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## The end of the Comintern

James Patrick Cannon

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# THE END OF THE COMINTERN

By JAMES P. CANNON

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*The Manifesto*

*of the*

4TH INTERNATIONAL

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# The End of the Comintern

And

## The Prospects of Labor Internationalism

(Speech Delivered in New York,  
May 30, 1943)

Comrade Chairman, Comrades:

The formal dissolution of the Communist International is undoubtedly an event of great historical significance, even though everybody understands that it is simply the formal certification of a fact that was long since accomplished. Some of the bourgeois commentators and politicians may exaggerate a bit when they speak of the dissolution of the Communist International as the greatest political event since the beginning of the war. But, in any case, there is no question of its transcendent importance. This is recognized on every side, and the event has called forth discussion from every quarter.

There are two ways to view the question. One is from the standpoint of the United States and Allied capitalist powers in their war against the Axis powers, and their struggle to maintain the capitalist system of oppression of the workers in the home countries and enslavement of the great masses of the colonial world. The other standpoint from which the dissolution of the Comintern can be discussed is from the standpoint of the liberation struggle of the workers

which has had a conscious expression now for 95 years, since the publication of the Communist Manifesto in 1848.

The discussion has all been one-sided so far. All the discussion outside our ranks begins from the premise of its effect upon the fortunes of American imperialism, with particular reference to the war. It is remarkable how so many people, in so many supposedly different camps, take this as their starting point in analyzing the burial of the Comintern. It was to be expected that the bourgeois press would take this point of view because all their interests lie in that direction. But we notice also that such labor leaders as have pronounced themselves show the same bias. They inquire, with straight faces, whether Stalin's action is sincerely meant as a gesture of help and cooperation with our war leaders in Washington and London, or whether it is a mere maneuver. No other aspects of the question seem to concern them.

The same thing is true of the Social-Democratic press. You might think that people who used to have an International of their own would have something to say about the unburied corpse of the Second International, but they passed that over as a matter of no interest. Perhaps they are right in this respect. They sagely discuss the recent events in Moscow and put seriously to themselves — these "Socialists" — the question: Will this help America in the war or not?

Even the Stalinists, who up to a few days ago were the adherents and representatives — even if not formally, owing to the Voorhis Law — of the Communist International, solemnly discuss the action like imitation Congressmen. They defend the burial of the Comintern without reference to its effect on the struggle of the workers for better conditions and eventual liberation — the original aim of the Comintern — but solely from the point of view of the interests of the American ruling class. Browder writes a letter to the *New York Times* and attempts to reassure this extremely perspicacious organ of America's Sixty Families that the action taken in Moscow is in good faith and in their interests, and that it is

not quite sporting of them to raise a questioning eyebrow about the fact.

So far nobody has discussed the question from the point of view which brought the Communist International into existence, that is, of organizing and furthering the worldwide struggle of the proletariat for emancipation from capitalism. But it is this point of view which I want to bring to the discussion here this evening.

Of course, the announcement of the formal dissolution of the Comintern is simply the news account of a burial that is ten years overdue. It serves a certain purpose in that it puts an end to a fiction and clears the air of illusions and misunderstandings, to say nothing of very bad odors.

This belated burial of the corpse of the Comintern is a climax, we might say, to a long sequence of events which have extended over two decades. These events, in their high-lights, can be noted as: the death of Lenin; the promulgation for the first time in 1924 of the theory of socialism in one country; the bureaucratization of the Comintern and all of its parties; the expulsion of the Bolshevik-Leninist opposition, first in the Russian party and then in the other parties of the Comintern; the capitulation of the Communist Party of Germany, with its 600,000 members and its 6 million voters, without a struggle and without a fight to Hitler fascism in 1933; the organized, systematic betrayal of the proletariat of the world in the interest of the diplomatic policy of the Kremlin; the murder of the old Bolsheviks; the assassination of Trotsky; the betrayal of the proletariat in the second world war, first to Hitler and then to Roosevelt and Churchill.

Since the beginning of the war the Comintern, the unburied Comintern, was silent as the grave. Now it is formally buried, and that, at least, is a good thing. It is somewhat late, but the old proverb says, "better late than never." By the formal burial of the Comintern, Stalin, for once on the international arena, has unconsciously performed a progressive act.

The bourgeois press and public generally, the political leaders and spokesmen, are very well pleased with the recent pronouncement, even if they understand that it is only a formality. They have good reason to be pleased. The dissolution of the Comintern, and the cynical repudiation of internationalism and the international proletarian organization, is an ideological victory of vast importance for capitalism and reactionary nationalism. They have been quite true to their interests in hailing this action and pushing aside the quibblers who wonder if, after all, it isn't another maneuver.

They have good reason to applaud the action of Stalin, taken through his puppets in the so-called Executive Committee of the non-existent Comintern, because the renunciation of internationalism is a renunciation of the basic premises of scientific socialism. It is a renunciation of the cardinal doctrine which has guided and inspired the struggle of the workers for generations, since Marx's day. The modern movement of international socialism began with the Communist Manifesto in 1848, 95 years ago, with its battle of cry: Workers of the World Unite! The Communist Manifesto proclaimed the doctrine that the emancipation of the workers could be achieved only by their common actions on an international scale. Against the cardinal principle and battle cry of Marx and Engels, and of all revolutionary socialists since that time: — Workers of the World Unite! — Stalin has announced a motto of his own: Disband your international organization; give up all thought of international collaboration; support your own imperialists, and confine your activities to the national framework of the country in which you are enslaved.

Internationalism was not a dogma invented by Marx and Engels, but a recognition of the reality of the modern world. It proceeds from the fact that the economy of modern society is a world unit requiring international cooperation and division of labor for the further development of the productive forces. The class struggle arising from the class division between workers and exploiters within the countries requires

class unity of the workers on an international scale. From the beginning the program of scientific socialism has called for the international collaboration of the workers and oppressed peoples in the different countries, with all their different levels of development, in order that each might contribute their strength as well as their weakness to a unified world program and world cooperative action. The Communist Manifesto called for common efforts of the workers in all countries for the common goal of workers' emancipation.

After the downfall of feudalism, the national states played a progressive role as the arena for the development and expansion of the forces of production in the heyday of capitalism. But these very national states, whose sanctity is proclaimed by Stalin in 1943, became obsolete long ago. They have become barriers to the full operation of the productive forces and the source of inevitable wars. The whole pressure of historic necessity is for the breaking down of the artificial national barriers, not for their preservation.

Just as the petty states and principalities and arbitrarily divided sections of the old countries under feudalism had to give way to the consolidated, centralized national states in order to create a broader arena for the development of the productive forces, so, in the same way, the artificially divided national states have to give way to the federation of states. In the future course of development this must lead eventually to a world federation operating world economy as a whole without class and nationalistic divisions. From this it follows irrevocably that such an order can be created only by the international collaboration and the joint struggle of the workers in the various countries against their own bourgeoisie at home and against capitalism as a world system. So preached and so practiced the great founders of socialism, Marx and Engels; so preached and practiced their great continuators, Lenin, and Trotsky.

Among the immortal achievements of Marx as a revolutionist, side by side with his monumental work on *Capital*,



will always stand his creative labor in the building of the first international organization of the workers, the International Working Men's Association. From the time that the ideas of internationalism were propounded in the Communist Manifesto to their first realization in 1864 in the First International, up until the present time, the conflict within the labor movement between revolutionists and reformists has revolved around this fundamental question. At the heart of every dispute, socialist internationalism on the one side has been contrasted to nationalistic concepts on the other.

We can see in the whole period down to the present day the deadly parallel between revolutionary internationalism, pointing the way to the socialist future, and opportunistic adaptation to the decaying order of capitalism. Marx and Engels were the champions of this idea of internationalism and of corresponding action. The nationally limited, narrow-minded trade union reformists of England and other places renounced the idea of internationalism. With the idea of gaining small favors for the day at the expense of the interests of the class as a whole and of the future, conservative trade unionism, even in Marx's day, took a nationalistic form and had a nationalistic outlook. In the first World War of 1914-18 the great resounding struggle which took place between the revolutionary wing headed by Lenin and Trotsky on the one side, and Kautsky & Co. on the other, had as its great criterion, its touch-stone, the question of international organization.

Lenin, the Russian, living as an emigre in Switzerland, with no more than a dozen or two followers that he could name and place, rose up against the whole so-called Second International and the Social-Democratic German parties in the war. He rose up against the bourgeois world, and announced the necessity for the Third International in 1914. Similarly, in the period of the decline and eventual decay and death, up to the formal burial of the Communist International, the great dividing line between the real inheritors of Marx

and Lenin on the one side, and Stalin and his cohorts on the other, has been this principle we are discussing here tonight — the principle of internationalism.

Since it was first proclaimed nearly a century ago, in the historic ebb and flow, the idea of internationalism and the organization of the international workers have suffered three great defeats. The organizations have been destroyed, but always the idea rose again after each defeat, corresponding to historical necessity, and found the necessary organizational form on higher ground.

The First International, that is the International of Marx and Engels, was founded formally in 1864. Seven years later came the tragic defeat of the Paris Commune. Along with that great defeat and the great impetus it gave to reaction on the continent of Europe, there was the unprecedented rise and expansion of capitalist industry. The productive forces began to expand and develop on a capitalist basis at an unprecedented rate. This temporarily weakened the revolutionary movement. It was the expansion of capitalism still reaching toward its apex of development which decreed the end of the First International by its formal dissolution in 1876. But the First International didn't die like the Second or like the Comintern. It was dissolved with its honor unsullied. It remained an inspiration and an ideal which still continued to work in the vanguard circles of the workers and in time bore good fruit.

The Second International followed. It was formally launched in Paris in 1889, thirteen years after the formal end of the First International, and died as a revolutionary organization on the 4th of August, 1914. The 4th of August was the day when the Social-Democratic deputies in the Reichstag voted for the war credits of German imperialism. But between the manner and form of the end of the Second International and that of the First, there is a great contrast that we should not forget. The First International succumbed to external conditions, to the defeats, the spread of reaction

and the expanding development of the capitalist productive system. It went down gloriously. The Second International, on the contrary, ended as a result of the betrayal of the leadership in a period when capitalism had already long passed its peak and had entered into its decline and bankruptcy. The Second International capitulated at a time when the necessity and urgency of international revolutionary organization were a thousand times more apparent than in the case of the First International.

The Third International was born of war and revolution and struggle against nationalism in March 1919, twenty-four years ago. This International, too, died ignominiously from a false theory, from capitulation and betrayal, and is buried in 1943, without honors, without regrets.

As far as the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat are concerned, the formal event was anticipated and nobody was taken by surprise. We have been struggling against the national degeneration of the Comintern for a long time. This struggle, as a matter of fact, began in 1923. That is twenty years ago. It is startling in these days, in contemplation of this final ceremony of burying the non-existent Comintern, to read the polemics of Trotsky written twenty years ago in Russia. At the very first signs of national degeneration, Trotsky, like a physician, put his finger on the pulse of the organization and detected the fever of nationalism and pointed out what it was and what it would lead to. He began a struggle twenty years ago in the name of internationalism against the theory of socialism in one country, against the conception that the workers could find any other way to salvation except through international organization and joint struggle against capitalism on a world scale.

This fight began in the factional and ideological disputes of 1923. The fight took international form in 1930 in the organization of the International Communist League shortly after Trotsky was exiled from Russia and began, from his refuge in Turkey, to communicate with co-thinkers on a world

scale. In 1938, the unceasing struggle of Trotsky and his disciples was climaxed by the World Congress of the Fourth International in 1938.

Trotsky, the unfailing champion of internationalism, in the uncompromising struggle against every form and trace of nationalist degeneration, was finally assassinated by an agent of Stalin. But his imperishable ideas are incorporated in the new international organization of the communist workers, the Fourth International.

Stalin's action, formally dissolving the Comintern, was taken in the midst of the Second World War, an appropriate time. The international organization which was presumably formed to enable the workers to take advantage of the difficulties of national capitalist states to promote the international revolution, is dissolved with a cynical explanation that it doesn't fit the conditions of the war. Kautsky, in 1915, explaining the collapse of the Second International when the war started, said that the International is an instrument of peace, not of war. Kautsky was the originator of this monstrous theory. Stalin simply repeats it, nearly thirty years later when it is thirty times more false.

Lenin said in 1914: "*Because of the war*, we must build the Third International in order to coordinate the activities of the workers in struggling against the war and in all that will follow from it." Stalin says to the workers of the world in 1943: "*Because of the war*, dissolve international organization and confine yourselves to the framework of your own bourgeois fatherland." In this contrast between the words of Lenin, who thought the war was a means of underscoring and emphasizing the necessity for an international organization of workers, and the words of Stalin, who says the war is a sufficient reason to disband international organization — in this contrast you have the measure of the two men and of what they represent in history.

Already in 1914, the First World War had demonstrated beyond all question that the bourgeois national states, as an

arena for the development of the productive forces of mankind, were already outlived and had to give way to a broader basis. National capitalism had already entered into its bankruptcy in that time, more than twenty years ago. The most tragic expression of the bankruptcy of capitalism was the fact that it could find no other way out of the conflicts between out-lived national states than in the explosion of the terrible war that cost ten million lives and crippled and maimed twenty million more.

And it was precisely the demonstration, by the terrible fact of the war; it was precisely the war, that caused Lenin and Trotsky, and such as they, to realize that even the Second International as it had existed before the war, as a rather loose federation of national parties, could not be rebuilt. Trotsky expressed it, that the war sounded the death knell of national programs for workers' parties. They drew the lesson from the experience of the last World War, 1914-18, not only that the workers must reconstitute their organization on an international scale, but that they must base this reorganization on an international program and not on the sum of national programs.

Thus, the war of 1914, which signaled the bankruptcy of the national capitalist states, was, in the eyes of Lenin and Trotsky, the greatest motivation for an extension of the idea of internationalism in program as well as in form of organization. Now, a quarter of a century later, when the bankruptcy of capitalism has developed into its death/agonny, when an explosion takes place in the Second World War in even more tragic loss in human life and material culture — now, after this, Stalin and his traitor gang, have the cynical effrontery to tell the workers that there is no need of international cooperation and international organization.

There isn't a shadow of logic or reason, if you proceed from the point of view of socialism and the cause of the proletariat, in any of the explanations given by the Stalinists for renunciation of internationalism. The explanation given

by the bourgeois press and bourgeois political leaders is more correct and honest because it frankly proceeds from the point of view that is of interest to them, that is, to the capitalist world order, and they can see in it a very good thing. But that it is no good for the workers is quite obvious.

Even the bourgeoisie recognize internationalism in their own way. The bankruptcy of national limitness has become so clear to the bourgeoisie that all their most perspicacious leaders have been compelled to renounce the idea of national isolation altogether. Isolationism as a political tendency stands discredited in bourgeois politics. And in this situation, in this terrible war that is caused by the artificial prolongation of the life of national states as separate economic units, Stalin and his puppets tell the workers: "Confine your efforts to the national limits in which you find yourselves. Support one set of bandits against another set of bandits." That, workers of the world, heirs of Marx and Engels, heirs of Lenin and Trotsky and the Russian Revolution, that is your destiny in 1943, pronounced by Stalin and his gang.

This treacherous advice not only defies Marxist doctrine and tradition but it violates the most fundamental features of the prevailing world situation. It betrays the workers in the metropolitan centers and even omits any mention of the many million masses in the colonies and the semi-colonies who were awakened by the Russian Revolution and the Communist International to the struggle for life and freedom.

I think that the frankest and most heartfelt expressions of opinion by the chosen leaders of the democratic world bourgeoisie — Mr. Churchill and Roosevelt — really were off the record. They didn't have the heart to put down in public print what they really think of Stalin and his order dissolving the Comintern. That could only make fun of the explanation that the time has come in 1943 to go back to the national boroughs and forget the world arena at the very moment when they, the leaders of the bourgeoisie, are looking over the whole world and talking only in global terms. Stalin's

explanation, intended to deceive trusting workers, can cause only the most cynical amusement to Churchill and Roosevelt, tinged with contempt plus a little appreciation for a very valuable favor. They at least have no illusions about national limitations either of economy or of politics, and certainly not of war. They have as little illusion on that score in their own way and from their own point of view, as Lenin had in this way, which was not the same way, and from his point of view which, needless to say, was not the same as that of Churchill or Roosevelt, or of Stalin.

If you take down from the bookshelf that imposing library of polemics, manifestos, appeals, analyses, written by Lenin from the 4th of August, 1914 on, you see running through the whole collection, like a red thread, the idea of internationalism. His manifesto, the manifesto of the Bolshevik Central Committee against the war, raised the demand already in 1914 for the creation of the new Third International. His attitude led him and the Bolsheviks to the Zimmerwald Conference in 1915, to Kienthal in 1916, and then to the revolution in 1917 in Russia.

Now, in all the plans of the Social Democrats, to say nothing of the imperialists, in 1914 — in all their plans to do away with international organization, to harness the workers to the war machine of their respective capitalist masters in the different countries, the one thing that was not counted upon occurred in Russia, a little surprise — merely a revolution. The revolution that first overthrew the Czar in February and then overthrew the bourgeoisie in October was one of those unheralded events of the past World War which upset all calculations.

We do not see any mention of that in the order of dissolution, as we may call it. There is no talk about revolution. There is no talk about socialism. There is no talk about anything except winning the war against Hitler. Lenin's steps, from 1914 on, led through these events I have mentioned to the Russian revolution, the conquest of power by the proleta-

riat of Russia, supported by the peasantry and led by the Bolshevik party of Lenin. That didn't end Lenin's fight against the theory of Kautsky that internationalism is an instrument of peace, not of war. In view of the collapse and bankruptcy of capitalism, as well as in anticipation of another war, Lenin and his party sponsored in 1919 the formation of the Comintern.

So, you see, throughout the whole course of Lenin's work, his manifesto after the betrayal of the German Social Democracy, his participation in the conferences at Zimmerwald and Kienthal, in the revolution of 1917, and the formation of the Comintern in 1919 — every act of Lenin from first to last took place under the banner of internationalism. The premises of the Third International were that the dissolution and collapse of the capitalist world order made necessary the organization of the proletariat for the seizure of power in the capitalist states, the federation of the socialist states into a world federation, and the inauguration of the world socialist order.

Lenin saw the Russian revolution as only the beginning of this world-wide process. Lenin and Trotsky and the Bolshevik party as a whole understood that Russia could not stand isolated in a capitalist world; it could not remain as a national utopia. They saw it as a fortress of the world proletariat. Their policy was to unite the Soviet Union, representing the fortress of the world proletariat, with its allies in the world. And who were the allies of the Soviets as Lenin and Trotsky saw them? Not Churchill. And not even Roosevelt. Their allies were the world proletariat in the capitalistically developed countries and the colonial peoples. Under this leadership the workers of the war-torn countries lifted their heads again. They were re-inspired with socialist ideas. They reorganized their ranks. They formed new revolutionary parties. They made heroic attempts at revolution in Europe. The colonial masses were awakened for the first time to political



life, to revolt against age-old slavery, and inspired to throw off the imperialist yoke altogether.

Such was the course of development under Lenin's leadership of the Comintern. Under Stalin's leadership, which was tainted from the start with narrow-minded nationalism, the world movement was betrayed; the Soviet Union was isolated; the services of the Comintern and its parties were sold like potatoes on the market to the various camps of imperialists for dubious pacts, for dribbles of material aid, at a very cheap price. Lenin and Stalin — the creator of the Third International and its grave digger — these two represented ideas and actions which are in polar opposition to each other. They can in no way be reconciled. I notice that while they had the effrontery to refer to Marx, in the order dissolving the Comintern, they left unmentioned its founder. That at least was a wise omission, because Lenin's name would have been out of place there, as Marx's was also.

In the course of twenty years, from 1924, when the fatal theory of socialism in one country was first promulgated, to the sorry, dishonorable end of the Comintern in 1943; in that whole tragic degeneration, we can see above everything else the decisive role of theory in political action. Stalin didn't begin with the dissolution of the Comintern. He began with the theory of socialism in one country. From this false theory everything else has followed — the betrayal of the world proletariat, the isolation of the USSR behind her national barriers, the purges, the Moscow trials, the mass murders, the assassinations, and, finally, the dissolution of the Comintern.

There is a profound lesson in this terrible sequence of events for all the generation of the young proletariat awakening to political interest and political life. Trotsky explained it in 1928 in his book, which was here referred to by the chairman. In "The Criticism of the Draft Program of the Comintern" he explained to the communist workers of Russia and the world that precisely this theory of socialism in one country, with its inevitable nationalistic implications, would

inevitably lead to the degeneration and downfall of the Comintern. When this was written 15 years ago, the great majority of communists considered this a great exaggeration and even an insult to Stalin and his co-workers in the Russian party. But Trotsky, who did not impute design but only ignorance to these people at that time, explained that good intentions cannot help you in politics if you proceed from a false theory. It is like a mariner setting a false course which can only lead the ship to an unintended destination.

The struggle against the theory of socialism in one country was conducted in the name of internationalism. And in the name of internationalism Trotsky and his disciples struggled against its disastrous consequences, as they began to reveal themselves in life. As the tragic course of events unfolded, Trotsky, step by step, analyzed, he explained, he threw the Marxist light on all the great events as they happened, before they happened, and afterwards he drew the necessary conclusions. He was not deterred by persecution; he was not dismayed by the few numbers that surrounded him, nor by the renegacy of others, nor by the sneers of philistines.

Trotsky did not consider in the first place numbers, popularity, success of the moment, any more than did Marx and Engels and Lenin. He considered historical necessity. He considered the task of formulating for the proletariat the program showing the shortest road to the realization of its historical goal. His work and struggle bore fruit in the creation of an international nucleus of revolutionary fighters, and eventually in the formal organization of the Fourth International, in the World Congress in 1938.

At the time it was formed the great politicians of the mass parties of the Social Democracy used to sneer at Trotsky's little handful and his insignificant Fourth International. The heroes of the London Bureau, the centrists who, if they could not organize mass parties could, at least, talk about them, used to argue against Trotsky that he didn't have many followers. And the Stalinists, backed by the limitless material resources of the Soviet Union, with money, tremendous apparatus, a

subsidized bureaucracy, and GPU murder machine at their disposal — with all this tremendous weight at their side, they hounded, persecuted and derided Trotsky and the Fourth International.

But in the brief period since the Founding Congress of the Fourth International, in a brief five years, every other international organization of the workers has been hurled down to ruin as Trotsky predicted they would be, without one stone left standing on another. This was the fate of the Second International of Social Democracy, of the London Bureau of the centrists, and now it is the fate of the Stalinists, admitted and acknowledged by themselves. They have all been destroyed by the war, as Trotsky said they would be. But the Fourth International remains. And with it lives the principle of internationalism which alone can show the tortured masses of the world the way out of war and slavery to the socialist future of humanity.

In this past period since 1864, each international organization of the workers in passing from the historical scene, left something accomplished, left something behind upon which its successor could build for the future.

The First International left an imperishable ideal, an unsullied record, as an inspiration for the workers from that day to this, a glorious memory.

The Second International died ignominiously through betrayal in 1914. Nevertheless, in the period from 1889 to that fatal day in August, 25 years later, it built great mass organizations of the workers, and handed on experience in organization of incalculable value, upon which the Third International was able to build. Also, the initial cadres of the Third International didn't fall from the sky. They came right out of the heart of the Second International. Thus, in spite of everything, the Second International left a great heritage.

The Third International, which has ended now in shame and disgrace, has nevertheless left behind the richest treasures for the future. Its founders, Lenin and Trotsky belong to us; nobody can dissolve the tie that binds the new generation of

revolutionary workers to Lenin and Trotsky, to their teachings, their example, their beautiful memory. The record of the long internal struggle from 1923 to this date, the struggle of Trotsky and his co-thinkers and disciples, belongs to the proletariat of the world. The record of that struggle is the basic literature upon which the whole new generation which is destined to lead the world will be educated and trained. The first four Congresses of the Comintern, held under Lenin's leadership in 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922 — four congresses in four years — produced documents which are the basic program of the movement that we uphold today.

And, in addition to that, out of the Third International, before it died and long before it was buried, came the initiating cadres of the Fourth International. Thus, looking at the thing always from the standpoint of the international proletariat and disregarding no elements in the whole survey, whether they are positive or negative, we have a right to say that the balance sheet of the Communist International, in spite of everything, shows a great historical credit balance.

Stalin can bury the dead organization but he cannot bury the great progressive work the Comintern accomplished in its first years. He cannot bury the Fourth International which has risen, phoenix-like, from the ashes of the Third. We know very well and we don't try to conceal the fact that the numbers of the Fourth International are small. But its ideas are correct, its program represents historical necessity, and, therefore, its victory is assured. Its program consciously formulates the instinctive demands of the workers and the colonial peoples for emancipation from capitalism, fascism and war.

Even today, striking workers who never even heard of the Fourth International, are denounced as "Trotskyists" whenever they stand up for their rights, just as the workers and soldiers in Russia in 1917 under Kerensky were denounced on every side as "Bolsheviks" and heard then, for the first time in the denunciations, the word "Bolshevik." Trotsky relates in his "History of the Russian Revolution" how they began to say to themselves, "If what they are accusing us of

is Bolshevism, then we had better be Bolsheviks."

So it will be again wherever workers stand up for their rights, express their instinctive will to struggle for a better future, and are denounced as Trotskyists. In good time they will learn the name of the Fourth International, its meaning, its program, and ally themselves with it.

No one can dissolve the Fourth International. It is the real Comintern and it will keep the banner unfurled in the faces of all traitors and renegades. And we assert confidently that it will be strengthened and grow and triumph until its organized ranks merge with the whole mass of humanity. The song which no Stalin can render obsolete ends its chorus with the words: "The International shall be the human race." And this chorus has a profound political meaning. It is not merely a poetical expression.

The peoples of the world in the various countries, through coordinated international effort, will pass over, in their great historic march, from capitalism to socialism through the transitional period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. As they progress toward the complete classless socialist society, all the various workers' organizations which have been instruments and mechanisms of the class struggle, that is, the parties, the unions, the cooperatives, the soviets, will gradually lose their original functions. As the classes are abolished and class struggles consequently ended, all these instruments of class struggle, will tend to coalesce into one united body. And that one united body will be the organized world society of the free and equal. The International shall really be the human race.

We disciples of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, we partisans of the Fourth International, retain undimmed that vision of the future. To see that vision even now, to see it clearly through the fire and the smoke of the war, is simply to be in accord with historical development, to foresee the inevitable march of events and to prepare for them. To fight for this vision of the socialist future, to hasten its realization, is the highest privilege and the greatest happiness for a civilized man or woman in the world today.

# Manifesto of the Fourth International

On

## The Dissolution of the Comintern

Upon the occasion of the burial of the Third International by its murderer Stalin, the Fourth International addresses the workers of the world, and particularly those who have adhered to the Comintern.

Members of the Communist parties! You thought the Comintern was yours, you devoted your lives to it, but you were permitted no voice in deciding its fate. That fact alone should make clear to you that the Comintern was not yours at all, that you misplaced your devotion, that Stalin and his puppets have betrayed you. On May 22 the Presidium of the Comintern made public its resolution for dissolution—made it public in order to confront you with the accomplished fact. Less than three weeks later, on June 10, the Presidium announced, in the language of a bankrupt shopkeeper, the appointment of a four-man committee “to wind up the affairs, dissolve the organs and dispose of the staff and property of the Communist International.” By what authority was the Comintern dissolved? Ostensibly, in the few days between May 22 and June 10 a long list of Communist parties had approved the resolution of dissolution. Who really approved it? The so-called Central Committees hand-picked by Stalin and his Presidium, but the membership was not even consulted. Among the parties listed as approving, are those of Germany and occupied Europe. But who could pretend to speak for them within three weeks, except a few degenerate bureaucrats living in Moscow? The bureaucratic method of dissolution showed what the Comintern has really been for nearly two decades— a

totalitarian instrument in the hands of a clique alien to the interests of the world proletariat.

The last act of the Comintern, characteristically, was a vicious attack against proletarian internationalism. Every reason given in the resolution for dissolution is reactionary to the core.

Attempting to conceal the abyss which separates the Comintern of Lenin and Trotsky from the Stalinized Comintern, the resolution is silent on why the International was originally founded. It merely says the International "was founded in 1919 as the result of the political collapse of the overwhelming majority of the old pre-war workers' parties." But it dares not recall by a single word what that political collapse actually consisted of: support of the war and of their "own" capitalist governments by the parties of the Second International. The Comintern parties have likewise become supporters of capitalist governments and their war, making necessary the founding of the Fourth International for exactly the same reasons for which the Third International was created. The last Comintern resolution falsifies the origins of the Third International in order to conceal the historical necessity for the Fourth International.

For the same reason the resolution falsifies the aims of the Comintern of Lenin and Trotsky, saying that its "historic role" consisted "in upholding the principles of the working class movement," helping "vanguard" workers in a "number of" countries to work for "the defense of their economic and political interests and for the struggle against Fascism and war." In the whole resolution there is not even a mention of socialism, capitalism, or class struggle. Contrast this with the Platform of the Communist International adopted at its Founding Congress in 1919, which stated its purpose as "the conquest of political power" by "the dictatorship of the proletariat" for "the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the socialization of the means of production." Likewise the first Article of the Statutes of the Communist International, adopted at its Second World Congress in 1920, read:

"The New International Association of Workers is founded for the purpose of organizing a joint action of the proletariat of different countries, aiming at a single and identical goal, viz, the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of the

dictatorship of the proletariat and of an international republic of soviets which will make it possible completely to abolish classes and bring about socialism, the first stage of communist society.”

All the documents of the first four Congresses of the Communist International—one each year, from 1919 to 1922—are similarly couched in ringing words, for the International under Lenin and Trotsky was in the direct tradition of the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels, which proudly proclaimed that “The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims.” Stalin’s resolution of dissolution, like all the Stalinist documents, belongs to an entirely different tradition, alien in spirit and language to everything revolutionary.

In the light of the real origins and internationalist aims of the Comintern of Lenin and Trotsky, one can see clearly how false and reactionary is the claim of the Stalinist resolution that the workers no longer need an International. Already in 1848 Marx and Engels adduced the necessity of the International from the fact that bourgeois society was world-wide in scope and required an international proletarian revolution to overthrow it and replace it by a socialist society. Still more concretely, Lenin and Trotsky declared the necessity of an International which should not be a mere sum of national parties but a single World Party with sections everywhere. The unevenness of development of economy and the workers’ movements in the various countries, far from being an argument against internationalism, was one of the main reasons insisted upon by Lenin and Trotsky for the establishment of the Third International. They never tired of stressing the mutual need which the proletariat of advanced capitalist countries and the peoples of the colonies have for each other—the workers of Britain and the masses of India, the U.S. proletariat and the toilers of Latin America, etc.—in their common struggle against the imperialist overlords.

It is against this century-old Marxist principle that the Stalinist resolution declares that “the deep differences in the historical roads of development of each country of the world,” and “the difference in level and rate of their social and political development,” create such “various problems” that their solution “through the medium of some international



center would encounter insuperable obstacles." If these arguments were true, and since the same essential conditions existed in 1919, then the International should never have been founded. But every word is false.

Piling one lie on top of another, the resolution asserts that the International was needed in "the first stages of the working class movement, but it has been outgrown by the growth of this movement" and the dissolution is "taking into account the growth and the political maturity of Communist parties and their leading cadres in separate countries." What a horrible joke! Nobody except the class enemy dreamed of dissolving the International when it was really at its height in 1922, numbering many millions of members in the capitalist world, with great mass parties in Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Scandinavia, Poland, Yugoslavia, France, etc. Now, when these parties have been destroyed as a result of Stalin's false policies, when the few parties which still exist have been reduced to marionette impotence with the strings held in the Kremlin, this is called "political maturity"! The cruellest satirist could not have invented a more grotesque formula.

Stalin orders his hireling professors to embellish his crimes with historical precedents from "Marxism." Even they, however, could not conjure up a "quotation" from Lenin to justify the dissolution. Lenin stood for burying a degenerate International by building the new one immediately. Apparently hoping that fewer workers will know the facts about an earlier "precedent," the resolution adduces "the example of the great Marx" who dissolved the First International "as a result of the matured situation creating mass national working class parties." The only truthful item in this lie is that the First International was dissolved in 1876. Marx, Engels and its other revolutionary leaders were compelled to dissolve the First International because it had suffered mortal defeat: the objective situation resulting from the crushing of the Paris Commune had paralyzed it, and the internal struggle with anarchists and adventurist elements threatened it with degeneration. It was dissolved, moreover, not in an epoch like the present, when world revolution is on the order of the day, but in the 1870's, at a time when still-expanding capitalism had before it the perspective of still further development and the socialist movement correspondingly had time for the regrouping of its

forces. Nor did the leaders of the First International present its dissolution as a triumph, but honestly called it a defeat. It left the scene beaten but undegenerated, with its banner unsullied and its historical lessons an inspiration to the workers of the world. Far from denying internationalism as Stalin does, Marx and Engels promptly set about gathering the forces to build a new International—a task accomplished within thirteen years by their followers. There is no analogy whatsoever between the clean death of the First International and the tardy burial of the malodorous corpse of the Third International.

The real analogy with Stalin's action is the shameful death of the Second International in August 1914. As the first imperialist world war was the decisive test of the Second International, so has this war been the acid test of the Comintern. Stalin's model is not Marx or Lenin but the bankrupt leaders of the Second International, the Kautskys and Plekhanovs. The parallel is inescapable. The "political maturity" claimed for the Comintern is the same kind of political rotteness exhibited by the Second International leaders, whom Lenin called "social-chauvinists"—socialists in words, chauvinists in deeds. Just as the social-chauvinists pretended to see a basic principled difference between the warring camps in 1914, so the Stalinist resolution of dissolution asserts "a deep dividing line" between the present warring imperialist camps and imposes on the workers in the Anglo-U.S. bloc "the sacred duty" of "national unity"—that is, the abandonment of the class struggle.

That this treason to the interests of the working class is as black as that of the Second International is obscured, in the eyes of many revolutionary-minded workers, because Stalinism presents it as the way to defend the Soviet Union. These workers, startled into awareness by the dissolution of the Comintern, must now thoughtfully re-examine the basic questions involved.

The Fourth International stands for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union. Despite the degeneration wreaked upon it by the Kremlin bureaucracy, the Soviet Union retains as its foundation the nationalized property created by the October revolution. This remaining conquest of the first successful proletarian revolution must be defended by every

worker. The real defense of the Soviet Union, however, requires entirely different methods than the false course pursued since 1924 by the Kremlin bureaucracy.

Every serious worker must learn to understand what has happened to the Soviet Union and the Comintern since Lenin's death. Only then will he grasp completely the fundamental difference between Lenin's method of defending the Soviet Union and Stalin's false method which made it possible for Hitler to invade the USSR, lay waste its richest areas, murder the flower of its manhood and, though Hitler should fail, leaves the way open for the "democratic" imperialists to go still further, whether by "peaceful" or war means, toward re-introducing private property.

When the Second International joined the war-mongers in August 1914, Lenin and his co-workers immediately proclaimed its death as a revolutionary body and the need for a new, Third International. The program of the new International was worked out during the war years, and it was on that program that the October revolution triumphed. This victory, the Bolsheviks understood, was but the first link in the world revolution; without other victorious proletarian revolutions the Soviet Union could not maintain itself indefinitely in capitalist encirclement. Hence the "Declaration of the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited People," which was the charter of the Soviet Union (until it was replaced in 1936 by the Stalinist "Constitution") established as the "fundamental task" of the new regime "the establishment of a socialist organization of society and the victory of socialism in all countries." That was Lenin's method of defending the Soviet Union. The indispensable instrument for that world task was the Third International, officially founded in March 1919.

Irreconcilable struggle against all the capitalists and their reformist agents, their peace and their wars, against their "democracy" and their repressions, for the revolutionary overthrow of all capitalist regimes and their replacement by the dictatorship of the proletariat and the World Federation of Soviet Republics—that, succinctly, was the program of the Third International under Lenin and Trotsky. Its first four Congresses, from 1919 to 1922, gathered together the revolutionary general staff of the entire world. The revolutionary offensive which it led very nearly put an end to the capitalist

system in all Europe—that is attested to by the memoirs of the capitalist leaders who have since confessed how nearly they were overwhelmed by the proletarian upsurge. That wave of revolution saved the young Soviet republic.

But by 1923 the revolutionary wave was temporarily thrown back by the capitalists with the aid of the reformists in the labor movement. And before the next wave began, the revolutionary weapon, the Third International, had been blunted beyond use.

It was blunted by a bureaucracy which arose in the Soviet Union. The Soviet bureaucracy was similar to the labor bureaucracies in the capitalist world in its higher standard of living and other special privileges as against the workers, its conservatism, fear and distrust of the workers. Its rise and seizure of power can be attributed in part to the economic and cultural backwardness and poverty of the predominantly agrarian country inherited from Czarism. Above all, however, the bureaucracy was enabled to have its way because of the failure of the European revolution. In the resultant isolation of the first workers' state in capitalist encirclement, exhausted by years of bloody imperialist and civil war, the Russian workers let the power slip into the hands of a bureaucracy of which Stalin became the spokesman. The bureaucracy entrenched itself by destroying all the democratic instruments—the party, the soviets, the trade unions—leaving only totalitarian caricatures completely in the hands of Stalin and his clique.

The bureaucracy distorted and revised Lenin's ideas, above all on the international character of the October revolution. In Lenin's theory socialist construction in Russia and socialist revolution elsewhere formed parts of an organic whole. In its place Stalin advanced the theory of "socialism in one country," asserting that an isolated socialist society could be built in Russia without the aid of socialist revolutions elsewhere—a theory which is a repudiation of proletarian internationalism.

Fortunately for the future of humanity, Bolshevism did not remain without its defenders. Lenin's principal co-worker, Trotsky, led the Left Opposition in the Russian Bolshevik Party and the Comintern in struggle against the bureaucracy.

The Left Opposition warned that the Stalinist bureaucracy was transforming the Comintern from an organization of

world revolution into a mere instrument of Kremlin foreign policy, a mere border guard of the Soviet Union. Nor would the process stop there. From the bureaucracy's loss of faith in the ability of the international working class to make the world revolution it was but a step to loss of faith in the ability of the world workers to defend the Soviet Union.

In the light of the dissolution of the Comintern, the workers who have adhered to it should ponder the prophetic words written by Trotsky in 1928 in answer to Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country": "If our (Soviet) internal difficulties, obstacles and contradictions, which are fundamentally a reflection of world contradictions, can be settled merely by the 'inner forces of our revolution' without entering the arena of the world-wide proletarian revolution, then the International is partly a subsidiary and partly a decorative institution, the Congress of which can be convoked once every four years, once every ten years or perhaps not at all."

The history of the Stalinized Third International is one of uninterrupted catastrophes perpetrated upon the world working class. We can note here only the most terrible landmarks of Stalin's false policy.

In 1925-1927 came the great Chinese revolution, marching forward to major triumphs over the imperialists and their native puppets. Its real strength came from the workers and peasants who were revolting against all exploiters, both native and imperialist. Stalin desired to weaken imperialism but, with characteristic lack of confidence in the masses, ordered the Chinese Communist Party to subordinate itself to the bourgeois Kuomintang under Chiang Kai-shek. Closer to imperialism than to the Chinese masses or the Soviet Union, Chiang in 1927 reached an agreement with the imperialists and was enabled to carry out a bloody extermination of the militant workers and peasants who had been disarmed by Stalin's endorsement of Chiang.

In England, Stalin tried to lean on the trade union bureaucrats, with whom he formed the Anglo-Russian Committee of the trade union bureaucracies of the two countries. The British labor bureaucrats were thus enabled to cover themselves with the prestige of the Russian revolution at a time when the British proletariat was rising in a struggle which culminated in the British General Strike of 1926. Using

the Anglo-Russian Committee as a shield against the wrath of the workers, the British trade union bureaucrats betrayed the general strike. Even then Stalin insisted upon continuance of the Anglo-Russian Committee. Shortly afterward, when the defeated British working class lapsed into passivity, the British trade union bureaucrats abandoned the Committee which had served their counter-revolutionary purposes.

In Germany, Stalin perpetrated the most terrible defeat of all. Here his lack of confidence in the workers took an "ultra-left" form, beginning in 1929. He launched the theory of "social fascism," terming the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions it led as the "twin" of fascism, hence "social fascist." This theory denied the possibility of a united front of the Social Democratic-led workers' organizations and those of the Communist Party for a common struggle against the rising Nazis. The pseudo-radicalism of this theory, which insisted that all the workers must first submit to the leadership of the Communist Party, actually led to disunity and passivity. The task of the hour, Trotsky warned, was to demand a united anti-Nazi front between the Communist and Social-Democratic parties. Should the Social Democratic leaders refuse, they would be exposed before their own members, who would then turn to the Communist Party. For this advice Trotsky too was dubbed a "social fascist" and the Stalinist leadership persisted on its disastrous course. Only thanks to this false policy was Hitler enabled to take over the country in 1933. The Stalinist leadership capitulated to Hitler, making no attempt, despite six million followers, to strike even such a blow as the socialist workers of Vienna struck against Dolfuss a year later.

The German catastrophe showed that Stalinism had corrupted the Third International beyond redemption. Until then the Left Opposition led by Trotsky had, though bureaucratically expelled from the Comintern, stood for return to it and reform of it. Now it became imperative to proclaim the need for a new, Fourth International. During the next five years the movement gathered its forces and in 1938 in Paris held the Founding Congress of the Fourth International.

The correctness of the establishment of the Fourth International was demonstrated by the defeats perpetrated by the Stalinist Third International since 1933. Whereas previously

Stalin had made opportunist pacts with the Chinese bourgeoisie, the British trade union bureaucracy, etc., now he sought alliances with the imperialist powers. Stalinism evolved from lack of faith in the ability of the workers into deliberate betrayal of the workers.

One open betrayal after another began with the Stalin-Laval pact of May 1935. Seeking implementation of that pact by direct military collaboration, and similar pacts with Britain and other "democracies," Stalin wooed them by demonstrating how useful the Comintern could be to the capitalists. In August 1935, after a lapse of seven years, he convened its Seventh (and last) Congress, which ordered the Communist parties to enter Popular Fronts—only the name was new, the policy of class-collaboration and government coalitions was one which revolutionists have always branded as a betrayal of the working class.

The fruits were soon to be seen. In France the Communist Party deputies voted for the capitalist government's military budget—precisely the act of the German Social Democratic deputies on August 4, 1914 which Lenin had branded as the death-sentence of the Second International. The Stalinist leadership openly joined in breaking the famous sit-down strikes of June 1936—a revolutionary upheaval which should have opened the road to proletarian revolution—with Thorez uttering the classic formula of betrayal: "Comrades, we must know when to call off a strike." The Stalinists declared the French bourgeois state was a true friend of the Soviet Union, enabling it to crush the workers' movement precisely because the Stalinists had presented it to the workers as a friend.

In Spain, where the civil war had begun in July 1936, and the workers were fighting back not only on the field of battle but by beginning the social revolution, Stalinism openly showed its counter-revolutionary character. To demonstrate his uses to the "democracies," Stalin constituted himself the guardian of private property in Spain. In return for scanty arms for the Loyalists, Stalin extorted political concessions which enabled the Spanish Communist Party and the GPU to crush the workers' factory committees, the peasant collectives of Aragon and Catalonia, to assassinate hundreds of Trotskyist, anarchist and socialist militants, and establish a

government under Negrin sufficiently "respectable" to meet the approval of the "democracies." But this process of repression of the Spanish revolution destroyed the morale of the workers and peasants and the Loyalist armies, while winning no arms from the "democracies." Thus Stalin facilitated the victory of Franco.

Nor did these betrayals gain Stalin his goal. Despite all his grovelling, Britain evaded concluding a military alliance. The Stalin-Laval pact was never implemented by military discussions and ended by becoming a dead letter. Thus Stalin's 1935-1939 policy of wooing the "democracies" collapsed in failure. Now, outraging the anti-fascist sentiments of the workers of the world, Stalin wooed Hitler.

The period of the Stalin-Hitler pact brought the Comintern to new depths of degeneration. Along with grain and oil, its services were sold to Hitler. The Comintern branded his opponents as "imperialists" and "war mongers," while Stalin's message to Ribbentrop in December 1939 hailed the Hitler-Stalin alliance as "cemented by blood," presumably the blood shed in their joint partition of Poland. This period of the Comintern is sufficiently characterized by the slogan of the Communist Party of the U.S.A.—"The Yanks are not coming"—a policy of defeatism without being revolutionary. Blind to the real course of events, the Kremlin bureaucracy flattered the Nazis, Molotov declaring that "A strong Germany is an indispensable condition for a durable peace in Europe."

This vile policy, in turn, collapsed on June 22, 1941, when Hitler, having completed the conquest of the continent, was able to choose his own moment for invading the USSR. The day before, the Stalinist press was reviling the "war-mongers" who were spreading "rumors" of an impending Nazi invasion. Overnight the Kremlin's puppets became again supporters of the "democracies."

Such is the indisputable record of Stalin and his Comintern. These false policies made possible the plight of the Soviet Union. Bled and impoverished by the Nazi invasion, the USSR, even though Hitler is vanquished, will still be left facing its capitalist "allies," who are no less opponents of nationalized property than is Hitler.

In the course of its degeneration the Kremlin bureaucracy has hardened into an ossified caste alien to the interests of



the Russian and world proletariat. For it there is no turning back to Lenin's method. The bureaucracy would be one of the first victims of a successful revolution in Europe, for then, freed from the fear of invasion and backed by new workers' states, the Soviet proletariat would no longer tolerate the totalitarian bureaucracy. The Kremlin will attempt to pursue to the end its policy of wooing and adapting itself to the imperialists.

That is the meaning of the dissolution of the Comintern. It is but the latest episode in the Kremlin's concessions to the capitalist world. The Communist parties have become the most rabid strikebreakers in England, the United States, Australia, Canada, etc. In India the Stalinists have played openly the role of tool of British imperialism in repressing the revolt of the Indian masses. Stalinist propaganda against Germany, making no distinction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, paves the way for a second and worse Versailles Treaty of imperialist vengeance; and the resolution dissolving the Comintern says not a word in solidarity with the German proletariat. The 20-year Anglo-Soviet pact is predicated on the reconstruction of a capitalist Europe with Stalin's cooperation. The dissolution of the Comintern is simply another sign by Stalin that he is ready to adapt himself still further to the rule of capitalism.

Like all his previous policies, Stalin's present "alliance" is a mortal danger to the Soviet Union and leaves the initiative to the irreconcilable imperialist foes of the workers' state. It enables them to seize the most favorable times for ever-greater demands for economic inroads into the Soviet Union designed to undermine the nationalized property and for a renewed attempt to crush it altogether. Like Stalin's previous false policies, this one too will collapse under conditions most disadvantageous for the Soviet Union.

But neither Stalin's concessions nor his aid to the imperialist masters can stabilize society in the period which Lenin called the epoch of imperialist wars, colonial revolts and proletarian revolutions. The world is not only ripe but overripe for the transition to socialism. All the objective conditions indicated by Marx and Lenin exist for the socialist revolution; the only thing that has been lacking is precisely the International which Stalin asserts the workers do not need.

Capitalist society has been in permanent crisis since 1914, having exhausted its potentialities. In its decline capitalism has inflicted upon humanity two world-wide imperialist conflagrations, and in between them innumerable lesser wars and imperialist aggressions against the colonial and semi-colonial peoples. Capitalist degeneration has expressed itself in the scourge of fascism, the most brutal and desperate form of capitalist rule, for the twin purposes of crushing the workers' organizations at home and launching imperialist adventures abroad.

The terrible fate of Europe, the most civilized of the continents, has shown the price that humanity is paying for the failure to extend the October revolution after the last war. There it is crystal-clear that the continuance of capitalism would inevitably mean a Third World War. Amid the tens of millions of victims, the workers must remember with bitterness the arguments of the Social Democracy and the Popular Front against "bloody" revolution. There is no hope for the physical survival of the peoples except through ending the Balkanization of the continent by establishing the Socialist United States of Europe.

The first wave of revolution in Europe in 1917-1923 aroused the huge populations of the colonial and semi-colonial world—the overwhelming majority of humanity—to enter the political arena and boldly challenge their imperialist enslavers. The coming wave will spread even more quickly to Asia and Africa—the great masses of India are already advancing to meet it.

The events on the other continents will give a decisive impetus to the revolutionary development of the proletariat in the United States. During the last decade the U. S. proletariat has learned that it is not immune to the evils which afflicted its European brothers. It has witnessed the Europeanization of America—permanent unemployment and hunger in the midst of plenty. The millions of workers who got their first jobs only when war industry mushroomed, and those who survive of the millions who never had jobs before they were put into uniforms, can have no expectations of returning to anything but a worsened version of the economic crisis since 1929. Stripped of illusions about their own future under capitalism, the American workers in uniform will prove to

be no pretorian guard against the European revolution.

These are the revolutionary developments, sure to come, which will save the Soviet Union from capitalist encirclement. It will be saved in spite of Stalinism and against Stalinism.

The revolutionary wave began in 1917 in spite of the fact that the war had begun with the collapse of the Second International. In 1914 only a handful of workers' leaders had remained true to proletarian internationalism. Their task of digging the workers out from under the ruins of the International and creating a new International may well have seemed insuperable. But history was on the side of this handful.

The collapse of the International caught the workers' vanguard unawares in 1914. Amid the war they had to begin the new International. This time, however, the revolutionary vanguard was forewarned. On all the continents and in all the principal countries there were established cadres of the Fourth International long before this war began. Everywhere they stood the decisive test of the war and remained firm in their revolutionary internationalism. While the Third International broke its silence during the war only to dissolve itself, and the Second International has given no sign of life, lacking even the energy to bury itself, the Fourth International has spoken out throughout the war, working and preparing for the revolutionary wave that is coming.

As Trotsky correctly predicted at a time when the tiny Fourth International was a subject for jest among the reformist leaders, the critical test of the war has destroyed every International and international grouping except the Fourth International. Nothing and nobody can dissolve this International, the heir of the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky.

Workers of all lands! Rally to the proud and stainless banner of the Fourth International! We are approaching the fifth year of the second imperialist world war. It is a year certain to outstrip all the others in human slaughter and material devastation. Before it closes, however, the first great battles of the proletarian revolution may already begin. Once again out of the vast sea of human suffering of war will arise the unconquerable spirit of the international proletariat, determined to complete this time the task begun with the

October revolution. The aroused workers will drop like cast-off garments the habits of servitude and dare to make a new world. In struggle the great masses will find in themselves inexhaustible reservoirs of revolutionary fortitude and heroism. In those days, nearer at hand than many of you dream, the cadres of the Fourth International will speedily become transformed into great mass parties leading tens and hundreds of millions in the final conflict. Comrades and fellow workers! Above all else the toiling peoples now need the International to lead them. There is only one International now, the World Party of Socialist Revolution, the Fourth International. Enter its ranks and prepare with it to lead the successful struggle for the world revolution!

June 12, 1943

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

# THE MILITANT

a weekly newspaper

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