of the French working class—this cannot be the ground for further weakening the latter by demoralizing it and thus still further worsening the international situation, of forcing the revolution to retreat and consequently placing the U.S.S.R. directly in danger.

Safety Lies in the Revolutionary Policy of the Proletariat

When events of world-wide importance are at stake, the revolutionary party has no right to permit itself to be motivated by secondary, episodic, conjunctural and always problematic considerations. It is necessary to be farsighted, prepared and accumulating the revolutionary strength of the class; it is in this manner that one can also best exert influence on all secondary questions: revolutionary policy is always the most practical. The enemy is Stalinism! It weakened the U.S.S.R. because it delivered the Chinese workers and peasants to the bureaucracy of the Kuomintang, the English workers to the bureaucracy of the trade unions, etc. . . . Frightened by the consequences it sought to play the card of adventurism, "third period." The results proved themselves even more fatal. Today Stalin and Co. have lost all confidence in the revolutionary forces. They resort to

pure diplomacy, that is to say, to the filthiest sort. They refuse to see anything except combinations with this or that imperialism against some other. They are above all afraid lest the French workers compromise their combinations. Thorez and Co. subscribe to this disgraceful attitude. They also deem the revolutionary movement to be an obstacle to the safety of the U.S.S.R. They accept the order to penalize and hamstring the revolution.

They openly become the Stalinist police over the French proletariat, and what is more, the Stalinist police become at the same time the police of French imperialism.

Socialism in one Country Ends in Civil Peace

When we, the Bolshevik-Leninists, began our struggle against the theory of socialism in one country it may have seemed that only an academic question was under discussion. Today the historical function of this formula may be clearly seen: it has for its task to sever the fate of the U.S.S.R. from the fate of the world proletariat. It has created a national base for the Soviet bureaucracy which allowed it to concentrate all the power in its own hands. The new law which extends capital punishment to children 12 years old reveals with fearful eloquence not only that the U.S.S.R. is still at a considerable remove from socialism but that under the domination of the omnipotent bureaucracy the social decomposition of wide strata of workers and peasants has attained formidable proportions despite all the technological conquests bought so dearly by the workers and peasants. And it is precisely at the moment when the war danger threatens the state founded by the October Revolution that the Government of the U.S.S.R. draws the final conclusions from the theory of socialism in one country, prostituting the A B C of Marxism and degrading the Comintern to the role played by Scheidemann, Noske, Renaudel, Vandervelde and Co.

The Third International Is Dead! Long Live The Fourth International!

When after the capitulation of the Communist International before Hitler, we proclaimed: it is the "August 4th" of the Third International, we met with not a few protests. "August 4th," we were told was a conscious betrayal while the capitulation before Hitler was the inevitable consequence of false policy. Today we see how superficial are such purely psychological evaluations. The capitulation was the expression of the internal degeneration, a consequence of accumulated blunders and crimes. This degeneration implied in its turn the capitulation to imperialist war and a prelude to the capitulation before the imperialist bourgeoisie which is preparing for war. That is why the "August 4th" of the Third International was already lodged in the capitulation to Hitler. It is the great merit of the Bolshevik-Leninists that they stated this in time.

Leninism is betrayed and vilified by Stalinism. The urgent task of the hour is to reconstitute the ranks of the vanguard of the international proletariat. For this a banner and a program are necessary, and they can only be the banner and the program of the Fourth International. The Third International is dead. Love live the Fourth International! —International Secretariat of the International Communist League.

Pickets Slugged in Brutal Police Sally

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Party and Ohio U.L., were among those on the strike committee and a written agreement was signed between the union locals and the League. The morale of the strikers rose; evidences of militancy broke out despite the pacific attitude of the Columbus Federation of Labor.

Bosses Understand

If the tremendous importance of the strike was not apparent to the labor leaders of Columbus, it was certainly clear to the Chamber of Commerce. They realized that if the strike could be broken, union labor in Franklin County would be smashed. Therefore, every resource of the police force was placed at the disposal of the plant.

The fighting spirit of the strikers mounted to a furious pitch that forced recognition from the union leaders of the demand for action. It was decided to stop all trucks and scab cars on Thursday night. Over 200 cops and plain clothesmen were massed to meet the pickets. However, the 150 workers, Unemployed Leaguers, and sympathetic students who were on the picket line managed to stop and smash every scab car that tried to enter. Arthur Wedemeyer led the picket line all through the night. When it seemed that the plant would be effectively throttled, the hired thugs, masquerading under

Toledo Power Strike Ended by Pressure

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have strong progressive and militant tendencies, it is felt that his long association with the old-line A. F. of L. officialdom may influence him to agree to suspension of the strike under this terrific pressure.

The strike was called following lengthy negotiations with the Toledo Edison management, when union requests for a 20 percent wage-increase were flatly turned down. The Toledo Edison Co. is one of Henry L. Doughterty's holdings. It has been making enormous profits and has been exacting terrifically high rates from the consumers.

Failure of the strikers' representatives to issue statements or a strike-bulletin or leaflets to offset the unrestrained lies and frenzied distortions of the press has been a distinct weakness of the strike tactics so far.

Labor to actively support the strike; mass picketing of an effective character must be resumed; the power of the Chamber of Commerce and its hired strike-breakers, the police, must be smashed.

Sunday, June 9—Hike to Painesville, Broadway line to Dyckman St. Meet at Dyckman St. Ferry, 11 A.M. Auspices: Spartacus Youth League.

READ THE NEW MILITANT.