

# For Revolutionary Resistance To Imperialist War

## The Main Enemy Is Still Our Own Capitalist Class

prices into a wedge to be driven between the workers and farmers and between the workers and the petty bourgeoisie of the cities. The peasant, artisan, small merchant, unlike the industrial worker, office and civil service employee, cannot demand a wage increase corresponding to the increase in prices. The official struggle of the government with high prices is only a deception of the masses. But the farmers, artisans, merchants, in their capacity of consumers, can step into the politics of price-fixing shoulder to shoulder with the workers. To the capitalist's lamentations about costs of production, of transport and trade, the consumers answer: "Show us your books; we demand control over the fixing of prices." The organs of this control should be the committees on prices, made up of delegates from the factories, trade unions, cooperatives, farmers organizations, the "little man" of the city, house-wives, etc. By this means the workers will be able to prove to the farmers that the real reason for high prices is not high wages but the exorbitant profits of the capitalists and the overhead expenses of capitalist anarchy.

The program for the nationalization of the land and collectivization of agriculture should be so drawn that from its very basis it should exclude the possibility of expropriation of small farmers and their compulsory collectivization. The farmer will remain owner of his plot of land as long he himself believes it possible necessary. In order to rehabilitate the program of socialism in the eyes of the farmer, it is necessary to expose mercilessly the Stalinist methods of collectivization, which are dictated not by the interests of the farmers or workers but by the interests of the bureaucracy.

The expropriation of the expropriators likewise does not signify forcible confiscation of the property of artisans and shopkeepers. On the contrary, workers' control of banks and trusts—even more, the nationalization of these concerns, can create for the urban petty bourgeoisie incomparably more favorable conditions of credit, purchase, and sale than is possible under the unchecked domination of the monopolies. Dependence upon private capital will be replaced by dependence upon the State, which will be the more attentive to the needs of its small co-workers and agents the stronger the toilers themselves will keep control of the State in their hands.

The practical participation of the exploited farmers in the control of different fields of economy will allow them to decide for themselves whether or not it would be profitable for them to go over to collective working of the land—at what date and on what scale. Industrial workers should consider themselves duty-bound to show farmers every cooperation in traveling this road: through the trade unions, factory committees, and, most importantly, through a workers' and farmers' government.

The alliance proposed by the proletariat, not to the "middle classes" in general but to the exploited layers of the urban and rural petty-bourgeoisie, against all exploiters, including those of the "middle classes,"—can be based not on compulsion but only on free consent, which should be consolidated in a special "contract." This "contract" is the program of transitional demands voluntarily accepted by both sides.

## The Struggle Against Imperialism and War

The whole world outlook, and consequently also the inner political life of individual countries, is overcast by the threat of world war. Already the imminent catastrophe sends violent ripples of apprehension through the very broadest masses of mankind.

The Second International repeats its infamous politics of 1914 with all the greater assurance since today it is the Comintern which plays first fiddle in chauvinism. As quickly as the danger of war assumed concrete outline, the Stalinists, outstripping the bourgeois and petty bourgeois pacifists by far, became blatant haranguers for so-called "national defense." The revolutionary struggle against war thus rests fully on the shoulders of the Fourth International.

The Bolshevik-Leninist policy regarding this question, formulated in the thesis of the International Secretariat (*War and the Fourth International*, 1934) preserves all of its force today. In the next period a revolutionary party will depend for success primarily on its policy on the question of war. A correct policy is composed of two elements: an uncompromising attitude on imperialism and its wars and the ability to base one's program on the experience of the masses themselves.

The bourgeoisie and its agents use the war question, more than any other, to deceive the people by means of abstractions, general formulas, lame phraseology: "neutrality," "collective security," "arming for the defense of peace," "national defense," "struggle against fascism," and so on. All such formulas reduce themselves in the end to the fact that the war question, i. e., the fate of the people, is left in the hands of the imperialists, their governing staffs, their diplomacy, their generals, with all their intrigues and plots against the people.

### CONCRETIZING A FEW ABSTRACTIONS

The Fourth International rejects with abhorrence all such abstractions which play the same role in the democratic camp as in the fascist: "Honor," "blood," "race." But abhorrence is not enough. It is imperative to help the masses discern, by means of verifying criteria, slogans, and demands, the concrete essence of these fraudulent abstractions.

"Disarmament?"—But the entire question revolves around who will disarm whom. The only disarmament which can avert or end war is the disarmament of the bourgeoisie by the workers. But to disarm the bourgeoisie the workers must arm themselves.

"Neutrality?"—But the proletariat is nothing like neutral in the war between Japan and China, or a war between Germany and the U.S.S.R. "Then what is meant is the defense of China and the U.S.S.R.?" Of course! But not by the imperialists who will strangle both China and the U.S.S.R.

"Defense of the Fatherland?"—But by this abstraction, the bourgeoisie understands the defense of its profits and plunder. We stand ready to defend the fatherland from foreign capitalists, if we first bind our own (capitalists) hand and foot and

## SALUTE TO OUR LIVING MARTYRS AND OUR HEROIC DEAD

At the moment when representatives of the Bolshevik-Leninists of all countries, gathered together in an international conference, are formally constituting the Fourth International (World Party of the Socialist Revolution), their thoughts and their revolutionary greetings go first of all to their comrades who everywhere in the world are victims of the repressions of capitalism and of totalitarian dictatorships.

Our cadres are as yet few and young; but already numerous are those of our comrades who lie in prisons or concentration camps established throughout the world by rotting bourgeois regimes and reactionary governments. From an Indo-China oppressed by French imperialism, through the bars of his prison, there comes to us the unconquerable voice of Ta-TuThau, weak, paralyzed, but as intransigent and loyal as ever.

In Brazil, a young worker and militant Bolshevik-Leninist, Hilcar Leite, sick, tortured, already sentenced to four and a half years of prison and threatened with an even more ferocious additional sentence, far from weakening, reaffirms, together with his prison-comrades, his unshakable faith in the victory of our cause, and expects his freedom only as a result of the triumphs of the Fourth International.

Our heroic Greek comrades, dozens and dozens of whom languish on the prison-islands of Metaxas, hold aloft with magnificent valor the banner of the Socialist Revolution, ranged around Stinas, sentenced to five years of prison and perpetual exile, and Polioupoulos, whose fate is unknown, and swear to avenge their comrade Scalaios, who died in the concentration camp of Acronauplia.

The concentration-camps of Germany and Austria are full of devoted militants, implacable "Trotskyite" revolutionaries, who are standing up against the executioners unleashed by Hitler.

The Polish Bolshevik-Leninists are not spared by the Bonapartist dictatorship there, but in the jails of Poland continue the fight for the cause of Socialism.

But it is not only to the fascist and Bonapartist dictatorships that the Trotskyites fall victim. The so-called democratic governments also rabidly attack our movement and our comrades: in Morocco, in China, in Latin-America, in France, in the United States, everywhere, our comrades are the object of persecution by the police. In Spain, while the mercenary gangs of Franco murder, without distinction of party, the best fighters in the republican trenches, the Negrin government hunts down the most militant and tested revolutionaries—when, indeed, it does not

hinder them from attacking foreign fatherlands; if the workers and the farmers of our country become its real masters; if the wealth of the country be transferred from the hands of a tiny minority to the hands of the people; if the army becomes a weapon of the exploited instead of the exploiters.

It is necessary to interpret these fundamental ideas by breaking them up into more concrete and partial ones, dependent upon the course of events and the orientation of the thought of the masses. In addition, it is necessary to differentiate strictly between the pacifism of the diplomat, professor, journalist and the pacifism of the carpenter, agricultural worker, and charwoman. In one case, pacifism is a screen for imperialism; in the other, it is the confused expression of distrust in imperialism. When the small farmer or worker speaks about the defense of the fatherland, he means defense of his home, his families and other similar families from invasion, bombs and poisonous gas. The capitalist and his journalist understand by the defense of the fatherland the seizure of colonies and markets, the predatory increase of the "national" share of world income. Bourgeois pacifism and patriotism are shot through with deceit. In the pacifism and even patriotism of the oppressed there are elements which reflect on the one hand a hatred of destructive war and on the other a clinging to what they believe to be their own good—elements which we must know how to seize upon in order to draw the requisite conclusions.

Using these considerations as its point of departure, the Fourth International supports every, even if insufficient, demand, if it can draw the masses to a certain extent into active politics, awaken their criticism and strengthen their control over the machinations of the bourgeoisie.

### A REFERENDUM ON WAR

From this point of view, our American section, for example, critically supports the proposal for establishing a referendum on the question of declaring war. No democratic reform it is understood, can by itself prevent the rulers from provoking war when they wish it. It is necessary to give frank warning of this. But notwithstanding the illusions of the masses in regard to the proposed referendum, their support of it reflects the distrust felt by workers and farmers for bourgeois government and congress. Without supporting and without sparing illusions, it is necessary to support with all possible strength the progressive distrust of the exploited toward the exploiters. The more widespread the movement for the referendum becomes, the sooner will the bourgeois pacifists move away from it; the more completely will the betrayers of the Comintern be compromised; the more acute will distrust of the imperialists become.

From this viewpoint, it is necessary to advance the demand: electoral rights for men and women beginning with the age of 18. Those who will be called upon to die for the fatherland tomorrow should have the right to vote today. The struggle against war must first of all begin with the revolutionary mobilization of the youth.

Light must be shed upon the problem of war from all angles, hinging upon the side from which it will confront the masses at a given moment.

War is a gigantic commercial enterprise, especially for the war industry. The "Go Families" are therefore first-line patriots and the chief provocateurs of war. Workers control of war industries is the first step in the struggle against the "manufacturers" of war.

To the slogan of the reformists: a tax on military profit, we counterpose the slogans: confiscation of military profit and expropriation of the traffickers in war industries. Where military industry is "nationalized," as in France, the slogan of workers' control preserves its full strength. The proletariat has as little confidence in the government of the bourgeoisie as in individual bourgeois.

Not one man and not one penny for the bourgeois government!

simply abandon them to the paid agents of Stalin.

To the heroic Spanish Bolshevik-Leninists who in the republican lines fight against the fascist bandits, or who in the prisons of Negrin and the G.P.U. hold unflinchingly to the program of socialist revolution—the sole guarantee of victory over Franco!—to Grandiso and his companions, greetings from the first international conference of the Fourth International!

In China, the situation is the same as in Spain: our comrades, even while in the first ranks of the Chinese armies facing the Japanese invader, are stabbed in the back by the agents of Chiang Kai-shek and Stalin who thus prepare the ground for a treacherous compromise with the Japanese imperialist bandits.

The Fourth International dips its stainless flag in salute over the still fresh graves of our heroic comrades who during the last two years have fallen under the bullets of Franco in Spain; under the axe or in the concentration camps of Hitler, in Germany and in Austria; in the prisons and prison-islands of Metaxas and Vargas, in Greece and Brazil; under the blows of the Bonapartist dictatorships in Poland, in China, etc.; under the Stalinist bullets and tortures in the U.S.S.R., in Spain, in China, Switzerland and in France.

Faucounet, Pasque, Medeiros, Scalaios, Hans Freund, Isidor Fassner, Erwin Wolf, Reiss, Rossini, Sedoff, Klement! Your names are written across our banner! We salute also those young unknown revolutionaries who in Russia fall under the executions of the G.P.U. still crying "Vive Trotsky!"

None of these repressions, these tortures, these assassinations, shall stop us, for our task is laid out for us by history, and not by the activities of police or of state terror-machines, no matter how powerful and totalitarian.

The first international conference of the World Party of the Socialist Revolution sends its greetings and its solidarity to all revolutionary militants thrown into bourgeois prisons, fascist prisons, and Stalinist prisons. It calls on all comrades, sympathizers, and conscious proletarians to put into practice their feelings of solidarity with all militants who have fallen victim to capitalist oppression and fascist and Stalinist terror. The very salvation of the socialist revolution requires that those militants who are being so sorely tried should feel that they are supported by an international solidarity which is active and effective.

Today's sacrifice is tomorrow's guarantee of triumph. The proletarian revolution, victorious under the banner of the Fourth International, will avenge the comrades who have fallen, and snatch from their prisons those who languish there.

Not an armaments program but a program of useful public works!

Complete independence of workers' organizations from military-police control!

Once and for all we must tear from the hands of the greedy and merciless imperialist clique, the scheming behind the backs of the people, the disposition of the people's fate.

In accordance with this we demand:

Complete abolition of secret diplomacy; all treaties and agreements to be made accessible to all workers and farmers;

Military training and arming of workers and farmers under direct control of workers and farmers committees;

Creation of military schools for the training of commanders among the toilers, chosen by workers' organizations;

Substitution for the standing army of a people's militia, indissolubly linked up with factories, mines, farms, etc.

Imperialist war is the continuation and sharpening of the predatory politics of the bourgeoisie. The struggle of the proletariat against war is the continuation and sharpening of its class struggle. The beginning of war alters the situation and partially the means of struggle between the classes, but not the aim and basic course.

The imperialist bourgeoisie dominates the world. In its basic character the approaching war will therefore be an imperialist war. The fundamental content of the politics of the international proletariat will consequently be a struggle against imperialism and its war. In this struggle the basic principle is: "the chief enemy is in your own country," or "the defeat of your own (imperialist) government is the lesser evil."

### AIDING NON-IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES

But not all countries of the world are imperialist countries. On the contrary the majority are victims of imperialism. Some of the colonial or semi-colonial countries will undoubtedly attempt to utilize the war in order to cast off the yoke of slavery. Their war will be not imperialist but liberating. It will be the duty of the international proletariat to aid the oppressed countries in war against oppressors. The same duty applies in regard to aiding the U.S.S.R., or whatever other workers' government might arise before the war or during the war. The defeat of every imperialist government in the struggle with the workers' state or with a colonial country is the lesser evil.

The workers of imperialist countries, however, cannot help an anti-imperialist country through their own government, no matter what might be the diplomatic and military relations between the two countries at a given moment. If the governments find themselves in temporary and, by very essence of the matter, unreliable alliance, then the proletariat of the imperialist country continues to remain in class opposition to its own government and supports the non-imperialist "ally" through its own methods, i. e., through the methods of the international class struggle (agitation not only against their perfidious allies but also in favor of a workers state in a colonial country; boycott, strikes, in one case; rejection of boycott and strikes in another case, etc.)

In supporting the colonial country or the U.S.S.R. in a war, the proletariat does not in the slightest degree solidarize either with the bourgeois government of the colonial country or with the Thermidorian bureaucracy of the U.S.S.R. On the contrary it maintains full political independence from the one as from the other. Giving aid in a just and progressive war, the revolutionary proletariat wins the sympathy of the workers in the colonies and in the U.S.S.R., strengthens there the authority and influence of the Fourth International, and increases its ability to help overthrow the bourgeois government in the colonial country, the reactionary bureaucracy in the U.S.S.R.

At the beginning of the war the sections of the Fourth International will inevitably feel themselves isolated: every war takes the national masses unawares and impels them to the

## Our Only War Is The War For A Workers' Revolution

side of the government apparatus. The internationalists will have to swim against the stream. However, the devastation and misery brought about by the new war, which in the first months will far outstrip the bloody horrors of 1914-1918, will quickly prove sobering. The discontent of the masses and their revolt will grow by leaps and bounds. The sections of the Fourth International will be found at the head of the revolutionary tide. The program of transitional demands will gain burning actuality. The problem of the conquest of power by the proletariat will loom in full stature.

Before exhausting or drowning mankind in blood, capitalism befools the world atmosphere with the poisonous vapors of national and race hatred. *Anti-semitism* today is one of the more malignant convulsions of capitalism's death agony.

An uncompromising disclosure of the roots of race prejudices and all forms and shades of national arrogance and chauvinism, particularly anti-semitism, should become part of the daily work of all sections of the Fourth International, as the most important part of the struggle against imperialism and war. Our basic slogan remains: workers of the world unite!

## Workers and Farmers Government

This formula, "Workers and Farmers Government," first appeared in the agitation of the Bolsheviks in 1917 and was definitely accepted after the October Insurrection. In the final instance it represented nothing more than the popular designation for the already established dictatorship of the proletariat. The significance of this designation comes mainly from the fact that it underscored the idea of an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry lodged in the base of the Soviet power.

When the Comintern of the epigones tried to revive the formula buried by history of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry," it gave to the formula of the "workers and peasants government" a completely different, purely "democratic," i. e., bourgeois content, counterposing it to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Bolshevik-Leninists resolutely rejected the slogan of the "workers and peasants government" in the bourgeois-democratic version. They affirmed then and affirm now that when the party of the proletariat refuses to step beyond bourgeois-democratic limits, its alliance with the peasantry is simply turned into a support for capital, as was the case with the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries in 1917, with the Chinese Communist party in 1925-1927, and as is now the case with the "People's Front" in Spain, France and other countries.

### THE RUSSIAN EXPERIENCE

From April to September, 1917, the Bolsheviks demanded that the S.R.'s and Mensheviks break with the liberal bourgeoisie and take power into their own hands. Under this provision the Bolshevik Party promised the Mensheviks and the S.R.'s, as the petty bourgeois representatives of the workers and peasants, its revolutionary aid against the bourgeoisie; categorically refusing, however, either to enter into the government of the Mensheviks and S.R.'s or to carry political responsibility for it. If the Mensheviks and the S.R.'s had actually broken with the Cadets (liberals) and with foreign imperialism, then the "workers and peasants government" created by them could only have hastened and facilitated the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But it was exactly because of this that the leadership of petty bourgeois democracy resisted with all possible strength the establishment of its own government. The experience of Russia demonstrated and the experience of Spain and France once again confirm that even under very favorable conditions the parties of petty bourgeois democracy (S.R.'s, Social-Democrats, Stalinists, Anarchists) are incapable of creating a government of workers and peasants, that is, a government independent of the bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless, the demand of the Bolsheviks, addressed to the Mensheviks and the S.R.'s: "Break with the bourgeoisie, take the power into your own hands!" had for the masses tremendous educational significance. The obstinate unwillingness of the Mensheviks and S.R.'s to take power, so dramatically exposed during the July days, definitely doomed them before mass opinion and prepared the victory of the Bolsheviks.

The central task of the Fourth International consists in freeing the proletariat from the old leadership, whose conservatism is in complete contradiction to the catastrophic eruptions of disintegrating capitalism and represents the chief obstacle to historical progress. The chief accusation which the Fourth International advances against the traditional organizations of the proletariat is the fact that they do not wish to tear themselves away from the political semi-corpse of the bourgeoisie. Under these conditions the demand, systematically addressed to the old leadership: "Break with the bourgeoisie, take the power!" is an extremely important weapon for exposing the treacherous character of the parties and organizations of the Second, Third and Amsterdam Internationals. The slogan "Workers and Farmers Governments," is thus acceptable to us only in the sense that it had in 1917 with the Bolsheviks, i. e., as an anti-bourgeois and anti-capitalist slogan, but in no case in that "democratic" sense which later the epigones gave it, transforming it from a bridge to socialist revolution into the chief barrier upon its path.

### PERSPECTIVES OF THE SLOGAN

Of all parties and organizations which base themselves on the workers and peasants and speak in their name we demand that they break politically from the bourgeoisie and enter upon the road of struggle for the workers and farmers government. On this road we promise them full support against capitalist reaction. At the same time, we indefatigably develop agitation around those transitional demands which should in our opinion form the program of the "Workers and Farmers Government."

Is the creation of such a government by the traditional workers organizations possible? Past experience shows, as has already been stated, that this is to say the least highly improbable. However, one cannot categorically deny in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.) the petty bourgeois parties, including the Stalinists may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie. In any case one thing is not to be doubted: