

# WORLD CONGRESS FOUNDS FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

## Congress Climaxes 15 Years' Struggle

### Fourth International Emerges From Fight Against Degeneration in the Third International

By MAX SHACHTMAN

Just as the main body of the Communist International came out of the Second International, so the roots of the Fourth International are to be traced to the beginnings of the crisis in the Third.

Fifteen years have elapsed since the movement now organized under the banner of the Fourth International first took shape. It arose in the form of the Opposition in the Russian Communist Party, variously called the "Moscow" or "1923" or "Trotskyist" Opposition. Uniting the best elements of the Old Guard and of the youth of the Party, and led by Leon Trotsky, it was the first to sound the alarm against the growing menace of degeneration in the ruling party and the revolution itself.

#### Against Bureaucratism

Significantly enough, the first blows dealt the ruling clique by the Opposition centered around the struggle against bureaucratism and for party and proletarian democracy. These questions were, however, inseparably associated, in the views of the Opposition, with the questions of the rhythm of industrialization of the country and the relationships to the Soviet peasantry, questions which were to play such an overwhelmingly decisive part in the further evolution of the Soviet Union.

The Opposition was supported by an unmistakable majority of the party and youth members in Moscow and numerous other important centers. But the almighty apparatus was in the hands of the notorious "triumvirate"—Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin. They proceeded to invent the bogeyman of "Trotskyism," to befuddle the minds of those they could not intimidate, and by the crassest manipulation of the party machinery they not only succeeded in voting down the Opposition but in accelerating the trend towards bureaucratic degeneration.

#### Rallied to the Opposition

It is interesting to note that from the very beginning, many of the most solid and ablest elements in the Communist International took a position either outrightly in favor of the Trotskyist Opposition or conciliatory to it. The leadership of the Polish party protested vigorously against the disloyal and dishonest assaults against the Opposition; it was answered—the reply soon became standardized—by having its leadership arbitrarily removed, its leader Domasky called to Moscow from which, years later, he was exiled, then imprisoned and, according to more recent reports, shot.

The founders and outstanding leaders of the French party took the position of the Trotskyists, and such figures as Rosper, Lorient, Souvarine, Louzon, Dunois, Menatte, Chambelland, and among the younger elements, Thorez (yes, the present Thorez!) ranged themselves alongside the Opposition, with early expulsion from the Comintern as their reward.

The German party leadership of the time—Brandier-Thalheimer—only "dissociated" itself from the Russian Opposition under the most severe pressure and threats of retaliation. The leadership of the Italian party, headed by Bor-

diga, also solidarized itself substantially with the Russian Opposition, and met the usual fate at the hands of the Kremlin machine. Virtually the entire party leadership in Belgium was arbitrarily ousted for the same reason. The same occurred in varying degrees in all the parties of the International.

#### Subsequent Struggles

In the course of the inner struggle which followed in the International, centering mainly around the question of the capitulation of the Stalinists to the British labor Bureaucracy, culminating in the fiasco of the 1926 General Strike and the notorious Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity Committee; of the Chinese Revolution, in which Stalin reduced the communist, the working class and peasant movements to so many serfs of the perfidious national bourgeoisie; of the domestic policy of the Soviet Union, which brought the country to the brink of catastrophe by favoring the well-to-do kulak and the labor aristocrat as against a policy, advocated by the Opposition, of a broad industrialization plan and the collectivization of agriculture; and above all, of the generalized theoretical expression of Stalinist reaction contained in its nationalistic concept of "socialism in a single country"—the original Moscow Opposition gained new support in a second layer of adversaries of Stalin.

Led by Zinoviev, Kamenev, Krupskaya and other former opponents of an alleged "Trotskyism," the Leningrad party organization joined with the Moscow revolutionists to form, in 1926-1927, the United Opposition Bloc. It was crushed even more savagely by the Stalin-Bukharin bloc than the 1923 Opposition had been. But not before significant international repercussions were heard. A whole section of the Comintern leadership which had been forced into power by Zinoviev's appointment, broke away from the Stalinists and came closer to the Opposition.

#### Other Breaks

These included the new German leadership of Maslow-Fischer-Urbans-Scholem; the French party leadership of Treint-Girault; the Neurath-Michalec group in Czechoslovakia; the Frey group in Austria. In the course of the next few years, new forces developed in the direction of the Opposition—Nin, Andrade and others in Spain, Chen Tu-hsiu in China, the Italian party leaders Feroci, Blasco and Santini, Spector and MacDonald in Canada, Diego Rivera in Mexico, Juan Antonio Mella in Cuba, Abern, Cannon and Shachtman in the United States and similar groups of active and leading militants, many of them founders of the International, in other lands.

Almost everywhere, their places were taken by unknown upstarts, young (and old) servile bureaucrats, people without ideas or character or principle, who were appointed today and as like as not demoted tomorrow as scapegoats for Stalin's catastrophic policies.

#### Process of Selection

Not all those who associated themselves at one time or another

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## Ten Years of the Fight To Build A Revolutionary Party in the US

By JAMES P. CANNON

The foundation congress of the Fourth International coincided, within the span of a few weeks, with the tenth anniversary of our struggle for bolshevism in the United States. On October 27, 1928 we raised the banner of the Russian Opposition (the Bolshevik-Leninists) in the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Therewith we broke all ties with the Stalinists and we never once looked back. These events—the formation of the American "Left Opposition" and the World Congress—mark two steps in one and the same uninterrupted struggle on an international as well as on a national scale. Their joint celebration in this issue of our paper is appropriate.

Our participation in the world congress which signaled the formal organization of the Fourth International was the logical outcome of our consistent adherence to the program we adopted as our own ten years ago. We have contributed something to the organization of the world movement. The Fourth International, in turn, now gives us a mighty impulse for further advances toward the American revolution.

#### Ten Years Strong

We are profoundly convinced that our ten years' struggle has prepared us for great things in the future and we face it with confidence. We have gained steadily, if all too slowly, from year to year. The basic program of ten years ago remains unchanged. The leadership, with important individual accretions and no significant defections, has maintained a ten-year continuity. We never suffered a single serious

split; disruptive and unassimilable elements, who periodically threatened our unity, were isolated and crushed every time. Beginning as the tiniest and poorest and most derided of all the radical labor groupings outside the camp of Stalinism, we have outstripped them all. By timely and successful fusions with all the genuinely revolutionary groupings and by shouldering the pretenders aside, we have gained the central position in the radical labor field.

Outside the Stalinist Party, which has been completely transformed into a cynical agency of imperialism in the labor movement, there are no cadres, no press, that can be compared to ours. This is not boasting—we have never been braggarts, never

pretended to be more than we are—but a plain statement of fact, which we can permit ourselves on this glorious tenth anniversary. Our party, at the end of the ten years' fight, has come to represent the revolutionary political movement in the United States and to be synonymous with it. We are not yet a mass party but we will become such. The foundations have been laid deep and strong.

#### Revolutionary Realities

In looking back through the ten-year period, which has been so rich in experience, we can easily distinguish three distinct stages in the development of our movement as the authentic successor of the once-revolutionary

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### The Pioneer Contingent



Martin Abern, James P. Cannon, and Max Shachtman, pioneers in the Communist movement in the United States who were the first, ten years ago, to raise the banner of revolt against the degeneration of the Communist International and who today stand in the front ranks of the Fourth International.

## Thirty Delegates From Eleven Countries Raise New Banner

### New International Created in Midst of European War Crisis Gives Voice to Revolutionary Opposition to Imperialist War

### YOUTH INTERNATIONAL FORMED

The Fourth International has been founded.

Meeting in the midst of the threatening war crisis in Europe, 30 delegates from eleven countries proclaimed the new World Party of the Socialist Revolution. A Youth International was simultaneously created.

The delegates represented organizations in the United States, France, Great Britain, Germany, the Soviet Union, Italy, Latin America, Poland, Belgium, Holland, and Greece.

Unable to send delegates because of conditions of distance, illegality, and other adverse factors, were organizations affiliated to the Fourth International in Spain, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Indo-China, China, French Morocco, the Union of South Africa, Canada, a number of Latin American countries, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, Norway, Lithuania, Palestine, Rumania, and several other countries. These organizations had already signified in advance their adherence to the new banner.

The world congress that raised the new internationalist banner met in strictest illegality "somewhere in Switzerland" on September 3, 1938. Because of the extremely difficult conditions engendered by the war crisis, observers elected to the Congress

## NINE COUNTRIES REPRESENTED AT YOUTH CONGRESS

### Delegates Gather Despite Many Obstacles

By NATHAN GOULD

In September 1938 the historic World Congress in Switzerland launched the Fourth International (World Party of the Socialist Revolution). One week later youth representatives from two continents gathered in the same city and convened the World Youth Conference of the Fourth International.

This conference culminated two months of intense preliminary work. Eight special commissions labored during these two months in the examination of facts regarding the situation of the world youth, investigated records, toured the national youth sections in Europe, drafted political documents and resolutions. Diligently, the commissions and the congress worked to meet the requirements of a great historical responsibility—to mobilize the youth of the world behind the Fourth International in the struggle for the Socialist emancipation of mankind.

#### 19 Delegates Attend

Nineteen delegates, from our sections in Poland, Austria, Belgium, England, France, Holland, and the U. S. A. participated. In addition, delegates from Italy, the U. S. A. and Greece were present as representatives of the International Bureau of the Fourth International. Meeting at the height of the European war crisis accompanied as it was by a rising wave of nationalism in the countries of Europe, and by blatant social-patriotic utterances by all Communist and Social-Democratic parties, the very representation at the conference itself symbolized the internationalism of a movement of world revolution.

That both conferences (adult and youth) were held despite countless obstacles—hounded by (Continued on page 3)

by the Workers and Peasants Socialist Party of France and the P.O.U.M. of Spain were unable to attend the actual sessions of the Congress. A special commission met later with representatives of the former organization.

No conference of revolutionists ever met under circumstances more tense and ominous or faced tasks of such supreme historical gravity than did this one.

More than five years have passed since the nucleus at work for the reconstruction of the revolutionary International drew up a courageous balance sheet of the humiliating defeat of the German proletariat which brought in its train so many other murderous blows against the working class of the world, and of Europe in particular.

Following the wretched capitulation to fascism of the only party in Germany which laid official claims to the traditions of the Russian Revolution—the Communist Party—and the cynically wholehearted endorsement of this capitulation by the entire Stalinist International, the Bolshevik-Leninists of that time, organized as the International Left Opposition, boldly proclaimed the need of organizing a new, Fourth International, true heir and continuator of the great traditions of the Internationals that had preceded it and implacable foe of the official traducers of the working-class movement.

Joined in 1933 in the famous Pact of Four for the new International by the Socialist Workers Party of Germany, and the Independent Socialist Party and Revolutionary Socialist Party of Holland, the Bolshevik-Leninists, the International Communist League gathering strength and influence in one country after another, alone and consistently remained loyal to the principles and promise enunciated in the Pact.

The best elements in the vanguard of the groups that had broken from the corrupt and incorrigible Third International, as well as the determined and serious elements from various centrist groups and even sections of the Second International, rallied to the movement for the Fourth International, despite the historically unprecedented hailstorm of abuse, misrepresentation, calumny and persecution to which it was subjected on all sides by its official adversaries.

The five years of unintermittent struggle for the ideas of the Fourth International enabled the movement representing these ideas to gather at its founding conference without having to face any serious claimant to the name or position of leadership of the revolutionary internationalist movement.

Our conference met at a moment of the most revolting self-

Just as significantly silent was (Continued on page 3)

# Trotsky Will Speak

by electrical transcription to our GRAND CELEBRATION MASS MEETING, heralding the foundation of the Fourth International and the Tenth Anniversary of our struggle for a revolutionary workers party in this country. Hear JAMES P. CANNON, MAX SHACHTMAN, JAMES BURNHAM, ANTOINETTE KONIKOW, and others, at the Center Hotel, 108 West 43rd Street, New York City, Friday, October 28, 1938, at 8 P. M.