

# The IV International in Danger

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## Letter to the Secretariat from the Spanish Group in México (September 1, 1944)

Comrades:

In December of 1941, the position of the Spanish members of the Fourth International in Mexico was announced publicly among the Spanish emigration in this country by means of the magazine «19 de Julio». Prior to that date, due to the Fourth Internationalists in this country, a series of preparatory tasks were carried out aimed at influencing politically the Spanish refugees. Due to the lack of financial resources, the life of the aforementioned magazine «19 de Julio» was limited to two numbers.

During 1942, without any organ of political expression appearing regularly, the work of the Group was limited to the development of such tasks as were possible to carry out in the environment of the emigration. The extent of our work was conditioned by the small number of our members in the emigration and, on the other hand, by the limited amount of time that these could devote

to political tasks, given the necessity to devote most of their activity to earning a living.

In spite of the above-mentioned unfavorable conditions, as a consequence of the work of clarification, propaganda and penetration, a certain stability was achieved, and the numerical strengthening that resulted from the arrival of some comrades from Europe placed the Group in a position to initiate, after February 1943, political work and normal propaganda. It is in February 1943 when the first number appears of the monthly organ of the Spanish Group in Mexico of the Fourth International, «Contra la Corriente» (Against the Current), a mimeographed magazine which until the present date has continued to appear regularly, already having published its number 14.

Together with the campaign of propaganda and orientation developed by the magazine it has served to carry to a large part of the Spanish emigration the political situation of the Fourth International on most of the contemporary problems of national and international interests. At present there is no event of political importance to the revolutionary interest that transpires without the Fourth Internationalist point of view being heard among the emigrants in Mexico. Besides, the work of penetration by our comrades among members of other organizations has produced, as a result, movements of opinion that favor our tendency and permit it to progressively assimilate larger nuclei. Concretely, this work is carried out among the Socialists, anarchists, and affiliates of the Spanish UGT and CNT union federations.

The foregoing has no other object than to inform briefly the Secretariat of our existence as a Spanish Group of the Fourth International in Mexico, organized since the beginning of 1941. We know that you are informed of all this through Comrade G.

And it is in our character of a Spanish Group in Mexico of the Fourth International that we address the Secretariat, exercising the right conferred upon us by the practice of democratic centralism, basis of the functioning of our organization, in order to present our opinion about the internal problems of the organization which we deal with in the following:

- Information on the international organization. Only in exceptional cases and accidentally has this Group succeeded in acquainting itself in an incomplete manner with the very rare internal problems of a political and organic character, in spite of there being posed many problems of vital importance to the process of theoretical and practical development of our international organization. In pointing out this lack of information we refer concretely to the lack of an internal bulletin or of a regular correspondence of a political and organic character that would keep all the sections and groups of the Fourth International informed about the political and organizational progress and development of each other.
- Relations between the international organization and the sections and groups. As it follows from point (a), the lack of information makes it impossible for us to know whether there exist normal relations and of what kind between the Secretariat and the other sections and groups. As far as our group is concerned and in spite of the fact that on our part and through Comrade G. we have kept the Secretariat informed of our existence and activity, we have not

succeeded as yet in having the Secretariat establish political relations with us.

- Organization of the Fourth Internationalist movement. Lacking internal information and without political organizational relations with the Secretariat, our organic functioning as a Spanish Group within the international organization imposes on us a certain autonomy, not desired but nevertheless tolerated, that harms, we don't know how much, the development of our international movement. The lack of organic coherency harms at least, the unity of political expression, permitting at times the struggle of tendencies that begin in our groups to overflow the limits of the Fourth Internationalist movement and degenerate to the point of being lost for the Fourth International.

Character and importance of these facts.

The character and importance of these facts demand—in the opinion of the Spanish Group in Mexico—a maximum effort to correct them; avoiding in this way that the persistence and the development of these functional ills cripple our organization for any effective international action.

In every revolutionary movement any fault in organization has inevitable political consequences. Organizational methods and political line are interdependent. Conclusive evidence (of this) abounds in the international workers' movement.

The Fourth International has clearly recognized democratic centralism as the norm and practice of its internal functioning, basing itself precisely on experience. The effective exercise of this would liquidate the mentioned vices and would avoid the consequences that derive from them.

What is the internal reality of the Fourth International as an organization? There is no centralism because the directing international organism with its ghost-like character does not coordinate the sections among themselves, it loses control of them and does not unify the policy to be developed when faced with the events of world significance that come up. There is no democracy because without normal relations of the Secretariat with the sections, it cannot submit any problem for internal discussion and when, on remembering one of its duties as the Secretariat, it does so, it tries to establish the point of view of the Fourth International by itself and on its own, without taking into consideration the point of view of the sections.

It is well illustrated by experience that democratic centralism can exist in reality to the extent that democracy and centralism are fully put into practice; in the contrary case both suffer. Centralism without democracy is converted into autocracy that, lacking a solid democratic base, can only make itself effective in a bureaucratic dictatorial form. In its turn, democracy without centralism is easily transformed into an anarchistic breakdown that ends fatally in impotence from the point of view of the interests of revolutionary internationalism. For greater democracy, greater centralism and *vice versa*: there is no solution to the organizational functioning of a revolutionary international.

The Spanish Group in Mexico of the Fourth International believes it to be its unpostponable duty to make the present criticism of the Secretariat, making use of its right as an integral part of the international organization and, besides, with full understanding of the responsibility that falls on the Fourth International in this historic period with relation to the better future of humanity.

There is no doubt that the revolutionary perspectives foreseen by the Fourth International begin to have immediate reality, particularly in Europe. The development of international events have proven the correctness of Marxist theory in general and of the Trotskyist in particular at the present moment. But, if, as we know, no revolution is possible without revolutionary theory, neither can we ignore that without an international revolutionary organization it is not possible to face successfully the historic task of the world revolution. The Fourth International, with the guarantee of its tradition and vigorous ideology, has posed before it the fundamental problem which in the last analysis is its organizational problem, whose favorable or unfavorable solution will have its inevitable repercussion in the international proletarian revolutionary movement.

While it is true that the Fourth International has suffered the direct consequences of the decline in the revolutionary movement, which explained its organizational crisis from its foundation until the present, it must be recognized that the revolutionary movement is now on the rise and that our organization must try in the shortest possible time to get in step with this accelerating rhythm, solving its organic problem first of all. The organic problem of our organization could be explained, consequently, in past years when the revolutionary task was fundamentally the defense of the revolutionary theory, but it can in no way be justified today when the fundamental -revolutionary problem is the preparation for the international revolutionary action of the proletariat. The Secretariat in particular and the sections of the Fourth International in general must act, taking into account this evident chance and enter fully into the practical solution of the persistent, acute and transcendental problem of the internal organic functioning which is the life blood that will invigorate the international organization. There is no time to be lost: with the solution of the organizational problem of the Fourth International goes the future of the world revolution.

The Spanish Group in Mexico of the Fourth International understands perfectly the difficulties of a technical order that must be overcome in order to solve the organic crisis of the Fourth International; it is not unaware that the Secretariat is confronted with the most difficult problems, but, far from ignoring, on the contrary, affirms and evaluates its transcendental historical responsibility. Taking into account these considerations, our criticism is energetic and our first requests of the Secretariat, which serve as conclusions to our criticism, are precise:

1. That the Secretariat pose as an urgent task the necessity to hold in the briefest time possible, fixing a date, an International Conference of the Fourth International.
2. That the Secretariat begin the publication of an internal bulletin of the Fourth International in which must appear the specific material that serves as a basis for the preparatory discussions of the

Conference; in it will be included the document that we now send to the Secretariat.

3. That the Secretariat begin to elaborate, collect and distribute all the necessary material for the preparation of the Conference—making an effort to see to it that it reaches all sections and groups of the Fourth International.

The Spanish Group in Mexico of the Fourth International understands that the Secretariat in particular and the other sections and groups of the organization in general, will know how to appreciate in our message the profound revolutionary sense that it possesses since we point out frankly the defects of our organization—although they may be involuntary—with the exclusive aim that they be corrected; we do not seek a division within the Fourth International, but rather the theoretical unification and the real live and dynamic existence of the organization internationally; in no way do we try to ignore nor to deny the importance of the Fourth International at the present time. Very much to the contrary, convinced of its potential strength and of its future decisive action, we strive for and hope that the Fourth International will be found at the height of its historical responsibility. The Fourth International must respond with acts before history of one hundred years of Marxism, in one way, only: with the world revolution.

The Spanish Group in Mexico of the Fourth International, at the same time that it will continue to intensify its practical work, proposes from now on to send to the Secretariat political discussion material, requesting that it be presented a; such internationally. The Spanish Group in Mexico of the Fourth International hopes to receive a rapid answer from the Secretariat to the present message and is confident that political and fraternal relation: will be established with it; it hopes also that these relations will acquire a greater and better positive content for the interests of the world revolution and of the Spanish proletariat in particular.

With our proletarian greetings.

## **Letter to the Secretariat from the Spanish Group in Mexico (June, 1944)**

Dear Comrades:

In the May 13th number of *The Militant* there appears an editorial article entitlec «Trotskyism and the European Revolution» about which we consider it indispensable to make the following observations:

1. Since the war began, and even before there has existed no real international contact. The groups, parties and national sections have developed and acted as well as they could without any kind of ideological contacts or external aid. Because of this, the tactical homogeneity of the movement had of necessity to suffer, even the ideological homogeneity on the most difficult questions.
2. In view of this situation of fact, we believe that before all of the groups that arise in Europe or in any part of the world defending the program of the Fourth International, an attitude must be followed at the same time critical and friendly which will permit us to come to a real ideological and organizational homogeneity with them. This

cannot fall from the sky; it must be the result of a collective work of discussion and action. Collective discussion and action having been absent from our international ranks for more than five years, it is absurd, disorganizing, mortal danger for the future of our movement blindly to launch excommunications of groups that do not coincide completely with the S.W.P.'s own appreciation of the Fourth Internationalist policy. The most elementary prudence, the experimental attitude that constitutes the base of every materialist position advises criticizing as much as one believes convenient, but at the same time to establish the means for coming to complete agreement and to an organizational understanding.

3. The above-mentioned editorial does exactly the contrary. Without a minute's warning, after having been well treated in previous numbers of *The Militant*, the Italian comrades are denounced as impostors, imbeciles, or muddleheads. It seems to us the most effective way of throwing them into the arms of the Workers Party<sup>1</sup>. With this method, every group that arises in Europe will be tripped up immediately and lost for the Fourth International, at least momentarily.
4. Treatment of them like impostors and imbeciles is based only on the position of the Naples group with respect to the U.S.S.R., the spiniest question in our movement, about which only experience will decide who is right and of which the Fourth International has not made a *sine qua non* question for membership during the recent years. If the «impostor, imbecile or muddlehead» Shachtman is not still in the S.W.P., it is because he did not want to be; the authors of the editorial know that. As we have said in other places, the question of the defense of the U.S.S.R. passes over more and more to the plane of the internal struggle against Stalinism and to the international revolutionary struggle.

The definition of the U.S.S.R. as a workers' state, considered inadequate by the Old Man<sup>2</sup> himself, does not aid at all at the present moment in the problem of our attitude toward the U.S.S.R. That which is fundamental is the process which operates within it. Taking this into account, the definition as workers' state is more and more static and false. After this war, assuming that all the revolutions fail, it becomes inconceivable that the «degenerated workers' state» will continue. It will necessarily be transformed into a new bourgeois state. The totality of the political characteristics of the «degenerated workers' state» coincide with those of a bourgeois state; the economic characteristics are on the road to identity. Do the editors of *The Militant* pretend that it is more important for the future of the Russian and world revolution to define the Soviet Union as a workers' state and to speak of its unconditional defense than to carry out a proletarian and internationalist policy in each country? It would be blind formalism. Let our Italian comrades be really intransigent in the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and in internationalism. This will help the Russian workers more against Stalinism than the slightly patriotic defensism of the S.W.P.

5. The editorial contains a reference to the P.O.U.M. dragged in out of place. Practically, the P.O.U.M. has been nearer to the defensism of the U.S.S.R. carried out by the S.W.P. than that spoken of in Naples. We believe, nevertheless, that the Italian documents do contain mistaken concepts with regard to the internal policy that could give rise to centrist attitudes and conceptions. It would seem to us much more important and justified if the editorial had dealt with those aspects, insufficiently clarified by the Italian comrades. But they should not because of this be treated as impostors. Above all it is necessary to establish contact with them and to exhaust every possibility of understanding. But we cannot omit saying that it seems alarming to us that the thunder is concerning the Soviet question while questions that can lend themselves to centrist deviations are passed over unseen. This obliges us to state unequivocally that we consider the criticism and the opinions of the S.W.P. exclusively their own, in no way representative of the international organization.
6. Consequently, and in anticipation of the next discussion and international conference, we propose to the Secretariat:
  - a. that no group or party be condemned for maintaining a position in respect to the U.S.S.R. different from the one laid down in the program of the Fourth International.
  - b. that with respect to the groups that arise there be applied a critical attitude fundamentally directed to their position on the national arena and with respect to proletarian internationalism.
  - c. that no break be made with any group ahead of time, that is, before having been able to discuss seriously with it, except in cases of manifest opportunism.
  - d. that the international discussion already proposed and the practical preparations for the next world conference be carried out.

Yours and for the Fourth International,

Spanish Group

### **Letter from Natalia Sedova (September 23, 1944)**

Dear Friend:

From your reply I conclude that my letter was written far too generally. I shall try to concretize it.

I do not propose that we take off the slogan «defense of the USSR» but I find that it must be pushed back to the second or third rank. In the process of war and especially of victories its content has sharply altered. It is necessary to lay this bare tirelessly.

The slogan of the defense of the USSR comprised in it a two-fold aim:

1. the struggle with the internal enemy -Stalin's regime; and
2. the struggle against foreign intervention.

The final goal of the defense of the USSR is the world revolution.

*I consider that the main source of the dangers for the USSR in the present international situation is Stalin and the oligarchy headed by him. The struggle against them in the eyes of public opinion is indivisibly connected for me with the defense of the USSR.*

(L.D.'s' <sup>3</sup> article on Stalin after the Finnish experience).

The unconditional defense of the USSR was always for us a factor of a merciless struggle against the Bonapartist bureaucracy right up to its overthrow and the reestablishment of Soviet democracy.

The military triumphs have strengthened the position of the Soviet bureaucracy (the internal enemy); reaction is growing -- from this it is necessary to draw the conclusion with regard to the slogan of the defense of the USSR. You write that it is necessary to take our starting point from that which is; base ourselves on facts. Absolutely correct. But after all this means that the slogan of the military defense of the USSR **withdraws to the background in the face of new events.**

The Soviet land stands on the threshold of revolution or counter-revolution. To carry through the counter-revolution under the conditions of encirclement by the revolutionary ferment in Europe is as difficult as to intrench the basic conquests of the October revolution in the reactionary encirclement of the Stalinist regime. When you underscore in your letter the meaning of that which is and the facts on which one must base oneself in his judgments you apparently have in mind the still unliquidated nationalized sector of property and planned economy. But after all it is impermissible to analyze this most important fact outside of the general present Soviet conditions which could not have failed to find their reflection also in this fact. The nationalization which was carried out in the epoch of revolution had as its goal; the equality and raising of the living standards of the masses. In the conditions of advancing reaction and in the hands of the Bonapartist bureaucracy it has still been preserved, but **has moved away from its initial task (as has the Red Army)**. The Bonapartist bureaucracy has used the greatest conquests of the revolution for its own personal interests. In addition to facts it is necessary to take into account the **tendency** of the development of this or that political phenomenon. Without such an accounting it is impossible to lead, or to prepare or to carry on propaganda, or to sketch out perspectives etc. etc. In the pre-October epoch the Mensheviks basing themselves on facts predicted the crushing of the October revolution, assigning to it a two week period of existence. The Bolsheviks basing themselves on facts conducted a confident agitation for the overturn. How is it then? The evolution of the **tendencies** of political events must take into account, analyze, discuss from different standpoints right up to sharp polemics, right up to differences of opinion -in this consists the living creative work of the organization, its preparation for the impending events; otherwise it is doomed to inaction.

The Soviet bureaucracy, the most reactionary in the world is pushing planned economy not in the direction of socialism but of capitalism. With the termination of the war the question of planned economy will be posed in all its sharpness. There is ripening a clash of planned economy with the Bonapartist bureaucracy which has strengthened its positions by the victories. The



contradictions may become unbearable and the break with planned economy can confront the bureaucracy as a vital necessity. Socialism or the restoration of capitalism? This most important problem of the USSR must be put in the center of our attention. A mortal danger is threatening the Soviet land, and the source of this danger is the Soviet bureaucracy (the internal enemy). The war is not ended: the external enemy still exists. But at the beginning of the war we viewed it as the most dangerous one and the struggle against the bureaucratic regime ceded its place to the military struggle; at the present time matters must be put just the other way. It is necessary to explain this to the Soviet workers as well as to the workers of the whole world; we must with all the necessary clarity warn them about the threatening danger to the first workers state.

Military victories of the Red Army cannot assure the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy; military defense does not lead to the revolutionary struggle against the Stalinist regime. The military defense of the USSR in the present world situation has become transformed into the problem of struggle against Stalinism.

A few words about Soviet literature. In your opinion it does not reflect Soviet reality -this is correct, but not entirely, not wholly but only to a certain degree. **And this certain degree must be taken into account.** The war propaganda could not have failed to have its effect on the Soviet masses. The war, what was lived through -not only the sufferings but also the experience- has taught Soviet citizens a great deal. They are feeling more confident of themselves, more independent, more demanding **and this has already found its expression** in the local correspondence in Izvestia and Pravda despite the bureaucratic vise and «command». But this is not all. In the same papers also is reflected the watchfulness and alarm of the bureaucracy in this connection and it is already issuing out calls for the restoration of order.

## **Letter from Natalia Sedova (November 6, 1944)**

Dear Friends,

I shall not dwell on the section of your letter which contains information, limiting myself to a grateful acknowledgement. I must tell you, however, that it supplied me with hardly anything new. The tireless work of our friends and its successes are a guarantee of its viability and **we have all the more grounds for a fearless review of our slogans.** I must come to the defense of those friends whom you condemn, in connection with differences of views, for having altered the character of the mutual (personal) relations, coloring them with sharpness, hostility and impoliteness. This is quite human, we are united by unity of ideas, whenever this is disrupted, the internal interrelations, and together with them also their external forms become altered.

After an exposition contained in the informational section in your letter, you pass on to the controversial question of the **defense of the USSR**; and you begin with a declaration of your complete agreement with me in the evaluation of the Soviet bureaucracy. I never entertained the slightest doubts about it. This has been firmly established through the greatest experience over many years; this was and remains the basis of our successive conclusions. Your declaration, as well as, incidentally, the exposition in the informational section (of your letter) was necessary in order to facilitate for you the road of

further discussion. But, after all, the criticism of the Russian bureaucracy does not exist of and by itself, no more than does the slogan of the defense of USSR. One must not incessantly repeat one's condemnation of Russian bureaucracy, without drawing corresponding conclusions from it. Criticism may undergo change during this or that segment of time, corresponding with the changes in the conduct of the bureaucracy itself; we criticize with **greater force** now one, now another of its sides. It is impermissible to confine oneself to an absolute adjustment once and forever. Criticism of this sort becomes transformed into a worthless, lifeless trinket which serves to lull oneself and to shut one's eyes to the occurring changes. By your declaration -and thereby you seek to bring about appeasement- you rid yourself of any genuine living criticism of the situation that has been created.

«Yes, yes, I am in agreement with the criticism of the Soviet bureaucracy», you say to yourself and by this lamentation -- you free yourself from the analysis of the current events, current facts which are bound up with the deeds of the bureaucracy.

You behave similarly with the slogan of the defense of the USSR. **You ignore the profoundest changes** both in the domestic and foreign situation of the Soviet land. For you the slogan of the military defense of the USSR is fixed once and for all, you do not notice changes that have been introduced into the concept of defense by the general surrounding background; that the direct need of it has fallen away and that in view of the **altered** conditions now comes to the fore with all its force not the military defense of the USSR but **its defense against the internal enemy, the mightiest and most dangerous one.**

You forget the essence of the slogan of the defense of the **USSR**, It includes at one and the same time the military defense against foreign intervention and internal (defense) against the usurping bureaucracy -**the latter conditions the former**. I do not propose as I have already -not once- written to take off the slogan of the defense of the USSR. But in view of the altered general situation I did propose to remove **military defense** to the background in view of its needlessness in the **present conditions** and to advance to the forefront with full force that on which military defense is grounded: the struggle against the Stalinist regime. Once again, the slogan of defense contains a two-fold meaning and depending upon the circumstances of the general political situation its center of gravity shifts now to one side, now to the other. **It is you and not I** who reduce to zero the meaning of the slogan of defense as a whole, when you incessantly repeat it in a situation in which the first part of the slogan **does not find application**; I say as a whole, because the actual situation **with its full force demands a stress on the second part**. By continuing in uncorresponding conditions to advance the slogan of military defense, **you wholly annul the slogan of defense**. Whereas I propose to preserve it by removing its first part to the third plan, saving thereby its most important ground (the second part).

«Whither the USSR?» This question must be placed in the center of our attention, of our propaganda, of our agitation. It is impermissible to plead lack of knowledge concerning what is taking place in Russia, (to cite) lack of information, Russian censorship, and so on. With respect to information, the conditions at the present time are much more favorable than was the case a few years ago, which did not prevent us (at the time) from analyzing the

internal situation of the USSR, determining the character of the first workers state in this or that period of time, **analyzing the tendencies of its development**, and drawing conclusions and sketching out perspectives. Recall the numerous articles of LD on this subject; -articles- elucidatory, persuasive, and outlining the possible perspectives. His variant of the revolution in the USSR which would overthrow the bureaucracy, clearing the road for the defense of the Soviet Union against the onslaught of the capitalist environment, rallying the international proletariat to its aid. And the other variant: the military successes of the bureaucracy, its temporary strengthening, the mighty entrenchment of its position, but its inevitable fall, all this notwithstanding. You recall the caution with which LD each time analyzed the political condition of the workers state in order to determine its further evolution, Absolutely correct. But caution served him for a definite aim: **to carry out the analysis on the basis of carefully selected material**. Caution in and of itself, just as criticism of the Soviet bureaucracy **in and of itself**, just like the slogan of defense **in and of itself**, becomes transformed into something just the opposite, something harmful, and **incautious** (it is **at least** incautious in the given conditions not to deal with burning questions) into a **fear** of seriously undertaking the analysis of the most important Russian question. This «bad» caution prompts you to adduce such arguments as lack of information concerning the USSR, absence of materials for arriving at judgments, and so on. And the result is that we, with excessive **lack of caution** have kept silent over the Russian question in the course of four years. In your letter, you absolutely correctly take note in your letter of this most onerous omission. **Unjustified caution** obstructs the road to a review (an analysis) of the slogan of the defense of the USSR. We have delayed exceedingly with it, too.

You write that «the Russian proletariat has not yet spoken its final word.» To whom do you address this assertion? Precisely because the Russian proletariat has not spoken its final word, I proposed to review the question of military defense by transferring the center of gravity to the internal struggle against the most dangerous and, **at the given time**, the one and only enemy of the Russian proletariat ~the Soviet bureaucracy, summoning it (the Russian proletariat) daily and hourly to «speak its final word.»

In *The Militant*, N° 34, there appeared a very good article on the actions of the Red Army (the Soviet bureaucracy) in Poland, with this exception, that, in my opinion, it is incorrect to consider partisan detachments as revolutionary. Both in their origin and in their composition they bear a purely nationalist character. If one takes into account the point of view expressed in your letter, it is possible to conclude that your attitude to the article is a negative one. Is that the case? In this connection I can adduce a quotation from the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition* N°, 72, 1938:

*Those who under the pretext of the war danger recommend the cessation of war against Stalinism (the Kremlin) are actually deserting revolutionary tasks, covering themselves with loud phrases about a world catastrophe. We have nothing in common with this utterly false view.*

You pose the questions:

1. What is the degree of degeneration reached by the workers state?
2. How long can the period of degeneration endure?

### 3. What form can it take?

(The first two questions are scholastic.)

Into the first question it would be possible to introduce greater precision; has the development of the tendencies of the workers state to the side of capitalism been deepened in the last four years? The time terms of its degeneration can hardly be indicated with precision, and essentially this is not important. The third question is determined by the first -complete degeneration can lead only to capitalism. **Regeneration** is possible through revolution which will overthrow the bureaucracy and lead to socialism. The questions posed by you ought to be combined into a single one: «Forward to Socialism or back to Capitalism?» And a number of articles should be written on this subject. It is also necessary to pose the question of the Red Army; it must enter into the above-mentioned unified question, but one ought to deal in greater detail with it in a special article or pamphlet. Because there are among us the **greatest** errors on this score. Here is what was written as far back as May-June 1938 in the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition* N° 66-67:

*The transition from a barracks army to a militia army was systematically prepared for over a decade, But from the moment when the bureaucracy completely crushed all manifestations of independence by the working class, it proceeded openly to transform the army into **an instrument of its rule**. The militia system was completely set aside. An officer Caste with generals and Marshals has been reinstated. **From an instrument of socialist defense the army has become the instrument for the defense of the privileges of the bureaucracy.***

*(My emphasis.)*

This was written, as I have already said, in 1938. But what has happened since then? You are acquainted with it. The example of Bulgaria which you adduced in your letter, undoubtedly indicates the revolutionary spirit of the Bulgarian masses, seeking the Red Banner. But not the revolutionary spirit of the Red Army.

To all your questions, you can already now receive answers from the articles in the **Bulletin of the Russian Opposition** <sup>4</sup>. They wholly retain their actuality. The anti-revolutionary tendencies of the USSR, outlined in them, have been and are deepening year by year; they have deepened catastrophically in the recent war years. I cite still another quotation from the same source:

*The evolution of the Soviet state therefore proceeds in complete contradiction with the principles of the Bolshevik program. The reason for it is that society, as has already been said, is evolving not toward socialism, but toward social contradictions. **If in the future the process continues along this same road** (and it is proceeding along this road - N.), **it will inevitably lead to the regeneration of classes, the liquidation of planned economy and the restoration of capitalist property.** The state regime will in that case inevitably become fascist.*

Permit me still another quotation:

*Thus, while it is impermissible to reject in advance in rigidly specific cases the possibility of a «united front» with the Thermidorian section of the bourgeoisie against the open offensive of capitalist counter-revolution, the chief political task in the USSR still remains: **the overthrow of the Thermidorian bureaucracy itself**, (This appears in bold face -N.) Every additional day of its rule shakes apart the socialist elements of economy and increases the chances of capitalist restoration.*

Articles from the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition* on this subject could be very instructive now. It is incomprehensible why they have remained unutilized in the course of four years. Not only were they not read in their entirety, but they were never quoted, nor referred to -**this is very indicative**. Only our Spanish friends have occupied themselves with this question. While the articles are being written on the subject treated by us -«Whither the USSR?»- I would propose that a number of articles from the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition* be translated both for the magazine and for the paper; and that they be carried from issue to issue. One could begin say with the article «Does the Soviet Government still continue to follow the Principles Adopted 20 years Ago?» (*Bulletin of the Russian Opposition*, N°. 66-67). The Bulletin ought to be studied and everything necessary taken from it.

Finally, a few more words about the Russian masses. There cannot be any doubts that the Russian masses are dissatisfied: that there exist oppositional elements and illegal organizations in the USSR. The Master of the Soviet land cannot pass over to capitalism without a counter-revolution, failing this he will not be able to tear away from the peasants the land for which they struggled for ages. It is still more difficult to perform this operation at a time when Europe is seized by a revolutionary movement.

*There cannot be any reason to doubt that the overwhelming majority of the communists as well as of the population do not want a return to capitalism, especially now that capitalism has plunged mankind into a new war.*

*Bulletin of the Russian Opposition, N°, 82-83*

From this flows the vital need of intensified propaganda on the above-described subject. Let us warn against the mortal danger threatening the Russian proletariat, let us explain to them the causes of it, let us summon them to a struggle against the usurpers and gravediggers of the great revolution, basing ourselves on the European revolutionary movement.

One additional comment: the article, «Does the Soviet Government Still Continue to Follow the Principles Adopted 20 Years Ago?» should be supplemented with detailed notes, pointing out the **road of further degeneration 1938-1944**, and corroborated with the corresponding (enormous) materials which are at our disposal; and this should be done as quickly as possible,

With friendly greetings,

Natalia

## **Letter from the Spanish Group in Mexico addressed to the IS (April 17, 1946)**

Comrades:

We have received several communications regarding the International Pre-Conference just held in Belgium. First of all we are compelled to raise the sharpest protest against the way in which this Pre-Conference was held. We note in passing that it became, in the very first line of the news release dated April 1946, a «Conference» of the Fourth International. Why? Who authorized that it be transformed into a Conference?

The methods employed by the new IS which issued from the Pre-Conference are the military methods of a big General Staff preparing operations and giving orders which must be carried out to the letter, and have nothing to do with the democratic centralism proclaimed by the Fourth International nor with the needs of our international movement after seven years of isolation. A barracks discipline is demanded of the sections at a time when these sections have not been invited to explain the reasons for this discipline. This is the best way to drive them to rebellion. This concept of a secret General Staff reveals itself again in the ridiculous way in which the propaganda about the Pre-Conference is approached. All the sections will publish on D-Day (why not at H-Hour?) an identical news release which says nothing of interest on the Pre-Conference itself. Would it not have been better, instead of this standardized press release, to immediately furnish each section with a report on the work of the Pre-Conference and the full text of the Manifesto which was adopted, and on the basis of this to ask them to give the widest possible publicity to the discussions and resolutions of the session? Instead of this, the platitudinous news release robs the section of all interest in spreading propaganda on the Pre-Conference.

Furthermore, no preliminary discussion took place, for the only document (dated December 1945) which seemed to have to do with the preparation of this Pre-Conference reached us at the very moment when the sessions were being held, if they were held in March as your communication of March 20 indicates («A Pre-Conference of the Fourth International took place»), and so timed that it was impossible to reply to it («A Conference of the Fourth International» took place early in April). What was the agenda of this Pre-Conference, who determined it? No one knows except for the group of conspirators who participated in it. And do you wish all the sections to accept the conclusions of the Conference with closed eyes? In that case we will not be among them, and we reserve our opinion on this Pre-Conference until we are acquainted with a report of the discussions and with the Manifesto which was adopted. No one knew where or when this Pre-Conference was held (except for the police!), not even functioning members of the EC; no one knew which sections were represented there, and why these sections rather than others. To be sure, we note that the news release speaks of the presence of delegates from «several other countries of the Western Hemisphere,» among which Mexico, for example, does not figure. Why? What sections are referred to?

All the foregoing reveals a total lack of real preparation for the Pre-Conference, and dangerous bureaucratic methods which we oppose with all our force.

We believe also that the Pre-Conference has not been a step ahead for the Fourth International, as a result, on the one hand and most importantly, of its lack of preparation, and also because, to judge by the document of the ES, none of the problems of the present moment were really discussed there. Thus the news release which we must give wide publicity to, says:

*In this Manifesto the Conference draws the balance sheet of the second imperialist World War and demonstrates that the capitalist world, which has resolved none of its fundamental contradictions through the: war, is again moving —through a period of great economic and political difficulties, dominated by the fundamental antagonism of the USSR and Anglo-American imperialism...[etc.]*

The nature of this antagonism is not specified. Is it a question, as we believe, of an antagonism like that between two bands of gangsters who come to blows when the hour arrives for dividing up the loot? In that case, the use of an equivocal terminology does not make it possible to understand what the editors of the news release mean. But we believe rather that they hold to the outworn formula of an antagonism between the property system of the capitalist world and that of the «degenerated workers' state» of the USSR, when everything shows that the USSR is nothing more than a hollow shell, empty of all the revolutionary content of October<sup>5</sup>.

The news release says also:

*The Manifesto of the Conference ends by calling on the exploited masses of Europe and the world to fight under the banner of the Fourth International.*

In the present state of affairs this constitutes, in the best case, an empty phrase, and in the worst, a demonstration of an absolutely unworkable ultimatum. It would have been more honest and saner to call on the masses to create with us a genuine revolutionary leadership, for let us remember with L. T. that «the crisis of mankind is the crisis of the revolutionary leadership». Now if we already were this leadership, the crisis would be resolved which is obviously inaccurate. This revolutionary leadership, for every Marxist who refuses to be satisfied with words, remains to be created. Can one actually assert that the Fourth International constitutes a revolutionary leadership, except potentially, —when its lack of material means did not allow it to raise its voice during the entire war, when it was not even able, owing to the lack of necessary contacts, to insure the routine functioning of the IS, when the new IS itself speaks to us out of the depths of the earth where it is hidden? No, this revolutionary leadership does not yet exist. All that exists is the will to create it. But this desire must remain powerless as long as one continues to be satisfied with words and to live comfortably on positions taken ten years and more ago.

We believe that the first duty of the Pre-Conference was to open a broad discussion on all the problems of the socialist revolution in our epoch in order to make genuine preparation for the coming World Congress. Now it would certainly seem, if one is to judge by the two sentences of the news release quoted above, that the Pre-Conference is still wearing its pre-war glasses and is saying that the Fourth International was not mistaken on anything and has nothing to add to or subtract from its program, thus imitating the regular

practice of Stalinism. Has the experience of these last years been analyzed without prejudice? It does not seem so from the news release; and yet if this experience had been studied without prejudice, it must have led the International to revise our estimate of the nature of the Russian state and consequently our tactic toward it and toward Stalinism. Instead of that, the position which the Pre-Conference—according to its news release seems to have taken, transforms the Fourth International into a left wing of Stalinism at the very moment when the workers of numerous countries can no longer have anything but hatred and contempt for Stalinism. Such a position, if not revised within a short period, can rob the Fourth International of all effectiveness and gravely threaten its very existence.

We therefore ask that a World Congress of the Fourth International be prepared immediately, which will have the full powers that the Pre-Conference did not have, and to be held within the maximum period of one year. Toward this end we will send you within a very short time a document on what we understand by the preparation of this Congress.

But we state here and now that the Congress will have no meaning unless all questions are discussed there, the questions of the Russian state, Stalinism, Socialist-Stalinist government, nationalizations, organization, the policies followed by the different sections during the war, etc. The very broadest preliminary discussion is necessary in order that all points of our program may be submitted to a pitiless and clear-sighted criticism which will eliminate from it everything outdated that still exists in it. Under these conditions the Congress will mark a decisive step forward in the life of the International, and the International will become a genuine revolutionary leadership of the masses, capable of leading them to the assault on the capitalist regime and the taking of power.

To sum up:

1. We protest against the anti-democratic way, completely unjustified by the circumstances, in which the Pre-Conference was held.
2. To give a news release to the press, we will wait until we have information on the discussions and the resolutions of the Pre-Conference.
3. We point out that the task of the Secretariat is not that of an ultra-secret leadership but that of coordinating and animating by its suggestions a broad world discussion.
4. It is only to the extent that the IS will understand how to animate the discussion and to obtain the participation of all the sections, even those which are not official sections, that the next World Congress will be a positive step toward the building of the Fourth International.

Mexico, D.F., April 17, 1946

For the Spanish Group of the Fourth International in Mexico. — B. P.

**«Beware!» by Benjamin Péret and Grandizo Munis  
(April 3, 1947)**



In its report to the October session of the IEC, the International Secretariat deals with the preparation of the World Congress of the Fourth International (*Internal Bulletin*, December 1946). We must say right at the outset that this document satisfies us in no wise because it contributes not the slightest substance to the discussion that ought to precede the Congress -quite the contrary- and in the absence of this discussion, the Congress, instead of leading to the constitution of a genuine world party of the socialist revolution, will be the introduction to its organic decomposition.

In this document is felt a timidity which is in striking contrast with the scope of the tasks that devolve upon us. Unlike Jean Sarment («I am too big for myself»), the comrades of the IS and the IEC repeat to themselves, «I am too small for myself,» all the livelong day. Indeed, we are told that the Congress «must be primarily a Congress of the organizations that have abided by international discipline and which maintained normal relations with the leading bodies.» They are trying here to cover up with the word «discipline» the blows inflicted upon the very principles, upon the written program of the International by, for example, the Canadian section. In the eyes of the comrades of the leadership, is not that loyalty to revolutionary principles which constitutes our reason for existence a thousand times more important than the observance of discipline and «normal relations with the leading bodies,» even though a lot could be said about normal relations so far as the Canadian section is concerned? We, however, accuse this party of having violated surreptitiously the principles of the International on the question of the war, and of having had an opportunist attitude toward it during the last imperialist conflict («non-support» instead of an active and consistent opposition). Besides, what is a discipline which clings to the external organizational forms (normal relations) in order the better to violate the principles upon which they rest? In reality, if the discipline were adhered to in the full sense of the word, the IEC would be obliged to forbid the Canadian section, and no doubt other sections, admittance to the Congress for having violated the ideological discipline which is certainly more important than the formal discipline which is dealt with here.

What exactly does the IS understand by «normal relations»? The position adopted with regard to the great revolutionary problems, or the courteous letters that are exchanged with it? For a revolutionary leadership, it would have to be the position adopted with regard to the great revolutionary problems and, in that case, we would be obliged to set ourselves against, at the very least, the participation in the Congress of the Canadian section and -who knows?- of the IS. As to the former, we can assert that it held an opportunist position during the war; as to the latter, its inertia in the investigation of this matter permits us to assume ideological complicity with the former. Between the Founding Congress of the Fourth International and the Congress now being planned stand all the war years, during which the IS was cut off from all contact with the major portion of our sections in Europe and Asia, and during this time it was unable to play the leading role for which it was designated. As a consequence, most of the sections found it impossible to maintain the «normal relations» in question with the leadership. Are they going to be excluded from the Congress? In reality, what is hinted at here by «normal relations» is the acceptance without a murmur of our particular war program in its entirety. So true is this that in the following paragraph the report of the IS declares that organizations «which set conditions for their membership in the International» cannot participate in the Congress. What conditions are involved? We are not told, and this very silence reveals their nature. All that

can be involved are demands relating to the reconsideration of this or that point of the program. These demands we support unreservedly, even if they touch upon certain points of the program which we continue to consider valid. Nothing is lost by discussing them; on the contrary, we will gain by having them further clarified for the whole of the International.

In fact, the whole attitude of the IS on the preparatory discussion of the World Congress discloses that its primary interest is to safeguard the prestige of the leadership from which the International suffers to the point of being incapable of playing the revolutionary role it should have in the struggles now being heralded. We are not the only ones who say this; other voices are being raised in the International to alert the various sections against the maneuvers being prepared behind the scenes. The Minority of the Canadian section already speaks of the Stalinist methods of the Canadian leadership, showing the capitulatory consequences of the policy followed by the present leadership of the International, whose procedure «betrays bureaucratic designs.» Today it is the Mexican section which is obliged to protest against Comrade Smith who, in the name of the IS, insists that Comrade Red, expelled after having resigned from the organization, be put back in the position of leader which he formerly occupied in the Mexican section. Why? Because -although Comrade Smith's letter does not breathe a word about it- Comrade Red supports unconditionally the policy of the leadership of the International. In addition, Comrade Munis is confronted with veiled threats of expulsion by the leadership elected by the pre-conference with the sole mission of preparing the envisaged discussion of the World Congress, even though it has not the right to expel anyone, because of its restricted authority. We could also speak at great length on the circular of last February 22, addressed by the IS to all the sections of Latin America, which plainly reveals the same maneuvering spirit. All these indications and facts show that an unhealthy atmosphere prevails in the summits of the International. It must be dissipated immediately if we want the next Congress to be in a position really to define the revolutionary policy incumbent upon us in the present period. Instead of employing all sorts of subterfuges for the purpose of evading or restricting the discussion which is the very condition for the effectiveness of the Congress, and with the aim of preserving the prestige of leaders whom these very precautions reveal as being conscious of their guilt, the leadership should organize the discussion loyally, and extend it so that none of the principal problems of the workers' movement may be neglected. The IS and the IEC should intervene in the discussion to launch and organize it and not to restrict it.

It is indispensable to draw up a sincere, precise and detailed balance sheet, to examine **thoroughly** what was the attitude of the various sections during the imperialist war. The IS in no way motivates its refusal to put on the agenda the question of the position of the sections toward the imperialist war and the national movements. Thereby it acknowledges that all the sections had a correct position toward this problem, and wants to have this thesis acknowledged by the International. Even if all the sections had followed an intransigent revolutionary policy, this examination would be necessary. That is not the case, however, and it would be too hard to show that this happened because of the youth of our movement, because of the complex problems presented in the course of the war, like that of the occupation of Europe by Nazi imperialism and by Anglo-American and Russian imperialism. This question of the position of our sections during the war, therefore, deserves to be discussed in detail. The mistakes must be denounced and a resolution must be adopted on this question. We are of the opinion that the decision of the IS

to devote a part of its report to this problem does not permit the ample discussion which is necessary, and clearly reveals the desire to cover up mistakes that the International as a whole ought to know in order to be in a position to avoid them in a similar case, and if a healthy regime is to prevail in the International. Thus, nobody knows what the attitude of the French section was during the war. What position did this section have toward the «national liberation movement,» the guerrillas, etc.? Nobody knows **in detail**, except for the well-informed circles at the top. The rank and file of the whole International not only has the right to know it, but it **must** know it in order to be able to draw the indispensable lessons from it.

All these restrictions that the IS wants to impose upon the discussion get their full meaning if we consider the limitations that the IS, in its circular of February 22, sets for the participation in the Congress of the sections and groups of Latin America.

If the IS has reason for promoting the unification of the various groups existing in different countries, to the extent where no serious political difference separates them, this is not a reason why the groups that have not achieved unity should be pushed out of the Congress. As for the condition imposed of accepting in advance the discipline of the majority of the Congress, it is unique in the annals of the workers' movement, and the comrades of the Minority of the Canadian section are perfectly right in a judging that it is «not very wise, and false.» That is the least that one could say about it! We consider this demand absurd because it is patently imposed to prevent a militant or a group of militants from rising up against this or that decision taken by the majority once they are expelled because of their disagreement. Besides, this condition betrays the fear of factions, whose legitimacy is nevertheless acknowledged, and it aims at the constitution of a monolithic point of view. We protest against this demand and ask the IS to reconsider the decision it has taken on this point.

If the IS does not see the need of entrusting the plenipotentiary World Congress with the discussion of the conditions in which various tendencies may coexist in the International, it is because its bureaucratic tendencies make it prone to deciding all problems by the application of a formal discipline, which may have a nice effect upon inexperienced eyes, but which bears within it a germ of degeneration whose effects will not be long in making themselves felt throughout the International, impeding all progress of the sections, ruining all possibility of ideological renovation for the International, striking it with sterility and impotence in face of the revolutionary events which are in preparation. That is almost inevitable if the IS succeeds in maneuvering the Congress as it has up to now.

Finally, we ask that all the groups and parties which adhere to the ideas of the Fourth International be invited to participate in the Congress with all rights. We have nothing to fear -quite the contrary- and by this the Fourth International will give an example of revolutionary democracy which will have the effect of helping dispel the accusation of sectarianism so often hurled at us.

In summary, we demand:

1. That the documents enabling us to judge the attitude of the principal sections toward the imperialist war and toward the «national resistance» movements, as well as those concerning the question of the Sino-Japanese war, be placed in discussion. This must be the first point of the agenda.
2. That the transitional program be re-examined and brought up to date. All the IS wants is a discussion on the means of applying the program. However, several points of this program are outlived (we refer above all to the slogans of the SP-CP government, the united front with Stalinism, nationalization, etc.) and must be replaced by others. What reasons can be put forward for refusing to discuss these questions?
3. That all the groups adhering to the ideas of the Fourth International be invited to participate in the Congress with all rights and without conditions.
4. That the IS launch the discussion without placing any obstacles in its way.

Mexico, D.F. April 3, 1947

### **«The Fourth International in Danger!» by Natalia Sedova, G. Munis and Benjamin Péret (June 27, 1947)**

At the Plenum held at the end of March, 1947, the IEC adopted regulations relative to the holding of the World Congress of the Fourth International, the bureaucratic character of which, inspired by old Stalinist maneuvers, represent a most alarming symptom. The IEC, indeed, has divided the world into three categories: countries of great, moderate and slight importance, What is the criterion which inspired such an outrageously arbitrary division? No one has deigned to share it with anyone in the International.

We imagine that the IEC is going to tell us that it was guided by the example of the First Congress of the late Communist International. But are we participants in the same situation as in 1919, or a real imitation of the First Congress of the CI? At the time of the First Congress the Russian Revolution had just triumphed, the Bolshevik Party numbered hundreds of thousands of members, though in the rest of the world the Communist Parties were still only little groups, for the most part comparable to ours today; so much so that the Bolsheviks were led to diminish the weight of their party in the young international in order by the free play of an apparent democracy to avoid the latter's automatically becoming a majority against the rest of the world and imposing its uncontested will upon it. It was a question of permitting the entire world to express itself even against the Russian party, that is to say, of assuring the operation of an effective as possible democracy in the International. Is this the same end that the IEC seeks today? We categorically affirm that it is not, and we are going to demonstrate that the IS and the IEC with their division of the world into three categories have in mind completely opposite ends, While the CI aimed at the weakening of the strong parties and the strengthening of the weak parties in order to assure a maximum of democracy, our IEC aims at the strengthening of the strong parties and the weakening of the weak parties in order to maintain itself in power.

The Criterion of the Big Three

Let us ask once again: What criterion was used in making this division of the world? The numerical importance of the sections? No, obviously, since Germany, where the section has just been reconstituted, figures in the first category, though it is of necessity very weak because of its recent formation, while Italy, whose section numbers nearly as many members as France, is placed in the second. We can say as much of the Russian section -which must obviously be insignificant- when it is compared with any other section in countries of «moderate importance.» It is, then, not a numerical criterion which governed the divisions moreover, we will see further on that the consideration of numbers was taken into account and not for reasons of democracy. Besides, even if it were, this criterion would be fallacious. Let us suppose that the Bolivian section numbers 200 members and that the country has 3,000,000 inhabitants let us admit, also, that the American section in claiming 1,600 members in a country of 150,000,000 is not exaggerating and that this figure is the exact expression of the truth. It is clear that the 200 Bolivian comrades have much more importance in the political life of their backward country than the 1,600 American comrades in theirs. For the relation of forces to be apparently the same, the American section would have to have 10,000 members. Further, this relation of forces would only be superficially equal, since 200 comrades in Bolivia, **a backward country**, play an infinitely greater role -they have demonstrated it- than 10,000 members of the American section would be able to play in the U.S., **an advanced country and the principal imperialist country** of the entire world.

Nor is it the revolutionary importance of the countries considered on the arena of the world class struggle which has motivated this division, since it seems that neither the United States nor England will be called upon to play a decisive role in the revolutionary wave which is becoming manifest, while Spain, Italy, Austria, Belgium, Holland, Greece, Indo-China, North Africa, Indonesia, Poland, Hungary, etc., all excluded from the first category, are obviously destined to play an important revolutionary role in the immediate future.

These reasons set aside, there remains only the criterion of the Big Three, which has doubtlessly inspired the division of the world. It is, in fact, only the importance on the world **capitalist** arena which has guided the IEC in its choice.

## The Majority as a Measuring Rod

To rest content with this declaration, however, would be to consider only one side of the question, its external aspects; in addition, the adopting of such a criterion shows an unconscious submission to imperialist influence and to the Russian counter-revolution, which must be ceaselessly combated,

It is known that the questions which will be discussed at the World Congress, whether the IEC or the IS wishes it or not, concern the politics of our sections during the imperialist war and in relation to the nationalist resistance movements, the problem of the Russian counter-revolution and world Stalinism, the tactic of the Fourth International in regard to Stalinism and reformism (united front, SP-CP-CGT Government) and our pre-war transitional program, But, **as if by chance**, a good number of sections in «countries of great importance,» some of them subjected to a bureaucratic leadership, others badly informed, or not informed at all, on the problems to

be discussed, have up to now through their majorities, put themselves on record in favor of the conservative position of the IS and the IEC.

The resolution of the IEC decides in parts 5 and 6 of paragraph 3:

*To give three delegates to each organization of from one to 150 members if they belong in Category A, two delegates if they belong in Category B, one delegate if they belong in Category C, 3*

*For 150 to 500 members, and with an approximate minimum of 300 members - one additional delegate, For 500 to 1,000 members, and with an approximate minimum of 750 members -another delegate, -and so on successively.*

Here let us insert a piece of figuring, which, for all of its being of necessity approximate, will be nonetheless edifying. Let us study the following tables:

**Table 1**

COUNTRIES OF FIRST IMPORTANCE	MAXIMUM ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF MEMBERS	DELEGATES GRANTED BY IEC	MAJORITY DELEGATES (APPROXIMATE ESTIMATE)	MINORITY DELEGATES (APPROXIMATE ESTIMATE)
U.S	1,600	6	5	1
Russia	several members	3	3	0
China	100	3	2	1
India	100	4	3	1
England	400	4	4	0
France	1,000	5	4	1
Germany	50	3	1	2
Totals	3,750	28	22	6

**Table 2a**

COUNTRIES OF MODERATE IMPORTANCE	MAXIMUM ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF MEMBERS	DELEGATES GRANTED BY IEC	MAJORITY DELEGATES (APPROX. ESTIMATE)	MINORITY DELEGATES (APPROX. ESTIMATE)
Spain	60	2	1	1
Italy	800	4	1	3
Holland	50	2	2	0
Belgium	50	2	2	0
Austria	50	2	0	2
Greece	500	3	2	1
Canada	50	2	2	0
Mexico	60	2	0	2
Brazil	50	2	1	1
Argentina	50	2	2	0

COUNTRIES OF MODERATE IMPORTANCE	MAXIMUM ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF MEMBERS	DELEGATES GRANTED BY IEC	MAJORITY DELEGATES (APPROX. ESTIMATE)	MINORITY DELEGATES (APPROX. ESTIMATE)
Chile	300	3	2	1
Bolivia	200	2	0	2
Indo-China	300	3	2	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>

**Table 2b**

COUNTRIES OF MODERATE IMPORTANCE	MAXIMUM ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF MEMBERS	DELEGATES FROM THE SECTIONS ON BASIS OF COUNTRIES OF FIRST IMPORTANCE	MAJORITY DELEGATES (APPROX. ESTIMATE)	MINORITY DELEGATES (APPROX. ESTIMATE)
Spain	60	3	1	2
Italy	800	5	1	4
Holland	50	3	3	0
Belgium	50	3	2	1
Austria	50	3	0	3
Greece	500	4	2	2
Canada	50	3	2	1
Mexico	60	3	0	3
Brazil	50	3	1	2
Argentina	50	3	2	1
Chile	300	4	2	2
Bolivia	200	3	1	2
Indo-China	300	4	3	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>

**Table 3a**

COUNTRIES OF SLIGHT IMPORTANCE	MAXIMUM ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF MEMBERS	DELEGATES GRANTED BY IEC	MAJORITY DELEGATES (APPROX.)	MINORITY DELEGATES (APPROX.)
Norway	50	1	1	0
Denmark	50	1	1	0
Switzerland	50	1	1	0
Bulgaria	50	1	0	1
Ireland	50	1	0	1
Palestine	50	1	1	0
Egypt	50	1	1	0
Cyprus	50	1	1	0
Cuba	100	1	0	1

COUNTRIES OF SLIGHT IMPORTANCE	MAXIMUM ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF MEMBERS	DELEGATES GRANTED BY IEC	MAJORITY DELEGATES (APPROX.)	MINORITY DELEGATES (APPROX.)
Peru	50	1	0	1
Uruguay	50	1	1	0
Australia	50	1	1	0
South Africa	300	2	1	1
<b>Totals</b>	950	14	9	5

**Table 3b**

COUNTRIES OF SLIGHT IMPORTANCE	MAXIMUM ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF MEMBERS	DELEGATES FROM THE SECTIONS ON BASIS OF COUNTRIES OF FIRST IMPORTANCE	MAJORITY DELEGATES (APPROX.)	MINORITY DELEGATES (APPROX.)
Norway	50	3	2	1
Denmark	50	3	2	1
Switzerland	50	3	2	1
Bulgaria	50	3	0	3
Ireland	50	3	0	3
Palestine	50	3	2	1
Egypt	50	3	2	1
Cyprus	50	3	2	1
Cuba	100	3	0	3
Peru	50	3	0	3
Uruguay	50	3	2	1
Australia	50	3	2	1
South Africa	300	4	2	2
<b>Totals</b>	950	40	18	22

From these tables it immediately stands out that seven countries (of the first category) will receive 28 delegates, while 26 countries (of the second and third category) will receive 45 delegates. In other words, seven countries of «first importance» will receive from 35% to 38% of the votes at the Congress. They will then lack only nine delegates to assure themselves control of the Congress. Of course, our Table N° 1 indicates six minority delegates. Even assuming that our estimate of the minority representation from the countries of «first importance» is not exaggerated, the six minority delegates that we note will be easily compensated for by support of the sections from countries of «moderate» and of «slight importance.» Further, Tables N° 2 and N° 3 clearly show this. It can be seen, therefore, that the division adopted by the IEC inevitably and bureaucratically assures it the majority in the World Congress, a majority which it will sit tight on while avoiding discussion of the major problems which are posed before our International.



It should be observed also that in the second table the 13 sections of «moderate importance» include Spain, whose revolutionary experience -even if it did not have more members than the Russian section- is particularly valuable for our epoch since it marks a decisive turn in the history of the Russian counter-revolution and of Stalinism, while the Russian experience, with all its enormous value, refers precisely to a period which the Spanish revolution brought to a close. Similarly found in this list, which is as outrageously arbitrary as the first, is Italy, which offers immense revolutionary possibilities, if a clear policy is followed in regard to revolutionary anti-Stalinist organizations (Bordighists, anarchists, left-socialists), Greece, whose admirable revolutionary combativity ought to give the IEC cause for reflection, Poland and other countries occupied by Russia, which the IEC totally forgets and which offer immense possibilities for action against the Stalinist reaction on condition that the demand is not made to defend the «degenerated workers' state» which oppresses them. Finally comes Indo-China, where support to our section has been forgotten for so long and where even to demand who assassinated Thu-Thau has been forgotten in order to support, without serious criticism, the Stalinist government of Ho-Chi-Minh, greetings from whom were so warmly hailed by *The Militant* and *La Verite*.

It has been seen that the resolution of the IEC creates an important majority in favor of the present leadership which the vote of countries of «slight importance» would not be able to modify even if they were able to send all the delegates the IEC grants them **and if** they all voted against **the present leadership**, But that is still based on the most favorable hypothesis, for it is impossible for the poor Latin-American sections to send the 10 or 12 delegates given them by the TE?. Moreover, the prohibition against proxy votes in actuality denies a number of sections in countries of «moderate» or «slight» importance the possibility of making themselves heard and of voting at the Congress, which does not prevent the IEC from demanding in advance the acceptance of the decisions which will be made by the World Congress and of desiring to prohibit all discussion after the Congress. The majority thus cunningly worked out by the IS and the IEC is thereby reinforced. Better yet, with this system, not a single opposition can hope to convince the Congress. What except ideological defeat and organic strangulation can the International expect from a leadership which has taken such decisions?

In fact, according to the system which the IEC means to impose, even if the method were rectified by giving the same basis of representation to all the sections so as to agree with the countries of «first importance» it can be seen (Tables 2b and 3b) that a majority is assured for the present International leadership by the fact that the western European, North American and Canadian sections will be almost the only ones able to send all the delegates accorded them. How can it actually be supposed that Mexico, Poland, Peru, Indo-China and other countries will find the necessary means to send two or three delegates? We have difficulty in believing that this represents ignorance on the part of the International leadership; on the contrary, we believe that a question of deliberate calculation is involved, for it could not have imagined that the International would accept such an arbitrary division without protest, But the tendencies which seized the leadership thanks to the conditions immediately following the war calculated that the sections in countries of «moderate» or «slight» importance would demand in principle to be placed on an equal footing with Countries classed as those of «first importance.» In most cases they would not be able to send the delegates granted them even if the

IEC did justice to their objections -and justice probably would have been rendered in order to preserve the democratic facade.

The preceding tables show that only **five** sections have a membership equal to or greater than 500 persons; while **seven** range between 100 and 400. members and 21 have only 50 members or less. If it is really desired to follow the First Congress of the CI, which diminished the weight of the strong sections and increased the weight of the weak ones, a sole method of representation would : be genuinely democratic: one delegate for 1 to 25 members and another delegate for 25 additional members or fraction of 25, up to a maximum of four delegates. To this method of representation must be added still another major democratic regulation: the transfer of majority and minority votes from one section or another or to individuals having a common position so that minorities can participate in the World Congress. To forestall the creation of artificial minorities which might threaten to swamp the Congress, it is important, therefore, to demand that minorities represent at least 20% of the members of their section in order to vote.

It can be seen by the following comparative table that the method of representation which we propose assures a very much greater guarantee of democracy at the projected Congress. We have not included in it, however, the figures on minority representations.

<b>SECTIONS</b>	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS</b>	<b>DELEGATES ACCORDING TO THE IEC</b>	<b>DELEGATES ACCORDING TO OUR PROPOSAL</b>
American	1,600	6	4
Russia	several members	3	1
China	100	3	4
India	600	4	4
England	400	4	4
France	1,000	5	4
Germany	50	3	2
Spain	60	2	3
Italy	800	4	4
Holland	50	2	2
Belgium	50	2	2
Austria	50	2	2
Greece	500	3	4
Canada	50	2	2
Mexico	60	2	3
Brazil	50	2	2
Argentina	50	2	2
Chile	300	3	4

	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>DELEGATES</b>	<b>DELEGATES</b>
<b>SECTIONS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF</b>	<b>ACCORDING TO</b>	<b>ACCORDING TO OUR</b>
Indo-China	300	3	4
	<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>THE IEC</b>	<b>PROPOSAL</b>
Norway	50	1	2
Denmark	50	1	2
Switzerland	50	1	2
Bulgaria	50	1	2
Ireland	50	1	2
Palestine	50	1	2
Egypt	50	1	2
Cyprus	50	1	2
Cuba	100	1	4
Peru	50	1	2
Uruguay	50	1	2
Australia	50	1	2
South Africa	300	2	4
<b>Total</b>	7,220	73	91

It can be seen that our proposal assures a more democratic representation at the Congress, the economic weaknesses of the distant and poor sections being compensated for by a larger representation for the small sections in general and especially the sections which will not be able to send their delegates to the Congress much less vote, while the IEC acts inversely and systematically discriminates against them in order to favor its combinations. This resolution of the IEC constitutes an immediate and mortal danger to the whole International, It must be revoked.

We are witnessing, as has been seen, an attempted bureaucratic seizure of the International leadership by elements interested in stifling a loyal discussion which would provoke their overthrow, It cannot be a question of anything else. Let us recall under what conditions the Pre-Conference of April, 1946 was convened and the motives for its convocation.

The IS and the IEC, which had been designated at the emergency conference of 1940 had only a vegetative political existence and led an almost non-existent organic activity during the whole war, the functioning of these bodies having been paralyzed by personal and political struggles in the atmosphere of the American section. As early as 1944 the Spanish Group in Mexico demanded the convening of a World Congress. Its request found not a single echo. The following year the IEC was consulted on the possibility of the convening of a pre-conference with limited objectives. This pre-conference proposal was accepted, for it was the only possible way of resolving the situation of an IS which was incapable, because of its internal divisions, of organizing a real discussion and preparing a genuine World Congress. It was then explicitly understood that this gathering would have as its task the selection of new leading bodies whose principal mission would be to animate and extend the international discussion in view of the World Congress. Then total Silence. After that, no one in the International was informed of the place and the date of meeting of the projected pre-conference, no discussion or even exchange of views preceded it, the agenda was unknown to almost the whole International. Members of the IEC were uninformed while the French police were perfectly

informed. Everything was organized in the dark by leaders interested in assuring themselves the hegemony in this gathering, The composition of the pre-conference, in addition, was as little democratic as possible, which was excusable given the conditions under which it was convened. But its nondemocratic, not to say, anti-democratic character ought to have encouraged the leading bodies which it had elected to compensate for their origin by measures authentically democratic. It is precisely the opposite which we have witnessed. Hardly had it got together when this pre-conference proclaimed itself a conference under the pretext of throwing dust in the eyes of the outside world and issued a manifesto which claimed to introduce the international discussion which it was charged with opening <sup>6</sup>. Then the IS and the IEC began to threaten expulsion and to legislate as if they were the product of a genuine conference delegated full powers by the International; in a word, they began to prepare the future World Congress majority, totally forgetting their principal mission: the loyal organization of a full discussion of all the problems posed before our International and the working class movement. They have even so completely forgotten their task that in all the discussion bulletins published under their guidance, more than a year after the pre-conference, of all the principal problems which confront our movement, only one, the Russian problem, has been extensively treated, and it still reflects only the official opinion. To our knowledge, only extracts from a thesis of the anti-defensist minority have been published. Can that be called a full and loyal discussion in preparation for a World Congress after seven years of a war which has produced changes of major importance? No, the discussion has, in its entirety, still to be organized.

## The Strangulation of Minorities

We affirm that the IS and the IEC are seeking to prepare **their** majority at the World Congress, In addition to the calculations which we have already unmasked what shows it clearly is the minute care they have taken to secure a maximum limitation of representation for minorities, both in number and in power. The next to the last part of paragraph three of the resolution of the IEC says: Minorities will be proportionally represented «in cases where the number of delegates permits it». In other cases, all minorities constituting approximately a quarter of their sections at least will be represented with a consultative vote. First of all, proportional representation of minorities, if it is placed alongside of the arbitrary representation of the sections criticized earlier, is only a snare. What minorities could be proportionally represented? Obviously those of «countrees of first importance» and yet not all, since that of the American section would have only the satisfaction of revealing its theses. The resolution clearly suggests: «In cases where the number of delegates permits it.» For it is obviously not the Peruvian, Polish or Austrian sections, for example, which will have a sufficient number of delegates so that one of them can represent the minority. These sections in countries «of first importance,» in addition to the privilege of importance, find themselves granted an additional privilege by the IEC, the luxury, so to speak, of one or more minorities. Precisely among these sections is numbered that of the most imperialist country in the world, and the PCI of France, where the Craipeau majority and the Frank minority have no serious political differences. Moreover, why is a fourth and not a third or fifth of the members required and why is only a consultative vote given? The resolution does not deign to inform us. What it signifies, we may already know. The reason probably is that there is not a single section at the present moment, thanks to the good offices of the

IS, where the minority represents a quarter of the membership, except the French minority led by Frank, who is under the guardianship of the present world leadership.

Nevertheless, the present International leadership is going to be obliged to permit a little discussion to take place, in order to save appearances. The minorities will more or less have the illusion of a discussion, but from now until the end of the year they will not have the time to develop and group themselves, since the IS and the IEC have evaded all discussion of the major questions; these minorities will therefore not have the time to win a quarter of the members of their sections. Moreover, even if they reached that proportion, most of the non-European sections would be incapable, as we have already stated, of sending all the majority delegates to which they were entitled, not to speak of the minority delegates. Thus, the stifling of the discussion organized for more than a year by the International leadership, was designed to prevent the growing of an opposition in our movement. The demand for a quarter now gives the *coup de grace* to minorities in preventing them from being represented at the World Congress. And in case that were not sufficient, now comes the prohibition against proxy votes, and, in consequence, the forestalling of the growth of new formed oppositions, who are prevented from being heard and from voting. For a long time the IS has declared that the next World Congress must above all be a Congress of serious sections of the International. We now know what it understands by that: the sections which support or accept its opportunism, its ideological conservatism, and its organic bureaucratism. Finally, to crown its work, the IEC in its resolution refuses to call the Congress legally on the pretext that the legal convening is «totally unrealizable under present conditions» and «would prevent the presence at the Congress of a series of sections and comrades.» We cannot accept that statement; in fact, what prevents the convening of a legal Congress which would hold secret sessions in the course of which illegal comrades would be heard? The fear of bourgeois and Stalinist repression? But from how many countries has the authorization to hold a legal Congress been asked? Obviously from not a single one. First of all, authorization must be asked everywhere for permission to hold a legal congress before taking refuge in conspiratorial methods. Secrecy, added to the restrictive methods already criticized, permit the leadership to combine and maneuver and assures that it will retain the leadership of the International. We confront you -and, with us, the whole International will demand the withdrawal of your resolution, the beginning of a real discussion of major problems, and the preparation of a democratic congress

## For a Genuine World Congress

For the World Congress to represent real progress for the Fourth International, it is first of all necessary for it to be convened under such conditions that not a single comrade will have the slightest reason for thinking of maneuvering by the leadership.

For the Congress to adopt resolutions which are necessary for the social revolution all minorities must be represented.

We therefore asks:

1. That the sections be represented on the basis of one delegate for every 25 members and additional fractions of 25 up to a maximum of four delegates for each section, minorities being represented in the same manner. However, only minorities representing at least 20% of the membership of their section will have the right to vote. Others will have only a consultative vote. It is in this fashion that the democratic example given us by the CI at its birth will be followed<sup>7</sup>.
2. Sections and minorities will have the right to transmit their vote to sections, minorities, or comrades outside their section.
3. Organizations close to the Fourth International with differences on this or that point of our program will be invited to the Congress with the same rights as the official sections, on condition of recognizing the fundamental principles of the International, even if fusion with the official sections has not been realized before the opening of the Congress.
4. The agenda will comprise:
  - a. Examination of the politics of the principal parties during the imperialist war and their position in regard to the national resistance movements during the Nazi occupation;
  - b. Character of the war between China and Japan;
  - c. Balance sheet of the Spanish civil war.;
  - d. Support or abandonment of the unconditional defense of Russia and the question of world Stalinism (SP-CP-CGT government, united front with Stalinism, etc.);
  - e. Outmoding of, or timeliness of, the transitional program and the manner of application of the, parts of the program which remain valid;
  - f. Problem of the tactics of the construction of revolutionary parties;
  - g. Colonial questions;
  - h. Nature of the present historic period and immediate and revolutionary perspectives.

This agenda is not at all exclusive. All questions of general interest which this or that section or group of comrades would like to present for the examination of the Congress will be discussed.

We call upon the whole International to express themselves on the preceding proposals.

If the World Congress meets under the conditions decided by the IEC, and even under better conditions, without a thorough preliminary discussion of the problems which confront our movement (see our open letter to the French PCI) the Congress will constitute a mortal blow for the Fourth International. The situation demands the energetic intervention of the sections and of comrades within the sections. The IEC must immediately withdraw its resolutions; otherwise the Fourth International will be bureaucratically asphyxiated.

For the revocation of the decision of the IEC or the resignation of the International leadership!

For a free discussion in the International!

For a genuine Congress of the International organized on democratic bases!

Long live the Fourth International!

Long live the world socialist revolution!

Mexico, D.F. June 27, 1947

Sections, groups of comrades, or individuals who share our criticisms and proposals are asked to communicate their complete or partial agreement immediately to the IS and to the following address: G.,. Munis, Apartado Postal 8942, Mexico, D.F.

### **Open letter to the International Communist Party, French section of the Fourth International from Natalia Sedova, Benjamin Péret and G.Munis (June, 1947)**

Esteemed Comrades:

Two years after the termination of the most devastating and reactionary war which history records, the French party faces a grave crisis, a concentrated expression of the crisis of the International, the latter in turn a reflection of the tremendous crisis the world labor movement is suffering each year more acutely. It is therefore necessary to judge the actual situation of the French party and to seek a solution in the operation of its two determinant causes, the Fourth International and the world labor movement

«The crisis of humanity,» we repeat a thousand times with L.D.Trotsky, «is a crisis of revolutionary leadership.» However many explanations may try to throw the responsibility for the defeat of the revolution on the objective conditions, the ideological backwardness or the delusions of the masses, on the potency of Stalinism or the illusory attractiveness of the «degenerated workers' state,» they are erroneous and fit only for exculpating those responsible, diverting attention from the real problem and obstructing its solution. Given the state of the objective conditions today for the taking of power, an authentic revolutionary leadership **must** conquer all obstacles, overcome all difficulties, triumph over all adversaries. The condition of the party in France, center of Europe and even now the influential nucleus of the world is in no way satisfactory. To speak fully and explicitly, since it is necessary to speak fully and explicitly if we wish to make progress, the condition of the French party signifies for us, and consequently for the proletariat, the revolution and all of humanity; a major calamity. Having gone through an imperialist war which offered unsurpassable conditions for its transformation into Civil wars in the presence of an arch-reactionary policy of the Big Three conquerors; in the midst of a complete corruption of Stalinism and reformisms; with the decadence of capitalism which threatens to drag down the whole of humanity with it already begun; with a proletariat avid for social revolution in spite of the evanescence to which the Stalinist and reformist leaders subject it; the French party does not yet represent a hope for the masses. No subterfuge; the fault is in the political leadership. Remember the French revolution. In its culminating period it shot the generals guilty of defeat, rejecting extenuating and even exculpatory reasons, today we must

mercilessly rout the policy and the exponents of the policy which brought about our defeat or even prevented triumph. Reasons much more imperious than those which compelled the French revolution to shoot the generals guilty of ineptitude demand this.

The world labor movement ought to have triumphed over the old capitalist world and the Russian counter-revolution during the imperialist war or immediately afterward. The war was simultaneously a result of the crisis of the world labor movement and the opportunity for its recovery and definitive victory. The ideological causes of the crisis and with them the organizations responsible for it should have been destroyed. But a reverse phenomenon has been produced. The organizations which caused and heightened the crisis have increased their organic power over the working class, binding it more strongly than before to the general system of the world counter-revolution. We, on the other hand, have nowhere attained the organic force, the ideological authority and the combative prestige which give a revolutionary party its qualification as such. This result cannot be in any way accidental and still less a product of the objective circumstances. The crisis of the world labor movement acquired official status in 1914, when the Second International deserted to the capitalist camp. The Russian Revolution, in 1917 vigorously started the recuperation. But shortly afterward the Stalinist Thermidor arrived to add its own factors of ideological crisis to the old reformist factor. Since then Stalinism has been continually deepening its , degeneration, getting prestige from the country of the revolution and money and stringent orders from the caste which has destroyed that same revolution. The social-democratic desertion was serious, very serious, and costly to the proletariat, but the intransigence of the Bolsheviks diminished its importance and the triumph of the Russian proletariat doomed it to a certain and early defeat. By turning against the Russian Revolution and chaining to itself the Third International, the Stalinist Thermidor coincided with the social-democratic desertion, obstructed the complete recuperation of the workers! movement and immediately itself deepened the crisis. From the Chinese Revolution to the Spanish Revolution, Stalinist foreign policy runs its degenerative cycle, which begins in complicity (ideological opportunism) with the petty-bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie of the Kuomintang and culminates in the destruction by its own hand (capitalist reaction) of a triumphant revolution, that of July 19, 1936. In this cycle there is a duplication of the evolution of Stalinist Thermidor in Russia which goes from the suppression of proletarian democracy and the Left Opposition to the extermination of the Bolshevik Old Guard and tens of thousands of militants, the Moscow Trials and the assassination of Trotsky, a retarded effect of the trials. The Russian government and its external appendage, world Stalinism, left the old social-democracy far behind, both having converted themselves, closely united, into the most powerful and dangerous cause of the crisis of the world labor movement. A cause which, furthermore, has at its disposal the GPU, a police force internationally organized and subsidized with millions!

The first point to understand in the world situation, without which understanding all the rest becomes fogged and action grows sterile, is that the present Russian state and government, far from having as its base or carrying along with it any remnant whatsoever of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, represents in respect to the latter the most ferocious and complete counter-revolution. By itself, alone the present Russian government has contributed much more to the defeat of the world revolution and to the state of prostration of the masses than all the old capitalist governments together. Yes, the politics



of Russia, and world Stalinism, image of its economic interests, dishearten human hopes and aspirations much more severely than the finance capital of Wall Street and the City with their respective armies and police forces. Without Moscow and world Stalinism, the imperialist war would either not have begun, that is, it would have been prevented by the European Revolution, or it would have been rapidly and victoriously transformed into civil war. The spontaneous action of the masses under the Nazi occupation moved in the latter direction, but Stalinism and world capitalism, in a formidable show of unity, detoured them to the support of the imperialist war by means of nationalist movements. Thus we find ourselves today facing the most complete and reactionary domination of the world by the victorious Big Three, which means the continual threat of a new imperialist war and gives the masses a bitter sensation of frustration, a pledge of Stalinist and reformist domination. The crisis of the world labor movement thereby resolves itself into Stalinism's organic capacity (socialdemocracy is completely secondary) to nail the activity of the masses during and after the war into the sarcophagus built jointly in spite of their quarrels, by the old imperialisms and the Russian counterrevolution.

In its quality as regenerating nucleus, the Fourth International ought to have developed as the world party fighting for the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war and adapted its tactics, general arguments and slogans to the changes which were produced or clearly manifested during the war. Mistakes uncorrected in any of these aspects and persistence in tactics and slogans superseded by events must inevitably have resulted in grave political and organic injury to the International. It cannot be doubted for a single instant that the latter is the principal cause of our feeble development and the particular crisis which the International is undergoing, a crisis expressed by diverse tendencies and sub-tendencies with points of view contradictory and even radically opposed on the most important problems. Yes, the International, or its principal parties in the period in which it did not exist as a directing center, have committed grave errors and persisted in slogans which ought to have been abandoned. But the major error is that to this very day it does not appear disposed to correct past mistakes and to abandon outlived slogans. And against this everyone must be alert, because it could prove disastrous.

Let us take the main problems in chronological order.

## The fight against imperialist war

One can scarcely speak of the International in respect to this, because the international center, isolated, cut off from any contact with all the sections in Europe and Asia, was practically non-existent. But it is possible to speak, on the other hand, of the principal parties. The most visible of them all, the one which by its geographic position, its economic resources, its conditions of legality and its capacity to influence and attract, appeared automatically as exponent of the policy of the Fourth International, did that party maintain an intransigent revolutionary and internationalist attitude toward the imperialist war? Did it wage the necessary struggle against it? No, categorically no. Any other reply would only serve to render difficult a positive solution to our difficulties, if not to aggravate them. Faced with war, the American party had an opportunist attitude similar to that of centrism, not to that which must be ours. It itself defined this as non-support, transformation of the imperialist

war into a genuine war against fascism, political opposition, etc... and in general, abstained from agitation and specific action against the war, as much in the rearguard, as in the vanguard. And the policy of this party appeared before the world for years as the official policy of the Fourth International! Furthermore, what then existed as an international center accepted it tacitly as sound. Evidently, the policy of the American party led all of the groups of the Fourth International in the world toward opportunism. By following its example, or at least taking shelter behind it, the English party itself, although in general to the left of the American party, weakened its policy toward war in a centrist fashion.

There were other opportunist manifestations, but we do not consider it necessary to speak of them here, it is sufficient to point to the fact for later discussions. Did our principal parties on the European continent maintain a completely internationalist attitude toward the war? There is nothing to reproach them with, up to the Hitlerite occupation. From then onwards, their policy is almost entirely unknown to us and therefore we wish to assert nothing one way or the other. We must note, nevertheless, that diverse indications and some documents suggest, in the French party, for example, the existence of non-internationalist attitudes. The comrades who continued the general struggle for the revolution around our ideas under frightful conditions during the occupation have become the creditors of the esteem and admiration of the entire International. To all of them, the fallen and those who survive, go our sincerest respect and friendship. This itself obliges us to point out mistakes which today obstruct the growth of the organization and revolutionary progress in general. In order positively to resolve its crisis and to help to resolve that of the International, the French party must analyze its own conduct and that of the International during the imperialist war and condemn all opportunisms and vacillations.

The most serious error in this field proceeds from the new world leadership elected in the pre-Conference of April, 1946. To date, more than a year having elapsed it has not arranged for a discussion of the politics of the principal parties during the imperialist war. Its error is all the more unpardonable since it had at its disposal from the instant of its formation important documents with which to open the discussion. Its error can be all the more fatal for our movement in so far as this new leadership resists placing as the first point on the agenda for the world Congress in preparation the attitude of our principal parties toward the imperialist war and the national movements. An error can be serious or even very serious; but a party which knows how to correct it will continue to progress toward the revolution. An uncorrected error produces theoretical consumption organic ossification, annulment, sooner or later. The Fourth International would demonstrate its inability to take itself seriously if, when the Congress is held, it did not place in the foreground the attitude of its parties toward the imperialist war and did not severely condemn the opportunisms manifested in its ranks. We are certain that the parties and groups will know how to react.

## The movements of national resistance under the Hitlerite occupation

There are positions of all shades in the International, from those who have openly supported the Committees of Resistance, demanding the entry of our parties into them, to those who opposed any compromise with them, leaving aside those who favored them more or less surreptitiously. Because the occupation -yesterday by the German troops, today by the Yankee, Russian and English- is a new phenomenon posed for the labor movement by the decomposition of capitalism, up to a certain point it was natural that many varied positions should arise in our ranks. They would certainly have appeared even supposing that all our parties had maintained an integrally internationalist attitude. But the latter has not been the cases; instead there have been opportunist tendencies which discarded revolutionary defeatism and internationalist tendencies which maintained it in every instance. All of the positions which arose round about the national movements can be catalogued under these headings, The opportunist tendencies supported and pronounced themselves more or less in favor, and the internationalist tendencies decidedly against. The former considered the fight against the occupation as a function of «the anti-fascist war»; the latter as a function of the imperialist war. As a consequence, the former saw in the resistance movements a positive element in the struggle against fascism, and the others an element of return to the imperialist war which the peoples had begun to transform into civil war. One group supported guerrilla warfare and sabotage, instruments of the national movements, while the other combated them as nationalist methods incompatible with the supreme objective of transforming the imperialist war into international Civil War.

The problem is not one of exclusively retrospective merit, the attitude taken today toward Russian and world Stalinism depends in great measure on the attitude taken previously toward the national movements, of which Stalinism was everywhere the principal inspirer, from Poland and Yugoslavia to France and Belgium. Even today Europe is totally occupied by the Big Three, It is therefore absolutely impossible to have a correct attitude toward the occupation by the Big Three without correcting the mistakes committed during the German occupation, because the occupation, despite quantitative differences, is not a characteristic result of this or that imperialism, but of imperialism as a world factor in the present epoch, the Russian counter-revolution being included under the imperialist denomination. The problem is indissolubly linked with that of the imperialist war and therefore both ought to be at the top of the discussion in each party and in the future World Congress. Without correcting the errors committed in these aspects we shall never be a genuine world revolutionary party and any organic progress will slip through our fingers as so much has slipped through the fingers of the centrist parties.

## Unconditional Defense of the USSR

It is not, as some tendencies unfortunately seem to consider it, absolutely consubstantial with our movement. The criterion which has always determined our attitude toward this problem is: does the defense of the USSR in a war against foreign enemies help or hinder the world revolution? The answer depended naturally on the criterion held as to the social nature of the USSR, whether something of the October Revolution did or did not remain which merited its defense. It is impossible for us to analyze this problem here. We must proceed by declarations since we are attempting solely to make the entire International think and discuss. The development of Russian foreign policy while the armies of the Kremlin were advancing toward the west

revealed a more and more acute contradiction with the degenerated workers state idea based on the remnants of the proletarian revolution, on which rested the idea of unconditional defense. With deep distress, because the world leadership is a part of our organization, a part of ourselves, we cannot refrain from saying that the International Secretariat failed in its most elemental duties by not bringing up for discussion on the day following its constitution the question of whether the «unconditional defense of the USSR» continued to be favorable to the world revolution or whether it seemed incompatible with it in the light of the tremendous supervening events. The IS simply ignored the tremendous events and continued tacitly to accept unconditional defense as sufficient, in which acceptance it devoted itself to influencing the International. Without doing anything here besides making assertions, we repeat, we declare to you, comrades of the French party, comrades of the International, that the «unconditional defense of the USSR» has revealed itself to be incompatible with the defense of the world revolution. Abandonment of the defense of Russia is of **utmost urgency**, because it is fettering all of our movements, blunting our theoretical progress and giving us in the eyes of the masses a stalinoid physiognomy. It is impossible to defend Russia and the world revolution at the same time. Either one or the other. We pronounce ourselves for the world revolution, against the defense of Russia, and we ask you to pronounce yourselves in the same way. Be careful, above all, of those tendencies which hide their opportunism towards the imperialist war and the present situation by boasting about their fidelity to the program of the Fourth International on the Russian question! A fidelity of this kind is a destructive fidelity, similar to that of the «old Bolsheviks» in 1917 in respect to the old theory, **completely Bolshevik**, of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry toward which Lenin appeared as a **revisionist**. In order to remain faithful to the revolutionary tradition of bolshevism, Lenin broke with essential ideas of bolshevism, effecting a prior revolution in his party which made possible the October revolution. In order to be faithful to the revolutionary tradition of the Fourth International, we must abandon the Trotskyist theory of the defense of the USSR we shall thus bring about in the International an ideological revolution indispensable for the success of the world revolution.

This is, beyond doubt, the most important question in dispute inside our movement, because all else depends upon it, in greater or less degree, if the tendency opposed to the defense of Russia can be accused of revisionism, its revisionism has the same character as Lenin's revisionism in 1917. On the other hand, out of the tendency supporting the defense of Russia if it does not rectify itself, will emerge a new reformism, such as was already emerging from the «old bolsheviks» when Lenin intervened with his April theses. In fact, the supporters of defense come to the conclusion that the counter-revolutionary Russian caste, upon entering the countries of western Europe and Asia, «is obliged» to expropriate capitalism and put the economy on the road of adaptation to the forms of property existing in Russia, forms which they themselves still consider socialist, produced by the revolution. When Thorez, Togliatti and other Stalinist leaders referred to the «new routes» offered by achieving socialism without the need of revolution, they had in mind, **grosso modo**, this same idea. But the supposed expropriation of capitalism consists in nationalization -whether more or less complete, with or without indemnification, is not important- of the means of production, On one hand, the nationalization is an automatic result of the concentration of capitalism in its epoch of involution, that is to say, degeneration and decay. On the other hand, years ago the European proletariat became master of the means of

production, by nationalizing these means the Russians performed -as did also the English and Americans, either by this procedure or by giving them back to private capitalists- an **operation of expropriation of the proletariat**. And thus it is that the supporters of «unconditional defense» have presented the expropriation of the proletariat, carried out by Russian troops with the aid of the Stalinist parties and reformists, as a progressive act, almost revolutionary, something which the proletariat should defend. Here in is contained potentially to say the least -a completely reformist tendency.

## Stalinists-Reformist Governments and United Fronts with Stalinism.

In France this idea is expressed concretely by the slogan of a CP-SP-CGT government, held in common by the Craipeau and Frank factions, which in addition share the potentially reformist theory of the defense of Russia and the majority of the ideas which are injurious to the French party.

On this question we must limit ourselves to declarations also since the analysis of each problem would not enter into the scope of an open letter. In its entirety, the petition on this slogan depends on the position on the defense of Russia, and in a more general way on the valuation of the present conditions of capitalism and the state of consciousness of the masses. When in 1917 the Bolsheviks enunciated the idea of a Menshevik government (oust the capitalist ministers from the government), they did it by taking into account on the one hand the deluded faith which the masses at that moment had in the Mensheviks and in bourgeois democracy; on the other hand they took into account the nature of the contradictions between the Mensheviks and the old classes which would cause the former, willy-nilly, to grant greater liberties to the masses and to the revolutionary vanguard in particular, which would allow the masses to condense their experience in organic forms and rise to higher stages of struggle. The existence of the soviets, legally allowed by the Kerensky government and in which the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Bolsheviks participated in a united front, permitted this development.

Do such conditions exist today? Decidedly not, as regards social-democracy, and much more decidedly as regards Stalinism. We do not believe it necessary to point out here the conservative evolution of social democracy in recent years. It has been simply a case of going from bad to worse.

Stalinism is today a thousand times more dangerous for the revolution because it represents the ideas and interests of a triumphant counter-revolution in Russia which offers the world and more immediately Europe, its experience, its power and its particular solution against the proletariat on the march toward socialism. The Stalinist parties are today mere representatives and disciples of the counter-revolution installed in the Kremlin. Compared with them, the Mensheviks of 1917 were very revolutionary. The slogans of united front and government of the workers' leaders constituted in Russia a whole at once inseparable from and derived from the forms of proletarian democracy existing in the soviets, which -this is of the utmost importance- were created and maintained with the collaboration of Mensheviks and revolutionary socialists. Stalinism is today absolutely incompatible with any proletarian democracy. Wherever organs of revolutionary power have emerged, from Spain to Warsaw, Paris and Milan, it has hastened to destroy them. **Stalinism cannot allow the revolutionaries to speak.** The tactic of a united front with it and the CP-SP-

CGI government cannot facilitate in any way the creation of organs of democracy and proletarian power, and any government that is Stalinist or under Stalinist influence brings with it an imperious tendency to annihilate physically the revolutionary vanguard. It is therefore urgently necessary that the PCI and our international movement withdraw these two now outmoded slogans. Is not the example of eastern Europe eloquent?

On the other hand, the proletariat today does not suffer from any real delusions about bourgeois-democracy, social-democracy or Stalinism. What it does suffer from is the fact of finding itself imprisoned in the organic apparatus of both tendencies, Stalinism first and foremost. The non-existence of a revolutionary organization which would inspire it with confidence and combative sureness contributes more than a little to this, that is, our actual policy contributes directly or indirectly. Yesterday it was indispensable for the proletariat to go through the experiences of governments set up by the leaders of the traditional organizations in order to understand that the revolution was the only possible way out. **Not today**; you have to cover your eyes obstinately with your hands not to see it. The experience has been long and painful. The proletariat understands that there is no solution to its problems other than the revolution, but it is pessimistic and somewhat inert in the hands of the traditional organizations because it sees no other organization which offers serious possibilities of making this revolution. It would hardly break away from this pessimism and inertia if we, to whom it looks with a little hope, without our succeeding in inspiring it with the necessary confidence to take action, say that it ought nevertheless to see a Thorez government. Let us hope it will never see it! In order to inspire confidence in the proletariat and persuade it to action and to a break with the organizations which imprison it, the thing most indicated would be the creation of a united front of all those minority labor organizations which oppose class collaboration and are supporters of the revolution and proletarian democracy in general, thus the proletariat would see a relatively solid nucleus which would break the asphyxiating circle drawn around it by Stalinism and reformism.

To sum up, the slogan of a CP-SP-CGT government such as has been used in France, the call for a Stalinist-reformist government in general, is today entirely false and will serve only to hold back the masses where they are, and also -it is painful but necessary to say it- develop the new potentially reformist tendencies existing in the Fourth International. We cannot refrain from telling you, comrades of the International Communist Party of France, that the crisis of your party in particular and that of the International in general will not be solved positively by supporting the Frank faction against the Craipeau faction, but rather by supporting the two factions which are against the defense of Russia and against the slogan of a CP-SP-CGT government. Fidelity to Trotskyism is not fidelity to the written word, but to the revolutionary spirit of Trotskyism. Between the two factions which today appear the strongest in France, the least bad will be that which offers the party a more democratic regime allowing it to carry out the political changes indispensable today through the widest and most democratic discussion.

## Nationalizations

From all the foregoing, our opposition to the slogan of nationalization can be logically deduced, It also belongs in the realm of the written word, and far from expressing fidelity to the revolutionary Trotskyist tradition, it expresses or at least aids that which we have designated above as the new potential reformism. In revolutionary movements, nationalizations have served the Russian counter-revolution as well as the counter-revolution of the purest bourgeois derivation to expropriate the proletariat as it was taking possession of the instruments of production, and in moments of passivity of the masses, to concentrate the property in the hands of the state, religious fetish and oppressor *par excellence*, so as to make strikes difficult, restrict democracy (Stalinist-reformist police in the French factories) and begin the creation of a corporative order. Against this senile slogan we must hoist that of the expropriation of capitalism and destruction of its State by democratically elected workers' committees. Every one of the situations and conflicts which arises between the proletariat and capitalism must reinforce in the workers the idea that nationalizations far from favoring their interests and those of the revolution in general, only aggravate the situation. The slogan of expropriation must become more comprehensible to the proletariat all the time. We believe that, in so far as its general meaning is concerned, it is already so.

The International has not had a revolutionary policy during the war, more exactly, it has had no policy. It slept while its most visible parties, principally the SWP followed an entirely opportunist policy of «revolutionary triumphism» toward the war at the same time that they pretended to set themselves up as trustees of fidelity to the program (what part of the program is more important than the struggle against war?), raising as their camp colors the defense of Russia above all else. We tell these tendencies which are not absent from the French party, that they have violated the most essential part of the program and that only a thorough, honest and critically undertaken correction will permit them to speak of fidelity to the program without sowing confusion. But there are also other tendencies whose fidelity to the program is more «genuine» who ought to keep a watch on themselves, for they run the risk of facilitating the International's remaining in the hands of the most opportunist tendencies which are dangerous on account of their organic strength -and this would, very probably, mean its ideological death. Our program must be adapted to the gigantic changes brought about by the war. It is here where fidelity to it lies and not in unchanging repetition, and even less in partial repetition, discarding revolutionary defeatism and interpreting the rest in right-wing fashion.

The criminal destruction of the Spanish revolution **principally** at the hands of Stalinism and the subsequent beginning of the imperialist war mark the end of a stage which opened with the end of the former imperialist war and the triumph of the Russian revolution. Everything has undergone changes of great importance, the old capitalism and Stalinist Russia, the general-attitude of the masses and their ideas or beliefs with respect to bourgeois democracy and traditional organizations. Europe is a vast prison, a torture-camp whose guards and torturers are sometimes German or Italian at other times Russian, American, English or French. A new stage has appeared in the implacable struggle of our epoch to find a revolutionary solution to its conflicts. Our program cannot be exactly the same as in the former stage. If it is to continue being equally revolutionary, it must be modified.

We do not doubt for a single instant that the fundamental cause of the crisis in the French party and the International can be summed up in the opportunisms of yesterday toward the imperialist war and the resistance movements plus ideological inertia in changing in time what needed to be changed. Today this inertia continues in full on the part of the new world leadership. The crisis will only be aggravated if it is not solved by adopting the changes indicated in this letter.

The Frank faction has had the party occupied for nearly a month in discussing an article entitled «The Party in Danger.» As a matter of fact, the French party is in danger. But its crisis, as we pointed out at the beginning, is an expression of the crisis of the International, in turn connected with that of the labor movement. It is a problem of very concrete ideas and slogans of -which the principal ones are explained in this document. The Frank faction is fully co-responsible for the crisis of the French party and of the International, and the PCI would be in as much or more danger if its leadership passed from the Craipeau faction to that of Frank. The danger stems from all these tendencies which have shown themselves indulgent toward the opportunisms committed during the war by the American party or by any other, and who continue to proclaim themselves supporters of the defense of Russia, a Stalinist-reformist government, a united front with Stalinism and nationalizations. The most important of those tendencies internationally, to which has been added the Frank faction, are the same which had an anti-fascist attitude and not an internationalist during the war. In no decisive aspect does the Frank faction differentiate itself from the Craipeau faction. Their real differences do not even merit separation into distinct factions. If one is opportunistic toward Stalinism, the other is opportunist toward Stalinism; if one finds something progressive in the counter-revolution of the Kremlin, the other also, etc. They are indiscriminately part of the right-wing of the International.

The next congress of the International Communist party will have enormous importance for the future of our world movement. It is necessary that the problems posed here be duly discussed in order to save the party, it is necessary that the entire party, including the Craipeau and Frank factions, realize the urgency of radically changing their positions on the points herein indicated; it is necessary to reconsider our transitional program in general and to put ourselves in a position energetically to aid the International in effecting its own ideological revolution. Whatever the divergences are between the two factions opposed to the defense of Russia and the slogan of a Stalinist-reformist government, through them can be glimpsed a positive solution to the crisis of the French party, a most important premise for solving the crisis of the International. It is the duty of these two factions to get along together and not help false left-wings in the International.

Once mores: fidelity to Trotskyism is not the literal repetition of what Trotskyism said yesterday, even supposing it were not distorted in a right-wing manner. Fidelity to Trotskyism is the firm, sincere, and courageous rectification of some of the assertions it made yesterday. The revolution also is revolutionary; it requires shifts, modifications and radical negations of its own former assertions. Yes, the revolution is also revolutionary!



Down with «Trotskyist» conservatism! Down with «Trotskyist» fetishism! Out with «unconditional defense» of the USSR! For an ideologically firm and renewed International! Long live the French proletarian revolution! Long live the world revolution! Long live the Fourth International!

Natalia Sedova-Trotsky, Benjamin Peret, G. Munis. Mexico, D.F.; June, 1947

### «Index of my disloyalty», by G. Munis (August, 1947)

The word disloyalty has already been used against me several times by members of the present world leadership. I always let it pass, without paying attention to it or answering with accusations in kind. Nor will I now answer with accusations in kind, but instead of ignoring it I shall pause to reconsider it, for we are on the eve of a systematic campaign against me and the international tendency to which I belong, in which adjectives will dance in a tumultuous frenzy. And it will not be we who put them in circulation, now or later but the other tendency.

Recently, Comrade Smith hurled the word disloyalty at my head in a document which is going to be known in the entire International, a document which pretends to be a «Reply to Comrade Munis.» My method, asserts Smith, «carries in all languages the qualification of **disloyal**.» What does that method consist of?

*Concentrating all attacks against the IS and affecting to ignore that on all the important questions which concern the life of the International, it is not the IS, but the representative aggregate of the sections of the International, that is the IEC, which decides.*

If that accusation were correct, my method, mere than disloyal, would be extremely stupid, and would not excite Comrade Smith and his tendency colleagues so much. It would do no more than inconvenience then, since a documentary proof of the fact on the part of the IS would be sufficient for all of the sections of the International to lock upon us with non-confidence and antipathy.

Smith set out to write his «Reply to Comrade Munis» as a result of the document «Beware!» signed by me and Peralta<sup>3</sup>. The latter document fundamentally criticized the IS because it does not distribute decisions taken by the IEC, but a report presented to a Plenum of the same **by the International Secretariat**. Perhaps Comrade Smith wanted us, as proof of loyalty, to attack the IEC and the entire International for words spoken by the IS? On the contrary, actually making a distinction between co-responsibles, Smith speaks of the document «Beware» as of something written by Munis «in collaboration with Comrade Peralta.» If he is interested in perfecting his method, Smith should know that the document in question was written by Comrade Peralta in collaboration with Comrade Munis, Not for this does Munis refrain from accepting responsibility for each and every one of the words of the document.

Furthermore, comrade Smith must have knowledge of a document of mine on the Spanish problems, entirely and exclusively directed against the IEC, since the latter supports the resolutions which I criticize and call for a struggle against. That alone is enough to demonstrate that the accusation of Smith is in the clouds and, let us say gratuitous, so as not to confuse it with the weighty criticisms that are directed at me. If more proof is absolutely necessary, here are the documents: «The Fourth International in Danger» also directed against the IEC, and the «Open Letter to the PCI», wherein the International itself is seriously criticized, which having let events overtake it, today plays a conservative role. You must be advised, Comrade Smith, that neither the tendency to which I belong is nor I personally am interested in making headway, and obtaining a majority by making ideological concessions, by criticizing some and acquiescing unprincipledly to others in order to set them against each other, in a word, by maneuvering. Do you wish proof? Look at our «Open Letter to the PCI», where in regard to the national question above all, criticisms are made which pertain to two of the tendencies of the French party closest to our position. We did not make these criticisms without being aware of it, but intentionally, because we are not interested in a shapeless majority of compromise but one obtained by the most rigorous and complete discussion of all problems, without sparing anyone. If you or anyone else insists, I can cite several cases in which the tendency to which you belong has not comported itself in the same manner. As a warning for the future, permit me nevertheless to add, Comrade Smith, that we are certain of triumphing in the International, because sustained by our ideas, by not making any maneuver, we «maneuver» better than anyone. Let those who can do likewise!

Let us examine soberly, with the indifference of a biologist who examines the organisms, the contents of the article of Smith in relation to the document «Beware» which this comrade appears to have set out to answer.

In «Beware» Peralta and I were criticizing the claim that the World Congress was, «before all else, the Congress of the organizations which have respected the international discipline and which maintain normal relations with the leading bodies.» We established, with concrete examples, that everyone can see in our criticism, that the «normal relations» with the leading bodies must be understood in the political sense (internationalist attitude during the war) and not in the organizational sense, since almost all of the sections were not able to maintain even half-way normal relations with the leading bodies. We asked, in a word, that they confront the problem with a broad political criterion and not with a narrow organizational criterion. In the «Reply» of Comrade Smith there is not even a superficial allusion to our criticism.

We also asked to what conditions the world leadership referred in proposing that organizations which place conditions to their belonging to the International should not participate in the World Congress. In eight pages, Comrade Smith has not found space for a line of reply.

«The whole attitude of the IS» -stated our document «Beware!»- «on the preparatory discussion of the Congress shows the primitive greed of safeguarding the prestige of the leadership.» By way of answer, Smith admonishes me: «Your articles, Comrade Munis, have been published in our press and your pamphlets have been distributed by us to all the sections and organizations of the Fourth International.» Smith would have been more convincing had he enumerated all the articles which he says have been

published by the IS and these which were sent and not published. Unfortunately I cannot produce the statistics because I do not have my archives here. But in the Bulletins of the IS I have seen only two or three letters, some amendments to a Spanish document and two brief articles that even deserve a reply, although I must add that of these Bulletins, not even a half a dozen arrive in Mexico, thereby making it difficult to deal with the complete collection. Even if all were published, does that fact perhaps excuse the IS from the principal accusation we made: of not having put on the agenda, more than a year after its formation, the principal problems posed to our movement and to the proletariat generally? It is less excusable if more discussion Bulletins have appeared? And this gives us the right to demand of Smith that when he tries to accuse a comrade of disloyalty he do it by at least replying to the principal arguments of the accused.

The distribution of the pamphlets, which Smith mentions as testimony of the democratic scruples of the IS, is on the contrary, an unanswerable charge against him. One of the pamphlets, written more than three years ago, condemns as opportunist and centrist the policy followed by one of our principal parties. It was designed especially to begin a world discussion on the subject, of transcendental importance for the entire International. In Mexico we published not more than a thousand copies in Spanish, of which only a few dozen that remained could be sent to the IS when the latter was formed. In order that the discussion materialize on this point, which should be one of the first and main points at the World Congress, if the World Congress takes itself seriously, it was necessary to send the pamphlet to all the sections, at least in English and in French. But more than three years after having been written, more than a year after the world leadership was constituted, the pamphlet is ignored by almost the entire International. Or does Comrade Smith pretend to have us believe that the sending to each section of four or five copies in Spanish satisfies the necessities of discussion on this point and stamps the IS as having functioned democratically? We already stated in the article «Beware!» that up to now the International does not know what the policy of its principal parties towards the war and the national resistance movements was. And this is one of the accusations for which Smith, amidst justificatory soft-soap, calls me disloyal!

My pamphlet on Russia and Stalinism, another of the principal points to be discussed in the World Congress, was not published by the IS, granting that it had appeared in French in Mexico. In one of the Bulletins of the IS, a note especially pointed it out as material also for discussion without even indicating to the readers where they could obtain it, as if they were dealing with a work as well known and easily obtainable as «Don Quijote de la Mancha» or «Gargantua and Pantagruel.» The French edition in Mexico did not even exceed a thousand copies. It is impossible that the IS, distributed the pamphlet in the same form and number as its Bulletins and, furthermore, the necessities of the discussion demanded that the principal arguments be answered, if possible in the same length, by the official tendency. That the French edition in Mexico was not the real reason why the IS refused to publish my pamphlet is irrefutably demonstrated by the following fact: the Bulletins of the IS on the Russian problem were translated into English and edited by the SWP. In this case the French edition -published in Mexico could not be offered as argument not to include my pamphlet in the English translations. Nevertheless, in the American Bulletins there appeared the same note of the IS, vaguely indicating the pamphlet as material for discussion. To deduce from all this that the IS directs the discussion by preoccupying itself primarily with

safeguarding the prestige of the leadership, is considered an act of disloyalty by Comrade Smith, who only repeats the words of other colleagues of his tendency.

Therefore, the only thing in Smith's eight pages that could be taken with much good will, as a reply to our concrete accusations, confirms rather than negates our criticisms in respect to the attitude of the IS toward the problem of the discussion in general. But let us continue.

Under the title «Beware!», we repeated for the nth time that the first point on the order of the day of the World Congress would have to be the attitude of our principal parties toward the imperialist war and the national resistance movements. Why have not the IS and Smith in his eight pages against me replied concretely yes or no to this demand? Because being unable to refuse to discuss this problem, they pretend to include it within the general report which the IS will submit to the Congress. Thus encircled by many other problems, the problem of the attitude toward the imperialist war and the national movements can be discussed only precipitously and with very limited time. No one in the IS has given reasons for making this encirclement. But its report to the Plenum of the IEC, to which «Beware!» refers, can only be interpreted as a formal denial. For his part, Smith again answers by silence, as on the problems enumerated above.

The same thing happens with the problems of the legality or illegality of the World Congress and the necessity of prior discipline for the Congress. Our position in respect to the latter is part of what Smith calls my disloyalty, but Smith does not consider himself obliged to take it into account. Why did you write eight pages, Comrade Smith to reply to me or to apologize for the IS? You do not reply to me; you do make an apology for the IS. Without following the example of your crude explanation let me say to you rectify your method, because by your means you will only succeed in embroiling the International still more.

There is, however, one point of the document «Beware!» which Comrade Smith does answer. It is a point in which he and the IS are right and he exploits it for almost an entire page. Peralta and I said that the IS supported L. Red in Mexico because it was completely in agreement with him, and that is not true. The reports are slower in circulating inside the city of Mexico than between the latter and Europe. But the right which helps Smith here is almost a wrong, because the Red matter would have been solved almost immediately after it arose, if it had not been inflated and nicely converted into a «case» by the IS and its close allies on this continent. Now it has to admit that L. Red does not have an effective group, after having invented the Red Group. It is no surprise to us that after having been the indulged, centrifugal candidate of the IS, by virtue of opposition to the effective group which Jorge Santiago, until now centrifugal candidate, leads the roles were reversed and subsequently the epithet petit-bourgeoisie fell upon the first, yesterday considered «proletarian», and the second was raised to the category of official proletariat. In any event, let my warning against those who abuse terminology in order to fill their ideological vacuum be posed here. I repeat that the present leading faction has already begun very seriously to abuse it, and if we do not succeed in halting it, it will replace ideas with empty sound at which everyone will finally shrug his shoulders. Outside of that, let us add that if the discussion and the conditions of celebration of the World Congress permit it, words will

again assume a their true meaning and opportunists will not continue to wear proletarian clothing.

There is still one point which, as presented by Comrade Smith, seems to prove him entirely right and to prove irrevocably that in the document «Beware!» Peralta and I distorted the truth deliberately. I refer to a circular of the IS to the Latin American sections, written in February 22 of this year. We placed it in the document referred to, «Beware!», as an example of the restrictions which the IS was trying to impose on the participation in the World Congress by the Latin American sections and all the small sections or groups generally. Smith counterposes to our assertion a resolution of the October Plenum of last year which says absolutely nothing definitive in this respect. On the other hand there was indeed something definitive after the February 22 circular and **before** Smith took the trouble to answer me. If Smith did not consider it necessary to take it into account, it is doubtlessly because, in respect to method, it is not so necessary with himself as with me. The resolution of the IEC of last March on the preparation of the World Congress, **prohibited the transmission of mandates of one section to the other** which if carried out, would keep the majority of the small sections and unofficial groups and even some of the large sections outside the World Congress and without voting rights. That resolution of the IEC abundantly confirms the warning which Peralta and I made in «Beware!» However, Smith tries to squirm out of it, here is the fact, incontestable, proving us right, and which furthermore does not leave my method of discussion and criticism in a bad light but rather Smith and those who are behind him. Finally, as though to annihilate me, Smith writes: «In reality, all this artificial noise that you make, Comrade Munis, about our so-called «Bureaucratism,» our «maneuvers,» etc. is explained by the fact that what you want to attack in us is above all our politics.» .

The conduct which Smith attributes to me here is not my conduct towards the political problems and the world leadership but -instead reflects the concept which Smith has toward it. In fact, Smith wishes evidently to say that the purpose of my accusations of bureaucratism and maneuvers is to serve as a battering-ram for my political differences with the present world leadership, as if I hid those differences or removed from them what they contain of a break with some Trotskyist ideas of yesterday -or if Comrade Smith wishes to exploit the term- of **revision**. But it will certainly not be from our revision that opportunism will issue. Since we are in disagreement with the present world leadership, Smith thinks -mark this remember the kind of thinking- we have to attack his organizational methods, inventing them if they do not exist in fact. I repeat that that is Smith's conception and not ours. «Beware!» was the title of the document to which Smith does not reply, beware of a World Congress arranged or even convoked without the proper previous discussion of all the problems posed by the tremendous events supervening in the turbulent years from the founding of the Congress of the Fourth International to today. Were we right or wrong in sounding the warning? When Comrade Smith was labeling me disloyal, the IEC had already adopted the resolution on the method of representation to the World Congress, the examination of which can be seen in the article, «The Fourth International in Danger.» Let us only recall some facts. Seven countries which have been conceded the grace of «first importance,» will have at their disposal in the Congress approximately 38 or 35% of the votes and will lack only **nine** delegates to assure themselves a majority. Second, of the minorities, merely in order to be heard in the Congress, it is demanded that they have 25% of the members of their section, which represents an absolute disdain for the ideas of the minorities, precisely

when the richest experience of the past years since the foundation of the Fourth, illuminating many problems with new light, demands to accord the maximum attention, not only to the ideas of the minorities, but even to those of completely isolated individuals. What the IS and IEC have decided to do cannot be considered, no matter how you look at it, Comrade Smith, as anything but a bureaucratic attitude towards ideas. Third, the resolution prohibits the delegation of mandates, with the result that a good number of groups and sections will be deprived of vote, groups and sections which, with a notion of discipline and loyalty which is not in the manner of the revolutionary movement, the present world leadership asks that they submit, from the present, to the discipline of a Congress in which many of them will not be able to vote. Even if there were no more than that (and there is more, as can be seen in the document, «The Fourth International in Danger») the foregoing in «Beware!» would be entirely justified. The «artificial noise» which Smith attributes to me has basis of definite solidity.

Far from proposing to attack deliberately the organizational methods of a leadership with which we are in political disagreement, we vigorously desire not to have to reproach it for more than its political ideas. If it had started a discussion, immediately after its constitution, on all those problems which, with greater or lesser verisimilitude could be suspected of deserving a reconsideration, taking at the same time entirely democratic means for the discussion and the celebration of the Congress, our political criticisms and our demands for the reconsideration of certain problems would be maintained integrally, but we would recognize that the leadership is untouchable from the point of view of the methods, which would be very sane as a principle of coexistence of different factions in the same organization. Our activity and our ideas tend to just this idea. Unfortunately, the present world leadership has not comported itself thus, which obliges us to transfer the criticism from the political level to the organizational level. Let us add that its behavior is not explained as much by its opposition to some of our points of view -such as the problem of the defense of Russia- as by the policy pursued by some of our parties toward the imperialist war and the movements of national resistance. Thus it is that our demand for discussion of this problem in the first place and as a special point of the Congress, giving previously all the documents necessary for the International to judge, has met such a sordid reception in the world leadership. I believe it is necessary to say here in order that it begins to be clear in the final instance, forced by the weight of facts and by the displacement of the base, the defensist heads, the IS as well as the American party, can come to liquidate the «unconditional defense of the USSR». That evolution would be much more probable in case of war, since if, for example, the SWP did not take during the past war a defeatist policy nor afterwards knew how to correct its errors, there is no reason to suppose that it should have a defeatist policy during a war between the United States and Russia. This being the case, surely many will suddenly begin to discover the transformation of quantity into quality. Above all, it is the opportunist errors which it does not wish to recognize, which dictates the organizational attitude of the IS, its manner of directing the discussion, which ignores totally the necessities of our movement and its calcified terminology.

With this I have full right to say this to you, Comrade Smith, because you and the IS have very precipitately directed all kinds of accusations of disloyalty at me, while you have as yet to direct even once severe glance at that policy which was defined as non-support for Imperialist War, transformation of this same war into a true war against Fascism, no obstruction to the effective

prosecution of their war (that of the capitalists), etc. Isn't it more important to direct one's gaze and criticisms at politics of this kind?

With this, your paragraph on the functioning of the International as well as everything else you have written, is answered

As for the quotations from Leon Trotsky, I reserve the right to return to it in my writings at a later date. However, I have this to say in advance if you find it to your interest to use it, I disagree with it and it appears to me to be entirely false today. And if the International should be guided by it, it would destroy Leon Trotsky's own work

Mexico, D.F., August 1947.

### **«Do what I say and not what I do», by G. Munis and Benjamin Péret (August 22, 1947)**

Discipline! Such is the slogan with which the International leadership - constituted by men who boast of being strong- attempts to hide its ideological nakedness. Certainly, no one is more of a partisan of discipline than we are, but it must not serve simply to guarantee a comfortable intellectual sleep for those who invoke it day in and day out. Discipline for the application of decisions democratically arrived at after a broad and loyal discussion, yes; discipline without discussion or democracy, no.

We have accused the International leadership of invoking discipline in order to assure the success of its bureaucratic maneuvers, and we have already furnished proofs of these maneuvers (see «The International in Danger»). The crisis in the English party furnishes a different example of these maneuvers.

In a previous document the International leadership demanded from the comrades and groups asked to participate in the World Congress a pledge to accept its discipline in advance. This demand -we repeat- is anti-democratic and constitutes an extremely dangerous precedent, authorizing, moreover, an actual ideological dictatorship by the International leadership which will come out of the Congress, a dictatorship which the present leadership is contemplating since it already wishes to prohibit all discussion in the International following the conclusion of the Congress, but in what nook or cranny has there been a discussion? We don't know of any. That pledge will therefore permit the leadership to stifle all life in the International since each time that a section or individual comrade comes forth with a new idea or suggests a tactic not foreseen by the Congress, the leadership will be able to brandish the pledge previously taken at this Congress and invoke the discipline of the barracks and the grave.

Further, the International leadership -and this time it is right- is in favor of a policy of unification where our movement is divided into two or more groups which are not separated by principled differences. For several years a discussion has placed a minority of our English section, favorable to entry into the Labor Party, in opposition to the majority, which refuses to envisage this immediate perspective. Let us say immediately that we are in all cases opposed to entry into reformist «workers» parties of the type of the Labor Party or the French Socialist Party. This tactic dates from the epoch of the radicalization of reformist parties (1933-1935). To follow that tactic today is to give proof of

ideological inertia, since previous conditions are absent. These parties are, by their own confession, no more than «loyal managers» of bankrupt capitalist businesses (Leon Blum dixit) and without them and the Stalinist parties they would be incapable of making the masses accept the unheard of sufferings that the Stalinists and reformists succeed in imposing on them thanks to the marriage, which is strengthened every day, of their apparatus with that of the capitalist state., Tactically, then, we do not have a common political interest with the English minority since we advocate a policy of united front with left minorities within reformist parties as well as with left proletarian organizations opposed to Stalinists and reformists. We are equally in disagreement with the majority of the RCP which, during the war, imitated the opportunist policy of the SWP and has up to now been unable to disentangle itself from the conservative policy of the International leadership. But now the English minority threatens to break the discipline of the next convention of the RCP by splitting, through insisting upon the immediate application of the tactic of entry into the Labor Party. It demands, in the event that the majority of the party comes out against its tactic, the right of beginning work «under its own control.» That is very definitely the breaking of discipline and splitting.

Beginning with the hypothesis of a healthy internal life in the RCP, what should the IS do to remain faithful to its policy of unification of the Trotskyist movement throughout the world and so as not to violate its own decisions relative to the acceptance of the discipline of the World Congress in advance? It obviously ought to say to the English minority:

*You wish to enter into the Labor Party to form nuclei there for the creation of a left wing. Good. But you accepted the discipline of the last national conventions; on our part we are enforcing the discipline of the World Congress accepted in advance. You must remain in the Party while submitting yourselves to the majority since your differences are on tactical questions.*

However, if the English minority spontaneously and not encouraged by the IS threatens to split, we think that the IS then ought to recommend to the convention of the English party to authorize the minority to go through its own experience of entry into the Labor Party **under the control of the leadership of the RCP**. Instead of that, what has the IS done? It first of all made contact with the English minority unbeknownst to the leadership of the party, that is, it encouraged the breaking of discipline by the minority. (Letters of the PC of the RCP to the IS dated June 23, 1947 and July 15, 1947.) Why? Comrade Gabriel Clearly indicates it in his letter of July 6 addressed to the PC of the RCP:

*...to establish concretely the experience of the line which you defend and that which the minority and the majority of the International defends.*

In other words, Comrade Gabriel in the name of the IS avows his agreement with the tactic defended. by the minority, And this explains that. It is useless to say that a split exists only as a distant perspective; it is no less true that the IS encourages the minority to resist by approving its intentions and thereby drives toward a split. But Comrade Gabriel is prudent and wishes to save appearances. That is why he proposes a discussion between the majority, the minority, and the IS. What could be more normal in appearance? Although the IS does not dare to propose that this tripartite meeting come to a decision by



voting, the result of which would be guaranteed in advance since the IS controls two votes out of three, it is obvious that it would be in a position to inform the International (which would not know in advance that the IS encourages the English minority) thereby «orienting» it toward the IS. This is evident if it is considered that the resolution condemning the threat of split which was presented to the IS by Comrade Conrad in the name of the majority of the RCP was rejected, What can that be called other than a maneuver, for it is the same International leadership which demands a pledge of prior acceptance of the discipline of a World Congress being held after nine years filled with events of incalculable significance which refuses to impose it on a minority of a party that determines its policy by regular conventions. A question, comrades of the International leadership: is the minority of the RCP centrifugal or centripetal? Thanks for the answer.

Thus the International leadership employs discipline at the pleasure of the interests of its conservative policy menacing those who are opposed to its political line and permitting its faithful to violate it. We categorically reject such an interpretation of discipline. It is a reflection of the degeneration provoked in the working class movement by Stalinism and Reformism. We will never submit to it because we know how to react against that degeneration. That degeneration is summed up in what is called in Spanish «*la ley del embudo*», the English equivalent of which is represented by the sentence preceding these lines.

To conclude we repeat once more: we are categorically against the position of the English minority and opposed to the political line followed by the majority of the RCP, a line similar in its entirety to that of the International leadership, which aids the most conservative (centrist) tendencies of our movement. We consider that the International leadership has favored the split tendencies of the minority, violating its own decisions in regard to the World Congress, while it ought to have acted inversely. We think that if a genuine democracy reigns in the English party -which we believe- the living together of the two tendencies is possible, the minority applying its tactic of entry into the Labor Party under the control of the national leadership, democratically elected and including representatives of the minority. The International and we are correct in saying to the IS: You who demand prior acceptance of the discipline of a World Congress held after nine years without discussion or contact refuse to demand of a national minority that it submit to the decisions of the convention of its party. The proof is thereby given that your demanding discipline is only a means of covering politically conservative ends by organizational proceedings. It is against this that we intend to establish a catalyzing agent in the International.

Mexico D.F. August 22, 1947.

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1. Escisión del S.W.P. norteamericano fundada por Max Shachtman en 1940. Caracterizaba a la URSS stalinista como un modo de producción propio, ni capitalista ni socialista, al que llamó «colectivismo burocrático». Shachtman defendía abandonar el marxismo como herramienta de análisis, los textos de Trotski en la polémica consiguiente se publicaron bajo el título *En defensa del marxismo*. El partido cambio su nombre en 1949 convirtiéndose en *Independent Socialist League*.↵

2. Apelativo con el que los cercanos a Trotski en Coyoacán se referían cariñosamente al revolucionario. *Nota del editor* ↩

3. Natalia Sedova estuvo casada con Trotski hasta su muerte. Juntos tuvieron dos hijos . Nunca se refería a él con sus nombres de pluma, sino por su patronímico ruso: Lev Davidovich, o en este caso por las iniciales de éste, L.D. *Nota del editor.*↩↩

4. El *Boletín de la Oposición Rusa* era estrechamente supervisado y elaborado en buena parte por Trotski. Todas las citas de esta carta son de textos muy conocidos escritos por el revolucionario ruso seis años antes. Al utilizarlas, y recordar que se dejaron de citar tras la «Conferencia de emergencia», Natalia Sedova está evidenciando la regresión sufrida por la Internacional bajo el Secretariado Internacional del SWP. *Nota del editor.*↩

5. Como se vería posteriormente, no se trataba de un exceso de susceptibilidad de la sección española. El SI llegaría a plantear abiertamente que la contradicción fundamental del capitalismo de posguerra no era ya entre proletariado y burguesía sino entre EEUU y Rusia. Las consecuencias últimas de esta idea (ingreso en los PCs stalinistas para empujarles a tomar el poder) serían defendidas abiertamente por Michel Raptis -Pablo- en 1953. *Nota del editor.*↩

6. La sección española publicó una crítica en extenso de este manifiesto redactada por Benjamin Péret y titulada *El manifiesto de los exegetas*. *Nota del editor*↩

7. At the emergency conference of 1940 Comrade Munis representing =: Spain was authorized to represent Mexico, Argentina, and Chile on the recommendation of L.D. (*Note by the authors in the original text*)↩