

Toward a Workers' and Farmers' Government

even if this highly improbably variant somewhere at some time becomes a reality and the "Workers and Farmers Government," in the above mentioned sense, is established in fact, it would represent merely a short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat.

However, there is no need to indulge in guess-work. The agitation around the slogan of a workers-farmers government preserves under all conditions a tremendous educational value. And not accidentally. This generalized slogan proceeds entirely along the line of the political development of our epoch (the bankruptcy and decomposition of the old bourgeois parties, the downfall of democracy, the growth of fascism, the accelerated drive of the workers toward more active and aggressive politics). Each of the transitional demands should, therefore, lead to one and the same political conclusion: the workers need to break with all traditional parties of the bourgeoisie in order, jointly with the farmers, to establish their own power.

It is impossible in advance to foresee what will be the concrete stages of the revolutionary mobilization of the masses. The sections of the Fourth International should critically orient themselves at each new stage and advance such slogans as will aid the striving of the workers for independent politics, deepen the class character of these politics, destroy reformist and pacifist illusions, strengthen the connection of the vanguard with the masses, and prepare the revolutionary conquest of power.

Soviets

Factory committees, as already stated, are elements of dual power inside the factory. Consequently, their existence is possible only under condition of increasing pressure by the masses. This is likewise true of special mass groupings for the struggle against war, of the committee on prices and all other new centers of the movement, the very appearance of which bears witness to the fact that the class struggle has overflowed the limits of the traditional organizations of the proletariat.

These new organs and centers, however, will soon begin to feel their lack of cohesion and their insufficiency. Not one of the transitional demands can be fully met under the conditions of preserving the bourgeois regime. At the same time, the deepening of the social crisis will increase not only the sufferings of the masses but also their impatience, persistence, and pressure. Ever new layers of the oppressed will raise up their heads and come forward with their demands. Millions of toil-worn "little men," to whom the reformist leaders never gave a thought, will begin to pound insistently on the doors of workers' organizations. The unemployed will join the movement. The agricultural workers, the ruined and semi-ruined farmers, the oppressed of the cities, the women-workers, housewives, proletarianized layers of the intelligentsia—all of these will seek unity and leadership.

How are the different demands and forms of struggle to be harmonized, even if only within the limits of one city? History has already answered this question: through soviets. These will unite the representatives of all the fighting groups. For this purpose, no one has yet proposed a different form of organization; indeed, it would hardly be possible to think up a better one. Soviets are not limited to an *a priori* party program. They throw open their doors to all the exploited, through these doors pass representatives of all strata, drawn into the general current of the struggle. The organization, broadening out together with the movement, is renewed again and again in its womb. All political currents of the proletariat can struggle for leadership of the soviets on the basis of the widest democracy. The slogan of soviets, therefore, crowns the program of transitional demands.

Soviets can arise only at the time when the mass movement

Militant Action By Workers In Advanced Countries Will Arouse Colonial Masses

enters into an openly revolutionary stage. From the first moment of their appearance, the soviets, acting as a pivot around which millions of toilers are united in their struggle against the exploiters become competitors and opponents of local authorities and then of the central government. If the factory committee creates a dual power in the factory, then the soviets initiate a period of dual power in the country.

Dual power in its turn is the culminating point of the transitional period. Two regimes, the bourgeois and the proletarian are irreconcilably opposed to each other. Conflict between them is inevitable. The fate of society depends on the outcome. Should the revolution be defeated—the fascist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie will follow. In case of victory—the power of the soviets, that is the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist reconstruction of society, will arise.

Backward Countries and the Program of Transitional Demands

Colonial and semi-colonial countries are backward countries by their very essence. But backward countries are part of a world dominated by imperialism. Their development, therefore, has a combined character: the most primitive economic forms are combined with the last word in capitalist technique and culture. In like manner are defined the political strivings of the proletariat of backward countries: the struggle for the most elementary achievements of national independence and bourgeois democracy is combined with the socialist struggle against world imperialism. Democratic slogans, transitional demands and the problems of the socialist revolution are not divided into separate historical epochs in this struggle, but stem directly from one another. The Chinese proletariat had barely begun to organize trade unions before it had to provide for soviets. In this sense, the present program is completely applicable to colonial and semi-colonial countries, at least to those where the proletariat has become capable of carrying on independent politics.

The central task of the colonial and semi-colonial countries is the agrarian revolution, i. e., liquidation of feudal heritages, and national independence, i. e., the overthrow of the imperialist yoke. Both tasks are closely linked with one another.

It is impossible merely to reject the democratic program: it is imperative that in the struggle the masses outgrow it. The slogan for a National (or Constituent) Assembly preserves its full force for such countries as China or India. This slogan must be indissolubly tied up with the problem of national liberation and agrarian reform. As a primary step, the workers must be armed with this democratic program. Only they will be able to summon and unite the farmers. On the basis of the revolutionary democratic program, it is necessary to oppose the workers to the "national" bourgeoisie. Then at a certain stage in the mobilization of the masses under the slogans of revolutionary democracy, soviets can and should arise. Their historical role in each given period, particularly their relation to the National Assembly, will be determined by the political level of the proletariat, the bond between them and the peasantry and the character of the proletarian party policies. Sooner or later, the soviets should overthrow bourgeois democracy. Only they are capable of bringing

the democratic revolution to a conclusion and likewise opening an era of socialist revolution.

The relative weight of the individual democratic and transitional demands in the proletariat's struggle, their mutual ties and their order of presentation, is determined by the peculiarities and specific conditions of each backward country and to a considerable extent—by the degree of its backwardness. Nevertheless, the general trend of revolutionary development in all backward countries can be determined by the formula of the *permanent revolution* in the sense definitely imparted to it by the three revolutions in Russia (1905, February 1917, October 1917).

The Comintern has provided backward countries with a classic example of how it is possible to ruin a powerful and promising revolution. During the stormy mass upsurge in China in 1925-27, the Comintern failed to advance the slogan for a National Assembly, and at the same time, forbade the creation of soviets. (The bourgeois party, the Kuomintang, was to replace, according to Stalin's plan, both the National Assembly and soviets.) After the masses had been smashed by the Kuomintang, the Comintern organized a caricature of a soviet in Canton. Following the inevitable collapse of the Canton uprising, the Comintern took the road of guerrilla warfare and peasant soviets with complete passivity on the part of the industrial proletariat. Landing thus in a blind alley, the Comintern took advantage of the Sino-Japanese war to liquidate "Soviet China" with a stroke of the pen, subordinating not only the peasant "Red Army" but also the so-called "Communist" Party to the identical Kuomintang, i. e., the bourgeoisie.

The betrayal of the international proletarian revolution by the Comintern for the sake of friendship with the "democratic" slave masters, could not but help it betray simultaneously also the struggle for the liberation of the colonial masses, and, indeed, with even greater cynicism than practiced by the Second International before it. One of the tasks of People's Front and "national defense" politics is to turn hundreds of millions of the colonial population into cannon fodder for "democratic" imperialism. The banner on which is emblazoned the struggle for the liberation of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, i. e., a good half of mankind, has definitely passed into the hands of the Fourth International.

The Program of Transitional Demands in Fascist Countries

It is a far cry today from the time when the strategists of the Comintern announced the victory of Hitler as being merely a step toward the victory of Thaelmann. Thaelmann has been in Hitler's prisons now for more than five years. Mussolini has held Italy enchained by fascism for more than sixteen years. Throughout this time, the parties of the Second and Third Internationals have been impotent not only to conduct a mass movement but even to create a serious illegal organization, even to some extent comparable to the Russian revolutionary parties during the epoch of Czarism.

Not the least reason exists for explaining these failures by reference to the power of fascist ideology. (Essentially, Mussolini never advanced any sort of ideology.) Hitler's "ideology" never

seriously gripped the workers. Those layers of the population which at one time were intoxicated with fascism, i. e., chiefly the middle classes, have had enough time in that to sober up. The fact that a somewhat perceptible opposition is limited to Protestant and Catholic church circles is not explained by the might of the semi-delirious and semi-charlatan theories of "race" and "blood," but by the terrific collapse of the ideologies of democracy, social-democracy and the Comintern.

The collapse of the Paris Commune paralyzed the French workers for nearly eight years. After the defeat of the 1905 Russian revolution, the toiling masses remained in a stupor for almost as long a period. But in both instances the phenomenon was only one of physical defeat, conditioned by the relationship of forces. In Russia, in addition, it concerned an almost virgin proletariat. The Bolshevik fraction had at that time not celebrated even its third birthday. It is completely otherwise in Germany where the leadership came from powerful parties, one of which had existed for seventy years, the other—almost fifteen. Both these parties, with millions of voters behind them, were morally paralyzed before the battle and capitulated without a battle. (History has recorded no parallel catastrophe. The German proletariat was not smashed by the enemy in battle.) It was crushed by the cowardice, baseness, perfidy of its own parties. Small wonder then that it has lost faith in everything in which it had been accustomed to believe for almost three generations. Hitler's victory in turn strengthened Mussolini.

FRESH FORCES ARE NEEDED

The protracted failure of revolutionary work in Spain or Germany is but the reward for the criminal politics of Social-Democracy and the Comintern. Illegal work needs not only the sympathy of the masses but the conscious enthusiasm of its advanced strata. But an enthusiasm possibly be expected for historically bankrupt organizations? The majority of those who come forth as emigre leaders are either demoralized to the very marrow of their bones, agents of the Kremlin and the G.P.U., or social-Democratic ex-ministers, who dream that the workers by some sort of miracle will return them to their lost posts. Is it possible to imagine even for a minute these gentlemen in the role of future leaders of the "anti-fascist" revolution?

And events on the world arena—the smashing of the Austrian workers, the defeat of the Spanish revolution, the degeneration of the Soviet State—could not give aid to a revolutionary upsurge in Italy and Germany. Since for political information the German and Italian workers depend in great measure upon the radio, it is possible to say with assurance that the Moscow radio station, combining Thermidorian lies with stupidity and insolence, has become the most powerful factor in the demoralization of the workers in the totalitarian states. In this respect, as in others Stalin acts merely as Goebbels' assistant.

At the same time, the class antagonisms which brought about the victory of fascism, continuing their work under fascism, too, are gradually undermining it. The masses are more dissatisfied than ever. Hundreds and thousands of self-sacrificing workers, in spite of everything, continue to carry on revolutionary mole-work. A new generation, which has not directly experienced the shattering of old traditions and high hopes, has come to the fore. Irresistibly, the molecular preparation of the proletarian revolution proceeds beneath the heavy totalitarian tombstone. But for concealed energy to flare into open revolt, it is necessary that the vanguard of the proletariat find new perspectives, a new program and a new unblemished banner.

Herein, lies the chief handicap. It is extremely difficult for workers in fascist countries to make a choice of a new program. A program is verified by experience. And it is precisely experience in mass movements which is lacking in countries of totalitarian

World Congress Manifesto Against Imperialist War

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of the masses and equally incapable of assuring peace. Less than a generation has passed since the last "war to end war" and we already find ourselves on the threshold of a new world war, infinitely more horrible than the last one.

Once more the exploited are called upon to destroy each other for their respective imperialist masters. Once more the mothers of the people are called upon to become brood sows. Once more fields will be transformed into blood soaked trenches and cities into devastated tombs—so that the imperialists may preserve their profits and their colonies, or acquire new ones.

A Bandit War

All the ruling classes of the capitalist countries are bandits. Their war, whatever the pretensions and hypocritical slogans, will be a war between bandits. It will not be a workers' war, but on the contrary, the workers, and the exploited in general, will be its victims. It will not be a war for democracy, since true democracy for the masses can be won only in the struggle against capitalist domination. Even the democratic rights which the masses still enjoy cannot be preserved or extended, as the example of the Spanish civil war has shown, except by methods of militant, revolutionary class struggle for socialism.

It will not be a war in the interests of the workers, since the attacks on the social conquests of the French workers of June, 1936, especially the 40-hour week, show that the defense of the most elementary economic and social interests of the masses—their daily bread and their freedom—is incompatible with the defense of the fatherland of the bourgeoisie.

Hitler, who destroyed all social gains of the German and Austrian working class, is leading the struggle in the name of capitalism against the interests of the peoples of Europe. In midst of war threats we emphasize again that the main enemy is in one's own country. The working class has no fatherland to defend except where it conquers and rules. No support to the war makers and to imperialist war—we say—but continuation of the class struggle in every situation and utilization of the war crisis for the overthrow of capitalist rule, i. e., the overthrow of the war and of capitalism itself!

Betrayers of the Toilers

Capitalism is bankrupt. Its social relations, its national boundaries, are strangling the economic and social development of man. It is more than ripe for socialist reorganization. Its prolonged existence can only add to unending horror and misery. Humanity can be saved from the new barbarism that

menaces it only under the leadership of the revolutionary working class, historic champion and ally of the landless and debt-ridden farmers, and of the millions of black, brown and yellow colonial slaves.

But the great tragedy of the proletariat resides today in the fact that paralyzing fetters prevent it from realizing its mission of emancipation, fetters less powerful than those of capitalism itself, but more subtly and insidiously devised. With these fetters the traditional parties of labor, the Second and Third Internationals, have bound it hand and foot.

The leaders of the Second International act as direct agents of "democratic" imperialism, helping it to soften the shocks of the class struggle, and hoping thus to preserve their position in declining capitalist democracy. The leaders of the Third International, betraying all their traditional principles and ideals, have been converted into instruments of the Soviet bureaucracy. The two old Internationals differ now primarily in the degree to which differences exist between the Anglo-French bourgeoisie and the ruling Stalinist clique.

Instead of hastening the dispatch of the putrified corpse of capitalism into the limbo of history, social democracy and Stalinism unite to patch it up and preserve it. They have long since abandoned the class struggle. They concentrate all their efforts toward bringing the working class into the service of capitalism in the name of a falsified "democracy" or a "People's Front" instead of destroying the monster. They support the domination of colonial peoples by their respective imperialists and offer their military aid to the same end.

Impotent Against Fascism

Neither of the old Internationals were capable of organizing proletarian resistance to fascism in Germany or in Austria. Even Spain, where the proletariat—by whose side we stand firmly and enthusiastically—has displayed its capacity to struggle effectively against the fascist beasts, the old parties sapped its resistance and brutally exterminated the revolutionary forces behind their own front, acting as agents of Anglo-French imperialism and of the Moscow bureaucracy.

In reality, by abandoning the vigilance of the working class, abandoning the independence of the workers' movement and subordinating it to the "democratic" bourgeoisie, the old parties facilitated the victory of fascism, whose aim—to smash the proletariat as an independent movement and as a class—is partially carried out in advance by the two old Internationals.

No less traitorous is the role played by the social democracy and Stalinism in the face of the imminent war danger. More cyn-

ically than the Second International before the last war—when it at least formally took an anti-war position—the two Internationals now demand for themselves the responsibility of leading the masses to the butchery.

They have neither the desire nor the possibility of organizing the struggle against the coming imperialist war. On the contrary, completely corrupted by social patriotism and flying the pirate flag of "democratic" imperialism, the social patriots are already acting as recruiting sergeants of imperialism.

The role that they play in the defense of the Soviet Union is equally perfidious. They do not defend the great Russian Revolution, but the reactionary, usurping bureaucracy. They do not lay the bases of socialist society but sap the foundations laid 20 years ago by the Russian masses under the leadership of the Bolsheviks.

We Are Loyal to U.S.S.R.

We, the Fourth International, loyal defenders of the U. S. S. R. against all its enemies, within and without, accuse Stalinism of having subjected the economic life of the country to the interests of the bureaucratic clique at the top. Partisans of real proletarian democracy, we accuse Stalinism of having deprived the Soviet masses of all the great liberties they won arms in hand.

The reactionary bureaucracy has established an odious totalitarian regime by means of a regime of continuous bloody terror supplemented by gangster attacks against revolutionists abroad and the corruption of the workers' and intellectuals' movements. This regime discredits the name of socialism. The so-called Communist Parties are nothing but the hired agencies of this totalitarian regime, whose only world aim is the maintenance of the imperialist status quo. The Second International differs from Stalinism only in its purely verbal and superficial criticism. Bonapartism is undermining the Bolshevik revolution.

Break the Chains!

The world proletariat cannot advance without breaking the chains that bind it to the old Internationals and their policies. Anarchism, which has shown itself, particularly in Spain, to be the prisoner of its own doctrines, and which capitulated to the bourgeoisie in the name of the People's Front, cannot make this break. Equally futile are the small centrist groups united in the London Bureau which refuse to break clearly with the old Internationals and take the road of class struggle toward international revolutionary socialism.

It is only by restoring the great traditions of revolutionary

Marxism, by breaking with class collaboration, social patriotism, and the priests of submission in the labor movement, and by taking the road of resolutely aggressive class struggle, by storming the fortress of the bourgeoisie, armed with the invincible weapons forged by our great masters, Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, that the exploited of the world will be able to escape stagnation and defeat and march forward like a solid phalanx toward the socialist future.

That is the road of the Fourth International! It rests upon the unshakable foundations of the principles of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism. It proudly proclaims itself the heir and perpetuator of the First International of Marx, of the Russian Revolution, and of the Communist International of Lenin.

The Fourth International

The Fourth International does not hide its aims. Its program is known to the working class. It is the program of irreconcilable opposition and of class struggle against injustice, against exploitation, and against oppression.

Above all, in the present crucial period—a period of crisis vital to the working class and all humanity—the Fourth International issues an appeal to the workers and oppressed people of the entire world.

To the French and German workers especially, who are menaced with mutual destruction in the interest of imperialism, we say: like the proletariat everywhere you hate the hangman Hitler. Like you, we are determined to destroy Fascism and all oppressive rule.

But fascism cannot and will not be destroyed by the bayonets of French imperialism. Only the independent class action of the proletariat will put an end to the hideous rule of fascism.

Unite in the unremitting class struggle against fascism and imperialist war.

Unite for the freedom of colonial peoples and against the tyranny of imperialist rule.

Unite in the only just and sacred war—the war against the oppressors, the exploiters, against their perfidious agents in the working class.

Long live the Fourth International!

Long live the International Socialist Revolution!

—The Executive Committee of the Fourth International (World Party of the Socialist Revolution.)

Sept. 15, 1938