

STATEMENT OF THE UNITED SECRETARIAT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL  
ON THE NEW PHASE OF THE SINO-SOVIET RIFT

The interruption of the "ideological conference" which was held in Moscow between the representatives of the leaders of the Communist party of the Soviet Union and of the Chinese Communist party opens a new phase in the Sino-Soviet rift and in the crisis of Stalinism. The new phase became clearer from the publication on June 14, 1963, of the "Twenty-Five Points" concerning the general line of the international communist movement issued by the Central Committee of the CCP and the "Open Letter" in reply given by the Central Committee of the CPSU a month later.

The Fourth International, the world party of the Socialist Revolution founded by Leon Trotsky, considers it necessary to state publicly the stand it takes on the questions raised in the discussion between the Communist parties of the Soviet Union and the Chinese Peoples Republic. This is all the more necessary as the CPSU's "Open Letter" explicitly refers to the positions of the Trotskyist movement and accuses the Chinese Communist party of "acting as real Trotskyists." It also accuses the Chinese representatives in Ceylon of being in "close contact with the faction of Edmund Samarakoddy, which is an instrument of the so-called Fourth International (Trotskyists)," and states that the Trotskyist Fourth International has sent an Open Letter to the Chinese Communist party "completely approving Peking's activities."

The position of the Fourth International on the Sino-Soviet rift is embodied in a document adopted at the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International held in Italy from June 21 to June 26, and just published in a special issue of the magazine Quatrième Internationale (No. 19, 21e année). We summarize the ideas developed in that document, and clarify our stand on the essential problems posed both in the "Twenty-Five Points" of the CCP and the "Open Letter" of the CPSU.

I.

The Fourth International is of the opinion that the discussion initiated in the world communist movement as a result of the Sino-Soviet rift is a healthy development. Far from "weakening the socialist camp" and "objectively helping imperialism," a frank and public debate on all the basic problems and the strategy of the world socialist revolution can only contribute to ideological and political clarification in the working-class movement and the anti-imperialist movement of the colonial countries, and thereby strengthen the struggles of all the anticapitalist and anti-imperialist forces in the world.

It is indeed a step forward that the discussion is now finally taking place out in the open, and that the ridiculous spectacle of Khrushchev concentrating his attacks on Albania

and Mao directing his ire against Yugoslavia, when the main debate for years between the CCP and the CPSU is finally over.

Public discussions on ideological differences within the world revolutionary movement are far from being alien to the Marxist-Leninist tradition. All great ideological discussions in Lenin's time, either before the October Revolution or after it, have been waged by Lenin and Bolsheviks in public, for the benefit of all workers and Marxists, in the tradition of Rosa Luxemburg's struggle against the reformist leadership of the German Social-Democratic party before 1914, or for that matter, the struggle of the Left in the Socialist International from 1900 onwards against Bernstein and Millerandism (regarding participation of socialists in the bourgeois governments).

Also all the discussions during the first four congresses of the Communist International, in Lenin's lifetime, were conducted publicly. The minutes of these congresses were published. These discussions involved questions concerning the tactics of mass parties in Germany, Italy, France and Czechoslovakia, and also questions concerning many tactical problems posed the process of the building of the Soviet State.

If the international communist movement could conduct such public discussions when it was relatively weak and when the first Soviet State, encircled by enemies, was involved in a civil war with its economy nearly broken down, surely the international movement has nothing to fear from such discussions when it is immensely stronger and when the Soviet Union is the second industrial power in the world, surrounded by workers states both in Europe and in Asia. Moreover, the world relationship of forces has decisively changed at the expense of imperialism, in favor of the anticapitalist forces.

The argument that such discussions help the imperialists to know what is going on in the socialist camp is not valid. The bourgeois press has kept itself "informed" about the Sino-Soviet differences for many years. Imperialist powers and the colonial bourgeoisie has freely speculated on the extent of the rift and has tried to profit from it. The only force misled was the international working class which was prevented from intervening in the debate. Once again it has been proved that the methods of "secret diplomacy" within the working-class movement can only help imperialism and capitalism.

A clear distinction should be drawn between a discussion on the problems of strategy and tactics of the international working class and revolutionary movement on the one hand, and the problems of mutual relations between various workers states on the other. While we favor frank and public discussions between parties, we stress the absolute necessity of maintaining unity of action between the workers states in the military, diplomatic and economic fields. In order to ensure this it is necessary to establish the relations between workers states

strictly on the basis of equality, and do away with once and for all the theory of the "state-guide" and the "party-guide." Common action by the workers states must be attained by mutual consultations and negotiations without any state having the possibility of dictating to the others.

Secret diplomacy between Communist parties was introduced in the world revolutionary movement by Stalin to defend the narrow interests of the Soviet bureaucracy which had usurped power in the Soviet Union. Servile submission of the leaderships of all Communist parties to the Soviet bureaucracy was likewise introduced in the world movement by Stalin. We call upon all communists, and particularly the communists of China who say that they are fighting for equality between Communist parties, and the communists of the Soviet Union who claim that they are "liquidating the consequences of the cult of Stalin's personality," to eradicate these bureaucratic methods once and for all from the international communist movement.

Do not hide differences from your militants and the working class!

Do not replace ideological discussion by secret diplomacy!

Fight for an international conference of all organizations which owe allegiance to Marxism-Leninism! Such a conference must include all Communist parties, the Fourth International, the fidelistas forces in Cuba and Latin America, the Yugoslav League of Communists, "pro-Chinese" communists expelled from the official Communist parties. It alone can thrash out all the ~~problems of strategy and tactics of the world~~ revolutionary movement today, not in a bureaucratic manner but on the basis of the rich revolutionary experience of the last twenty years.

## II.

The Khrushchev leadership endeavors to cloud the issues by pretending that the Chinese communists "desire a nuclear war," or "are indifferent to the danger of a nuclear world war breaking out." This is nothing but pure and simple slander, objectively helping the anti-Chinese and anticommunist propaganda of American imperialism.

It is true that the Chinese CP in some of its old documents while supporting the Soviet Union in its fight for the destruction and banning of nuclear weapons which constitute a great danger to the working class of the world, sometimes used formulas which implied an underestimation of the destructive power of these weapons. When the CPSU's "Open Letter" in reply to the CCP's "Twenty-Five Points" continues to argue on the assumption that the CCP would be "indifferent" to nuclear war or that the Chinese even wanted to unleash such a war, it is clear that the Soviet leadership deliberately distorts and falsifies the CCP's positions clearly stated in points 15, 16 and 17 of the CCP's document.

In reality the discussion in the world revolutionary movement does not and cannot center around the "advisability or not" of unleashing the nuclear war, for no one outside a handful of madmen can defend such a suicidal proposal inside the international working-class movement. Nor does the discussion center around the destructive potential of a nuclear war. This again is not a problem of "tactics" but a scientific fact. THE REAL DISCUSSION DOES NOT RELATE TO THE POLICIES OF WORKERS STATES (neither of the Soviet Union nor of the Chinese PR), BUT TO THE POLICIES OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES AND THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN THE COLONIES.

Nowhere in their "Twenty-Five Points" have the Chinese asked the Soviet state to initiate an armed intervention in the anti-imperialist struggles of the colonial people. What they do ask is that the Communist parties of the imperialist and the colonial countries should not use the slogan of "peaceful coexistence" between states as an excuse for "peaceful coexistence" with their own bourgeoisie and as a cover for their abandonment of revolutionary strategy and tactics in favor of reformist and revisionist opportunism of the crassest type.

The Chinese are absolutely right in drawing the attention of the communist movement to the well-known fact that all victorious revolutions so far (not only in the pre-nuclear era, but also since the development of nuclear weapons) had to be fought with arms for the overthrow of the enemy as was demonstrated by the Vietnamese, the Cuban, and the Algerian revolutions.

It is a monstrous slander, therefore, to identify revolutionists who state these undeniable truths with people wanting to provoke a nuclear war. On the contrary, the Chinese are generally justified when they state that only the successful -- including, if necessary, armed -- struggles of the colonial masses against imperialism, and successful proletarian revolutions in the imperialist countries can, in the final analysis, disarm world imperialism, destroy nuclear weapons and guarantee definite and lasting peace for mankind.

Inasmuch as the Chinese Communists more or less advocate the above general line, we support them against the right-wing opportunism of the Khrushchev tendency on the question of world revolution. The Chinese now share the Trotskyist criticism of the extreme right-wing degeneration of some CP's, i.e., the Dange leadership's treacherous support of its own bourgeoisie against not only the Chinese workers state but even against the revolutionary workers and peasants put in jail by Nehru; the American Communist party's scandalous appeal to the Negroes and workers to support the Democratic party of monopoly capitalism and of the most rabid segregationists; the French Communist party's ignominious passivity during the Algerian war; the Italian Communist party's revisionist theory that a capitalist society can be transformed into a socialist society by "structural reforms" by parliamentary means, without having to overthrow the bourgeois state and without the conquest of power by workers and poor peasants. To that extent we support their general criticism of these CP leaderships. We question at the same time the consistency of the CCP position when Peking

maintains silence over the Indonesian CP's opportunist support to Sukarno's bourgeois regime.

### III.

On the other hand, when the "Twenty-Five Points" of the CCP contend (point 23) that Yugoslavia has ceased to be a workers state and has become a capitalist country, or when the Chinese (point 19) say that "some people" exaggerate the problem of a "certain person's role" in the past, when they ask for a discussion on "the criticism of Stalin," we certainly cannot approve their positions.

The CCP is correct when it refuses to attribute too much importance to the role of a single individual, and refuses to accept the non-Marxist thesis of Khrushchev that the terrible crimes which under Stalin were committed against communists and workers in the Soviet Union and against the international working class were due to the so-called "personality cult." The Chinese are also right when they criticize Khrushchev for wanting to "make one person responsible for all faults and glorifying himself with all merits" (point 19). This criticism of the Khrushchev leadership is valid only if it is used to push the so-called "de-Stalinization" process further than Khrushchev has. This criticism becomes irresponsible and incorrect if it is used for combatting the process of de-Stalinization as such.

The crimes committed against the entire old-guard leadership of the Soviet Communist party, the majority of whom were physically liquidated by Stalin; the crimes committed against the international working class by the Stalinist leadership which tried to sabotage and prevent revolutionary struggles in many countries (as it tried in 1946 to prevent Mao Tse-tung from making a turn toward the conquest of power in China) are very real and very concrete. And these crimes live today in the consciousness of millions of communists, revolutionary workers and peasants in many countries, above all in the Soviet Union and in the workers states of Europe.

When we criticize Khrushchev's policies on these problems, we must say: these crimes were not the personal responsibility of Stalin alone but were the collective responsibility of the entire leadership of the CPSU of that period. These crimes can be explained in a Marxist way only if we see them as the expression of the interests of a bureaucratic caste which had usurped the power of the workers and poor peasants and had suppressed Soviet democracy as a real instrument of proletarian power. In order to prevent a revival of such crimes, it is not enough to denounce Stalin as a person. It is necessary to destroy the political, social and economic privileges of the bureaucracy, to restore real Soviet democracy on the basis of elected workers councils, to restore the right of communists to form tendencies within the CP (for, as the Chinese CP itself has stated, a minority can be right within a CP), and to restore the right of workers to form new working-class parties within the framework of Soviet legality and on the basis of the socialist constitution. It is necessary to re-establish the rule that the "party maximum" (maximum income of a party member in administration) be not higher than the average income of skilled workers, as under Lenin. Above

all it is necessary to entrust the workers with real power in the factories by establishing workers self-management through workers councils.

Such a criticism of Khrushchev would be very welcome and very popular among the Communists and workers in the Soviet Union and other workers states. The CPSU's Open Letter correctly states that the mass of the Soviet people certainly support de-Stalinization. Any attempt by the Chinese to fight de-Stalinization will only cut them off completely from the rank-and-file workers and Communists in all workers states.

The Fourth International can under no circumstances support the position of the Chinese CP on de-Stalinization. We seek to develop our criticism of the Khrushchev leadership in the opposite direction. We firmly maintain that only a political revolution will restore real Soviet power in the Soviet Union. The liquidation of the abuses and privileges of the bureaucracy will immensely strengthen the Soviet Union and international communism.

We also reject the Chinese campaign against the Yugoslav communists and their characterization of the Yugoslav state as a capitalist state. The Chinese are correct in their denunciation of the extreme right-wing deviation of Yugoslavia in her foreign policy. But the nature of the state in Yugoslavia as elsewhere is determined by the property relations. The property relations in Yugoslavia are those of a workers state as much if not more so than in 1948 when the Chinese CP also considered Yugoslavia a "socialist country."

The Chinese communists are of course justified in their denunciation of Khrushchev's non-Marxist theory of "the state of the people" as a substitute for the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union. They are right in denying the validity of Khrushchev's -- also Stalin's! -- theory that a classless society has already been established in the Soviet Union. They point out correctly that there are still two classes in the Soviet Union, thereby exploding the theory that the building of socialism has already been accomplished in that country. But when the Chinese quote extensively from Lenin's "State and Revolution" in order to prove that as long as classes exist, the state will also exist, they seem to "forget" the other dialectical part of this fundamental truth, also developed by Lenin in "State and Revolution": the dictatorship of the proletariat is a "state of a special type," a "state which begins to wither away," because more and more state functions should be exercised collectively by the mass of the working people. The Chinese do not seem to insist, as was done by Lenin, on the necessity of a constant development and increase of socialist democracy, on the necessity of fighting again and again against bureaucratic deformation and degeneration by placing real power in the hands of the mass of the workers. Why? Perhaps because it is the Yugoslav "revisionists" who have made the greatest progress in this field? Or is it because in China itself there are powerful bureaucratic deformations and the mass of the workers do not exercise direct state power as elaborated in the "State and Revolution"?

IV.

This in brief represents the Trotskyist position in the present "grand debate" within the world communist movement.

The Trotskyists extend wholehearted but critical support to the Chinese and the left-wing tendencies within the various CP's which fight against right-wing opportunism of their pro-Khrushchev leaderships in the colonial countries as well as in the imperialist countries.

We critically support the Chinese call for a revolutionary orientation of the CP's in the capitalist countries as the only means of effectively fighting imperialism and imperialist preparations for a nuclear war.

But contrary to the tendencies of Khrushchev and Mao the Trotskyists defend the principles of Marxism-Leninism against any attempt to revise them to suit the immediate interests of any bureaucratic group or caste, or to distort them to reflect the temporary advantages of any workers state. We strive to develop the theory of Marxism-Leninism so that it can reflect within the great revolutionary upheaval mankind is passing through in the present epoch, the general historical aspirations of the international working class and of mankind as a whole. We repeat, the only way out for mankind from the present crisis is a successful international socialist revolution.

The present crisis reflects the urgent necessity for the world communist movement to come out of the morass in which Stalinism had sought to drown it in order to answer the demands of the present period. We repeat our concrete proposal to all communists throughout the world:

Forward to an international conference of all organizations owing allegiance to Marxism-Leninism!

Forward toward revival of Marxism-Leninism through workers democracy and international debate.

The United Secretariat of the  
Fourth International

July 25, 1963.