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THE LIFE OF GERMAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

Below we print the English translation of a report by a former prisoner in a German jail who was recently able to leave Germany.

1. Preliminary Detention: Because of chronic over-crowding, it is impossible for the jails to provide separate cells for prisoners, except in especially important instances, e.g., for important functionaries. Solitary cells are usually reserved for the purpose of rendering "noiseless" the "work-outs" given the prisoners; these range from nightly third degrees, through subtle torment (e.g., offering salted food and forbidding water), to all manner of bodily and spiritual torture. These tortures have by no means lately been abandoned. The difference between the practice of the regime in earlier days and in recent months is that the use of torture is no longer haphazard but is methodically organized. Diligent Kommissars exchange suggestions for tactics to be used on various types of prisoners and arrive at unbelievably interesting results. In many instances, notably among the best "politicals," the jailers have found that punishment and force simply harden the prisoner and make the eliciting of further information impossible (as long as the prisoner is rational). And because the object of the torture is not simply sadistic exercise but the eliciting of a maximum, comprehensive statement, physical torture is frequently abandoned, especially when a point has already been reached from which further confession can be pursued and developed. Often purely psychological instrumentalities for exerting pressure bring better results (e.g., arrest of innocent relatives, denial of the right to receive letters or visitors, denial of the privilege of reading, deprivation of relaxation time).

Until the end of the most important investigation, the prisoner is usually kept as completely isolated as possible, especially from his "accomplices." In the larger jails, however, "politicals" are kept together; they quickly exchange tales of their experiences and warn each other against spies. (The spies associate intimately with the other prisoners, brag about their "revolutionary work," and attempt to pump "admissions" from their associates. They return from their "interrogations" with smuggled cigarettes, chocolate and other things with which to buy themselves into the good graces of other prisoners). He who maintains a wary attitude in respect to unfamiliar neighbors, speaking little of his own "deeds" and spending his time in political discussion, will be rewarded in (mostly bad!) experience.

Conversations deal mostly with experiences before and during the "interrogations;" interest in general, especially theoretical, questions tends to diminish.

Aside from the early period of the harrassing "interrogations," the tension of waiting for newcomers, confrontations, etc., life in a jail is relatively bearable. For in spite of especially bad meals (because originally it was arranged for a short period), the guard is mostly composed of officials from the "old system," who, as soon as the immediate pressure of the Gestapo lets up, are willing to ease the conditions of the politicals especially. The most

important element is, of course, the relationship with other comrades which is avidly cultivated by word of mouth or through writing, despite the tale-bearing of petty criminals or even of officials.

2. During the period of detention for examination, the political prisoner is handled precisely in the same manner as the criminal. Now an "ordered life" begins with stipulated work. These months of waiting for sentence are the most difficult for many, especially when, as frequently occurs, one is kept in solitary confinement. One has to worry too much about the inevitable mistakes of the trial, and about the preparation for the trial; and above all, his personal insecurity and the fate of his comrades weighs heavily upon the prisoner in isolation. In these cases, there is rarely communication among politicals. Comparison of notes by means of petty attempts at bribery through the medium of certain criminals who clean the floors, serve the food, etc., is usually risky and, if discovered, can effect more harm than the chance is worth.

The hearing itself is in most instances hardly more than the gathering together of all Gestapo records. The judges hardly know the accused. Denial of statements once certified by the prisoner (even if done under duress) is almost always useless. Some of the arresting officers of the Gestapo are always present as witnesses at the trial. The transactions usually take place so as to avoid publicity. Official attorneys act toward their imposed "clients" more like prosecutors, pass unbelievably quickly over the arguments for defense and try to obtain confession. Their pleas usually begin: "My client is guilty; but there are perhaps in this or that factor extenuating circumstances to account for his behavior." Freely chosen defenders are absolutely denied. The sentence cannot be appealed to a higher court and is immediately effective.

3. After the trial, even in cases where the punishment is severe, an easing of the jail atmosphere is noticeable. The psychological pressure of uncertainty lets up; solitary confinement and isolation usually stop. Only long-term prisoners, hardened to jail routine, would be able to stand as much as three years in solitary without interruption. Very often the jail doctor orders an interruption in solitary confinement when signs of psychic disorder appear.

In general, the release from solitary and consequent association with other prisoners, constitutes in itself a betterment of conditions, at least offering a diversion from brooding. In the long run, it is only an exceptionally strong-willed, powerful individual, with highly diversified interests, who can work in isolation ten hours a day at a monotonous occupation without becoming spiritually dulled. One is thrown upon his own resources entirely for stimulation. Only in exceptional cases are textbooks allowed. In such instances our comrades often prefer to be alone rather than subject themselves to the influences of bad company. Then every moment of free time is utilized for study and even the work period is used for the mental solution of problems outlined in the textbooks.

The smallest scrap of news from outside, culled, for example, from newspapers of the officials or from reports by fellow prisoners engaged in outside work and coming into contact with "free" workers, spreads like wildfire. Politicals naturally accept outside work with alacrity and since the shortage of rural laborers has become so noticeable, they are no longer kept for work inside the jail. It has been demonstrated that the politicals, through solidarity, maintain order and discipline in their own ranks.

Every work-group of from ten to twelve men has an officer as overseer. In addition there is a foreman sent by the firm for which the work is being done. Especially in the case of politicals there is a careful guard against the establishment of illegal relations with the outside.

Despite careful supervision, the "outside workers" always bring fresh life into the jail and are proud of being able to supply news to their comrades "inside," along with a few pennies saved out of the increased wage paid them for the more arduous outside work.

A prisoner is allowed to write one letter every two months from the penitentiary and to have one ten-minute visit every three months. These "privileges," as well as letters from the outside, are great events, shared in by all comrades; every bit of news is immediately relayed about the jail. There are fairly accurate reports on regulations in the different institutions, which can be very diverse, depending upon the management. For instance, in certain places the "politicals" are absolutely separated from the criminals in order that the latter may not be "infected;" the treatment of politicals is usually worse under these circumstances, their food more meager, their work more distasteful, their quarters more noxious, etc. The modern conception is that it is better for the general life of the institution to abolish separation of prisoners into categories, in order to weaken the unity of the politicals by incessant spying on the part of the criminal prisoners. The close association of politicals is extremely difficult, aside from the spying, for political conversations are strictly forbidden and every reported word leads with certainty to punishment or the concentration camp. One is forced, therefore, to select one's companions from among those with the most reliable characters; from this category must be excluded the higher functionaries of the Stalinists, since even on the outside these people denounce oppositionists as "traitors" to the state institutions. These "notables" use the prison regulation against political conversation as a pretext to forbid association on the part of their followers with oppositionists whose ideas might harm their loyal sheep. Among the best elements this warning against association often works in reverse; it brings sharpened interest and eagerness for discussion. One usually begins with concrete, personal experiences, like a criticism of stupid, illegal methods of work which has entailed a great loss of members; reinstitution of the Russian "Paragraph 218," etc.; in order through these gradually to approach fundamental questions. For, among many, purely theoretical interest tends in time to diminish and many become unpolitical,

either because of outer pressure or of inner laziness. Only a few pursue political problems out of their own intellectual urge.

Although numerically the C.P. is most strongly represented among the politicals, our comrades are everywhere among the most politically active and clear-thinking; and where they work astutely have a relatively great influence, despite substantial opposition -- under pressure of the jail system, every Stalinite name known to the masses has a double influence. Our comrades engage in a form of pedagogic exercise to be carried on inside over an extended period. To effect the gradual victory of our ideas in the minds of a few, particularly under such especially difficult circumstances, is a task which can bring a rich reward. If one has the rare pleasure of working with other comrades at the task of winning worth-while sympathizers to our views, elaborating methods, charting progress and apportioning the work, then each small accomplishment can be justifiably looked upon with pride.

One on the outside has no conception of the problems discussed inside by the really interested comrades. Not only the latest Stalinist change of line and its consequences, but also theoretical and actual problems of our movement. Frequently those inside sense with sharpened intuition the difficulties and matters for argument confronting their comrades outside, discuss those matters, make prognoses, and formulate political attitudes. When a prognosis thus made is later substantiated by a letter from the outside, one is proudly assured that the "officers" of our cadres are equipped to arrive at decisions independent of "orders" from above.

In this spirit our imprisoned comrades, deeply moved by the death of the Old Man, express their gratefulness for his priceless teachings, left to us and future generations as tools with which to build. They caution against the convenient argument that the Old Man was prevented by sentimentality from admitting that the achievements of October, won with his help, have been lost. Throughout the time of the Finnish war the comrades stood staunchly behind the slogan of the defense of the Soviet Union, as they had after the Stalin-Hitler pact and the invasion of Poland. They believe that those inside do not have their vision blurred by the propaganda machine of the bourgeoisie and therefore are able to perceive fundamentals with greater clarity than some of those outside in contact with the class enemy. Although the isolation of those inside produces the danger of their arriving at conclusions disconnected from events in an alien world, still the intense discussion inside and the correspondence from the outside act as correctives. Perhaps some time we shall enjoy the fruit of this correspondence, penetrating the double censorship of jail and state, to sustain and inspire those working inside who in turn reinforce and enrich their meaning. It is a small contribution to the preparation of the German and international revolutions.

4. Prior to the expiration of the penal term of a political, the administration of the institution must submit a written report to the

Gestapo concerning the tendencies and political attitude of the prisoner. The basis of these reports consists of summaries of "conversations" conducted by the jailers at regular intervals throughout the detention period. These are amplified by the statements of certain spies and the reports of the jail officials. Basing itself on these reports, as well as upon the general behavior of the comrade after his arrest (during the interrogation and before the court) and upon his earlier revolutionary activity, the Gestapo decides whether to free him at the end of his term or to detain him longer. Usually at least a declaration is demanded, in which the prisoner promises to abstain from future revolutionary activity. Whoever refuses to sign such a declaration (e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses) must reckon with the concentration camp. Usually, after the conclusion of his sentence, the released prisoner has to face new hearings at which pointers for further trials are gathered, with new arrests and the rolling up of old, forgotten items. So it may happen that, years after acts were committed, new arrests can be suggested by the review of the record of a released prisoner, involving comrades who had long considered themselves safe. Fortunately the bad consequences of such declarations made by released comrades can be avoided because of the general acquaintance with the methods of the Gestapo; the comrades are shrewd and prepared.

Our knowledge of life within the concentration camps is most meager. For their inmates do not come out so easily and those who have been only temporarily "entertained" there are acquainted with conditions only as exceptions. The state cannot maintain a steadily increasing number of persons for any great length of time; it must engage them in productive activity in order to produce a value more than covering the cost of their detention. The prisoners are therefore used in inside and outside work, especially in types of labor necessary to the conduct of the war: construction of buildings, improvement of the land, etc.

The inmates can write nothing to those outside concerning their work, since the censorship and rules in concentration camps are much more rigid than in ordinary jails. Letters are regulated even as to the number of lines and are harshly withheld if they do not comply exactly with the rules. That is why we have a livelier and more intensive correspondence with our comrades in the jails than in the concentration camps. At least the concentration camp inmates have the opportunity to see daily newspapers, and the weekly paper The Lighthouse, published for all German penal institutions, can be bought out of the prisoners' wages. This sheet contains brief reviews in catch-word style, of the most important events of the week (according to the lights of the editor!) as well as details of the long speeches of statesmen.

The main difference between concentration camps and jails is the composition of the body of inmates (in the concentration camps mostly qualified "politicals") and of the guard: in the jails most of the old staffs of officers are maintained, with occasional removals and replacements but with new management and changed rules and under the control of reliable superior officers. In concentra-

tion camps there are also SS-guards, frequently sifted and sorted, since they become occasionally infected and decomposed. Neither the politically unstable nor the persistently sadistic elements can be constantly used over a long period, because the hard work required of the inmates could not be realized in some cases due to mistreatment, deaths, etc. Without exception, the concentration camps swarm with spies, as well as provocateurs who, for instance, on the occasion of the mass reception of radio addresses or appeals, will utter revolutionary expressions, observing and reporting the reactions of the comrades.

The head of the concentration camp is required to submit, at least quarterly, regular political reports on the inmates. In connection with these, they circulate all sorts of veiled promises of release, or of amnesty, and throw out a variety of demoralizing rumors. Despite certain "advantages" to be found in the concentration camps (subscriptions to newspapers, the purchase of supplementary food items) there is greater pressure upon the nervous system of the inmate, because of the complete isolation from the outside world (prohibition of visitors and censorship of letters) and the uncertain perspective of a problematic release in the distant future. The knowledge that the desired goal of every inmate, freedom, can be attained only through the revolution should lessen the danger of becoming unpolitical in the concentration camp. But political education in the concentration camp goes contrary to the official goal -- not toward the development of good citizens; the concentration camp is in reality the high school of the revolution for our best forces.

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NEWS FROM FRANCE

The conditions now prevailing in Europe oblige us to be extremely cautious in our news reports. On the whole the status of our organization in France is very satisfactory. The I.E.C. is in regular contact with the regional leadership of the unoccupied zone, which in turn is in regular contact with the occupied zone, Belgium, Holland, and other European countries. The French organization has groups in all the important cities of the unoccupied zone. These groups are essentially working class in composition and many of our militants have a considerable influence in the factories and in what remains of the trade unions. Factory papers and pamphlets are published regularly. The groups receive La Verite, published abroad, which has been very well received by the French comrades. The groups of the unoccupied zone held a regional conference on June 1 and 2nd, at which the Paris group was also represented. These and a series of resolutions were adopted. Their evaluation of the situation in France coincides with that of the I.E.C. The resolution on the U.S.S.R. (adopted before the Russo-German war) is completely for defense of the U.S.S.R. and their evaluation of the relations between

Hitler and Stalin is identical with ours. Communications received since the outbreak of the war against the U.S.S.R. confirm that the organization is irreconcilably for defense of the U.S.S.R.

In the occupied zone, the organization consists of several groups, the principal one being that of Paris. The composition of this group is very different from that of the organization in the unoccupied zone. The group has increased numerically with great rapidity in the last few months, but it does seem that this was achieved at the expense of quality: A large quantity of new elements, less stable, young, quite often students, has entered the group. A tendency favoring the victory of England, -- as a means of overthrowing the Nazis, -- sprouted, and even succeeded, -- in May, -- in obtaining a majority within the group. We must not forget that the political situation in Paris, where the oppressor is immediately present, is quite different from that in the unoccupied zone. A political clarification is now taking place in order to establish the unity of the Paris group on the basis of the principle of the Fourth International.

August 1, 1941

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WHERE ARE WE?

Where are we? (Resolution on the international situation presented by the Regional Committee of the Free Zone to the Second Regional Conference held June 1 and 2nd of 1941).

[Reprinted from the Monthly Bulletin of the Fourth International (Free Zone), N. 4, May 15, 1941]

1. The present situation of the capitalist regime

The war is revealing the essential internal contradictions of capitalism, namely, the growing disproportion between the productive forces and the market possibilities, a disproportion which imposes the obligation on the imperialists of looking for and conquering new markets. But territories without industry are limited in extent (almost all of Africa and Asia, and part of South America) and the imperialists must contend with each other for them periodically, -- and this is armed conflict. The first World War did not resolve any of these fundamental problems of economic equilibrium in any way. Or more exactly, it was decided, and then only in part, only in favor of the Franco-Anglo-Saxon bloc. The second World War, the inevitable product of the Versailles "peace" and foreseen by the Marxists, cannot, any more than the former one, bring a lasting or general solution to this problem.

(a) Fascism and economic autarchy. Fascism, born of the conditions created in the vanquished countries (Germany) or in the im-

poverished relatives of the victors (Italy), has been unable to find a remedy for this growing economic disease, in spite of the fact that it succeeded temporarily in stifling the visible signs of the class struggle.

Planned economy has been able to create an apparent upsurge in capitalism (absorption of unemployment, increase in production), but in the last analysis it only tends to prepare war, and by virtue of this is merely a war economy anticipated. Planning does not enter into any of the various systems of planned economy as a progressive factor, but as a preparation for the mass destruction of the economic forces.

The fascist state is not independent of the ruling class in a capitalist economy. The purpose of all restraints laid on liberal economy is the safekeeping of the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole and the increase of its possibilities of aggression against rival imperialism.

Economic autarchy has its source in the absence of colonial markets and the lack of raw materials; thus it is the expression of the opposition between rich imperialists and poor ones. But economic autarchy (which, however, is never integral) is not sufficient to define fascism. Italy was fascist before being self-sustaining. Spain is fascist and it is not even progressing toward a self-sustaining economy. The example of this last country shows us very well that fascism can be directed exclusively against the working class. That it can be an excellent instrument of expansion and of struggle against rival imperialism, we do not doubt (thus Spain has already formulated her "demands"). But it is above all a war machine directed against the proletariat.

The external market of the victor in this war will be mostly colonial or semi-colonial countries, in need of liberation. This factor and the progress of proletarian class consciousness -- these are the two political factors which will prevent the voluntary relaxation of the fascist grasp and the even partial return of fascism to liberal anarchy.

(b) Development of the war. The question is not for us to enter into strategical considerations, but to examine the war briefly according to the formation of the camps and of their satellites on the basis of economic rivalries.

(1) Generally speaking it is the countries without colonies which are grouped around the Axis bloc. They have for satellites some small states of central and eastern Europe, largely dependent on German industry. The "rich" are in the Anglo-American camp which also included also France before her defeat. The first camp calls itself "anti-capitalist" and is in reality anti-British. The second one calls itself "democratic" and aims at nothing but defending its colonial empires.

(2) The neutral countries, including the U.S.S.R., or the countries already crushed by one camp are obliged to choose: if they don't they are at the mercy of an armed invasion.

(3) The colonial or semi-colonial countries, into which the war is steadily extending almost all show movements of national independence, but at the same time translate the interests of one or the other of the two great rival camps.

(4) The munition makers' International, although less visible than in 1914, reaps benefits from both sides. As for the church, it can only continue placing its bets on both sides.

(5) The military result of the conflict is still in doubt, in spite of the victories of the axis. The decisive part is not played yet. The axis may achieve a victory against England before the United States becomes completely involved in the struggle. The conflict between Germany (that is, Europe) and the U. S. would only be postponed. What seems most likely to us is that in the next few months the war will spread over the whole world and that we will have to consider its development on the light of the new attitude of United States, of Japan, and of U.S.S.R. The capitalist world has entered in a stage of permanent and generalized war. It is digging its own grave.

(6) To finish this short expose let us give an economical definition of the American "pacifist" and isolationist. They express a minority tendency in the bourgeoisie, which thinks that the United States can without losing too much "fall back" on the American continent and that there is more to lose than to win by fighting with Germany for European African and near-Eastern markets. But isolationism becomes reticent when the question arises of the Asiatic markets (Phillipines, China, Dutch Indies.)

(c) The Situation in France. We will not speak again of the so-called "defeatism" of the French bourgeoisie in the war which has just been finished. The betrayals, however numerous they may have been, cannot be confused with defeatism. They were only the logical consequence of a manifest and crushing inferiority of the French military machine in comparison to the German one. However, if the French bourgeoisie has not "wanted" the defeat, it has known how to use it remarkably well as a point of departure for the liquidation of the democratic regime.

The totalitarian reaction of Petain, which is nothing but the transitory government of an occupied country, cannot even follow the tempo of the development of war. Resisting the invader a bit more after the British success in Africa, the Vichy government, since the Balkan events, once again incline strongly toward Germany. Let us not forget, however, that the French bourgeoisie is almost unanimous in wishing a British victory. In counting on a German victory, it is only with bitterness that it bows to the policy of collaboration, in order to save what can be saved. Even the only serious fascist-like party with some kind of a basis, the party of La Rague, is pro-British.

Doriot, who does not stop denouncing the Anglophilism of the former is satisfied with being "Petainist" and understands very well that the Deat-Laval clique, openly pro-German, has no echo whatsoever in the country. Deat-Laval are nothing but careerist politicians devoted to nazism. They could not politically survive a German defeat.

The fascists in France, very divided, lack the necessary mass basis. Moreover, the invader could not tolerate a fascist government whose policy of "awakening" could only have a too open form of revenge.

2. Stalinism and the Subjective Conditions of the Revolution

(a) The U.S.S.R. and the Imperialisms

(1) A serious analysis of Stalinite policies necessarily has as a point of departure the diagnosis of the social and political motivations which determine the line, including all the abrupt shifts, of Russian policy during the last few years. The "Russian enigma" contains nothing enigmatic for the Marxist observer: the Russo-German agreement, the diplomatic prelude to the second imperialist world war, was foreseen by the Fourth International. Everything that was relevant in the summer of 1939 is even more valuable today, after the military successes of the Axis.

All the "current" explanations of Russian policy have one character in common: they remain on the surface of the problem. Some of them—our own ranks have a few timid adherents of this tendency -- speak of a neo-Russian imperialism, which they interpret as a continuation of the traditional expansionism of Tsarism, with a fixed goal: the Straits, Iran, and, by way of Finland, an outlet to the Atlantic. In another version there is an explanation of Stalin's abandonment of internationalism by "pan-Slavism," that hoary spectre of pre-war political romanticism; thirdly a large portion of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians are still looking for Lenin's revolutionary spirit in Stalin's manouvers, discovering anemic parallels between the famous sealed train of 1917 and Molotov's special train in 1940, between the Polish campaign of 1920 and the occupation of Eastern Poland in September, 1939. Finally, a group of ex-communists considers the similarity of repressive methods in Germany and Russia a proof of a structural identity, views the Russo-German agreement as a definitive bloc and in this way arrives at the same conclusions as the bourgeois ideologists who take seriously the noisy anti-capitalism of the Nazis.

All these theoreticians remain incapable of "unveiling" the secrets of the politics of war. This is so either because they are nursing the sterile hope of seeing Stalin leap out one day as a "doux ox machina" to dissipate the fascist nightmare, or because they hate this same Stalin in whom they think they see Lenin's follower and accept Hitler as a dissipator of the proletarian nightmare. Sinning by the same fault, all the predictions of these schools have the common fate of being rapidly contradicted by the facts.

On several occasions the "pan-slavists" have proclaimed the break up of the pact on the basis of events in the Balkans. According to them Stalin must at all costs prevent the domination of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia by Germany. And, apart from panslavism, wouldn't Hitler's possession of the mouth of the Danube be a constant menace to the Crimea and the Baku wells?

As for the theoreticians of "Russian imperialism," they also foresee a break up daily, yesterday about Rumania, today about Turkey. Perhaps tomorrow it will be about Finland again, because there are already German soldiers in Finland. And those who consider Stalin the leader of the world revolution express the same hope.

The inventors of the "new bureaucratic system," whose two protagonists would be nazism and Stalinism, think quite differently. The basic unity between these two systems is something historically established for them: they are little concerned with all those little signs which already allow a glimpse of the conflict being generated between Russia and Germany. Whereas some see too much, the others are blind.

And the Stalinites themselves? They explain nothing and foresee nothing. Everything done by Stalin is well done. And they are preparing themselves to celebrate as a great victory of the "Father of Peoples" the day Hitler arrives in Bagdad because Stalin may have, once again, a narrow, or even wide, strip of northern Persia as compensation.

(2) The present Russian policy is the consequence of all the faults and betrayals of the great organizer of defeats. But it is also the result of a cold calculation, of a comparison of Russian and German war potentials. Stalin is not Daladier. He has a greater knowledge of political and military data. Opportunistic, like all Stalinite policies, that of today is dictated primarily by fear. The danger of a German attack towards the East explains everything. The "wise policy of peace" has aggrandized Russia with vast territories, but at the same time it has given Hitler a common frontier of several hundreds of miles, open to the motorized columns of the Fuhrer whenever he gives the order to attack. In the Russo-German alliance there is -- after what took place in the Balkans it is indisputable -- one strong and one weak partner. It is Hitler who is dictating Stalin's policy today. And only imbeciles can believe that the Russo-Japanese agreement is directed against Germany.

The only attempt on Stalin's part to influence recent events was his pact of friendship with Yugoslavia. But this pact was scarcely signed when Yugoslavia no longer existed. Everything that followed was merely an effort to save face. The resentment Vishinsky expressed at the Hungarian Embassy after the occupation of a part of Yugoslavia by the Hungarian army has exactly the same value as the pact with Yugoslavia. That is, none.

And necessarily so! In every military realm the Germans are superior to the Russians. Stalin's sole trump is the factor of space. It is the vast stretches of Russian territory which were Lenin's chief support during the intervention. But "in extremis" Lenin was able to envisage a retreat beyond the Urals in order to save the revolution, in spite of famine, in spite of the lack of arms, because he based himself on the rallying of the peasants and the enthusiasm of the Russian workers, and the aid of the world proletariat. Today the conditions are different. Industrially Russia is infinitely stronger than in 1917-1922, and so is Germany, but the peasants are dissatisfied, the workers are oppressed, the European proletariat is beaten. Scarcity alone remains.

Stalin's sole support is the bureaucracy. But in its nature this is ready for treachery, the day the power is broken. Once beaten at Moscow no retreat beyond the Urals will be possible; the Bonapartist regime cannot survive military defeats.

Stalin is incapable of conducting a revolutionary war. This seems to us the essential lesson of the Finnish war. We witnessed, not the internal military decomposition of Finland, but the unity of the Finnish people against the "invader." We saw a Russian army, valiant to be sure, but without a trace of the spirit that inspired the red army of the heroic epoch. Stalin knows all of this. And this is the cause of all the waywardness and concessions which characterized the last congress of the Russian party.

(3) The Soviet Union is entering the most critical phase of its existence. Seventeen years of the Stalinite regime have prepared a situation in which the imperialist encirclement is complete, the world proletariat disoriented, the revolutionary party liquidated, and the internal forces compromised. It is not merely the Ukraine, the oil, the immense area for exploitation which are pushing German imperialism into an attack on Russia at the right moment. In spite of Stalin and his conquests, the U.S.S.R. remains an anti-imperialist country, closed to penetration by foreign capital; it represents the survival, in a distorted and caricatured form, of the October Revolution. It is both impossible and unnecessary to specify the moment of attack. Everything depends on international developments. A Japanese-American conflict might prolong the delay, but the initiative will come from the German side, to the extent that the Nazi army remains intact. Hitler will fix the day for breaking up an agreement that has performed its function. And that day will also bring the rupture of the Russo-Japanese agreement.

In those circumstances the responsibility of the vanguard becomes enormous. The Bonapartist regime has seriously compromised the prestige of the U.S.S.R., and the practical liquidation of the Comintern deprives the Union of its sole faithful ally: the world proletariat. The workers are beginning to lose interest in the fate of Soviet Russia, and even demonstrate a certain enmity towards it. This danger is not counter-balanced by the tractability of the Stalinites, whose devotion rests on a lie: the lie of a strong and a socialist state. This fiction, which the advance of the German

army will unveil one day, will have as an inevitable consequence the total paralysis of those forces which at present are still pro-Stalin, and an inconceivable confusion will seize hold of what remains of the C.P.

The only ones capable of action will be those who are defending in the Soviet Union not a bloodstained regime corrupted to the marrow, but the state born of the proletarian revolution, and the survivals of this revolution. The irreconcilable enemies of Stalin and of his bureaucracy will be the only sure defenders of the U.S.S.R. Nothing would be more short-sighted on our part than a sort of satisfaction at the proclamation of a military defeat of the U.S.S.R. A German victory would mean the restoration of capitalism in Russia -- and let us repeat it: fascism is nothing but the terrorist dictatorship of finance capital -- and everything would have to be begun over again.

(b) The Working Class Movement.

(1) The collapse of the working class movement at the beginning of the first World War astounded even revolutionaries as experienced as the Russian Bolsheviks. This time we have the theoretical advantage of not rocking ourselves to sleep with any illusions concerning the great workers' parties. The treachery of the Second International has been complete since 1914. Very much alive as huge electoral and bureaucratic machines, always maintained by a strong section of the proletariat, the social-democratic parties were dead as socialist workers' parties. In the democratic countries they were all bound up intimately with the bourgeoisie, entered the Sacred Alliance (Union Sacree) the same day war was declared, and, as in England, played a preponderant role in the political organization. In small neutral countries they were found, together with their bourgeoisie, in the camp of a pacifism devoid of perspective, and in its consequences pro-German, as was every pacifism in that war. And at the moment of capitulation before German fascism they presented themselves, still together with their bourgeoisie, as the best "collaborationists." The Staunings in Denmark, the De Mans in Belgium and the Paul Faures in France are merely the consistent leaders of governmental social-democracy.

Of a different character, but none the less definitive, is the bankruptcy of the Communist International. Instruments of Russian foreign policy more than ever, the Stalinites passed abruptly from anti-fascist patriotism and jacobinite war-mongering over to pseudo-revolutionary pacifism. After having replaced the dictatorship of the proletariat in their programs with democratic governments (new style), they exchanged the slogan of "civil war" for that of "immediate peace." The People's Front was invented in an attempt to appease the bourgeois democracies in the west. Stalinite pacifism is only the continuation of the Russo-German agreement in the realm of the workers' movement. Hitler is the one served by peace offers in his war policies. And the precise meaning of a Hitlerite peace becomes clear in a country "pacified" by the Nazis.

The centrist groups and parties were never capable of going against the current in any belligerent country, of resisting the nationalist pressure of the bourgeoisie as expressed by anti-fascism, Anglophilia, etc., or the pacifist pressure of the petty bourgeoisie. Their organizations were dispersed far before police repression had the time to break them. An extensive chapter of the vanguard's recent history is closed. Orientation towards the centrist groups has shown itself to be a tactical error.

(c) Franco.

The French C.P. was clearly anti-British during the first months of the war. After the French defeat this attitude even assumed a pro-German character. It was impossible to pick out a single attack against the occupying authorities in the illegal Stalinist press. For some months now the official slogan is: "Neither for England nor for Germany." With this slogan the C.P. gives itself an appearance of independence again as compared to antagonist blocs.

Nevertheless the French C.P. remains an incontestable power, with control of effective means in illegality and of militants whose activity is only equalled by their blindness. Its propaganda, revolving around anti-Potainism, does no more than counsel the bourgeoisie on economic reforms to put into effect (liberty of commerce between zones and departments, reduction of profits for intermediaries, etc. . .), formulate a few demands and resume the hoary terminology of the People's Front (Cagoulards, 200 families, etc.) However, the Anglophile spirit of the masses is also reflected in the C.P.

French social-democracy has disappeared as a party. A few personalities remain. Blum's tendency is confused with Gaullism. The Spinasse-Paul Faure team ("L'Effort") marks the open passage into the bourgeois camp.

As for the P.S.O.P. people, their principal task seems to be flight. But we have no doubt that a few individuals among them may be integrated with the vanguard.

3. The Situation in the Vanguard

The Fourth International rests fundamentally on those rare militants who have not forgotten the basic principles of Marxism, who have not been terrified by repression, and whom the shipwreck of the workers' parties has not convinced of a shipwreck of Marxism itself. Accordingly, it needs a firm theoretic base, the sole guarantee of a stable revolutionary regrouping, and a serious and disciplined activity from each one of its members. Even in our ranks there are some who think that the Fourth International has not met the test of the present war and that it would be useful to discuss the recognition of its eventual failure. We do not think so.

In spite of shameful deviations and some spectacular betrayals the majority of the comrades in the parties officially based on the Fourth International have regrouped themselves and are carrying on the struggle on the unchanged foundations of the Bolshevik-Leninist program.

We have not stopped and we shall not stop denouncing the traitors in our ranks, expelling our shoddy material and vigorously fighting revisionist attempts.

(a) The more or less fascizing, Germanophile, and governmental tendency of the renegade Rous has been studied and liquidated from the moment of its inception by our Parisian comrades. It is a betrayal pure and simple. Under the guise of "assimilating" fascism, an inevitable stage in capitalism, the Rous group has no other object than to be assimilated by fascism.

(b) The tendency referred to as "Anglophile" is something else. It is very dangerous for us, because it may lead its activities even within our own organization. The Anglophiles do not repudiate the principle of the class struggle, but in certain cases demand that it be shelved. This was the point of departure. We shall not go back to the analysis of the causes of these deviations: if the occupation plays its part in it, the largest part goes back in any case to our organizational weakness.

As far as we can judge by the meager documentation received from our comrades in Paris, the political position of the latter has kept on deteriorating, from the famous "Message to the English workers" down to Nos. 7 and 8 of the Parisian "Verite." These last are politically infamous. From No. 9 on the tone changes, with an abruptness we cannot explain very well just now but which reassures us somewhat anyhow. The Anglophilia is disappearing. Does this mean that the anglophile tendency no longer exists in our Parisian region?

As a whole the political line remains very hesitant.

In any case we may observe that the Anglophile tendency is not one -- by no means -- and that among them the gamut runs from those for whom "our" colonial empire is almost sacrosanct to those for whom the strike movement in the U.S. is something ecstatic. But let us also recall for the sake of any philistines outside that the Anglophile tendency in the unoccupied zone constitutes an infinitesimal minority in our ranks, a minority whose effective forces are steadily diminishing.

The wave of strikes in the U.S. disintegrated the revisionist core somewhat. Some of them, the majority, were embarrassed, reticent, and would have liked to avoid the subject, perhaps by eliminating it. The others, who are sportsmen, attacked it directly, and these themselves have split up into two groups: those who quibbled: "these are political strikes run by the Stalinites, poisoned by Nazi

provocateurs. We must analyze them carefully, in the best of cases, and only support them with the greatest caution." And then there were those who saw in the strikes the only proletarian opposition to war for years.

With respect to our orthodoxy, which they called rigid, sectarian, and impotent, the "Anglophiles" tried to make their policy appear "realistic." But as foreseen, these are the people with the folded arms. Every proletarian upheaval finds them impotent, in need of explanations and slogans. One may ask under these conditions what content can rest in the title of "vanguard" they still claim to be adorned by. The events of the latest months have created one impasse for the Anglophiles: what is to be thought of the insurrectionary Iraqi movement with a nationalist character? But nevertheless these comrades were for the support of "Greek independence" to the limit.

Let us resume: the "Anglophiles" deny the very foundations of Marxism, and repudiate the essential elements of Leninism. The party -- and the Fourth -- must ideologically liquidate such a deviation. This is what the slow and patient work of clarification of the last few months has led to.

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INDIA

From a letter from India, dated March, 1941:

I should like to say that I am now -- as before -- 100% in support of your policy and ideas. The policy of Messrs. Burnham, Shachtman, Sherman Stanley and Abern is obviously wrong on each of the disputed issues. . . Stanley's ideas of the business in the Indian empire, and especially about Ceylon, have to be thoroughly scrutinized. The opinions he enunciated here were fundamentally wrong. Neither the aristocratic planters of Ceylon, nor the stockbrokers of Calcutta are suitable representatives for our business in India.

(Editor's note: Sherman Stanley made a trip to India sometime ago and the writer of this letter had the opportunity to speak with him directly).

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CHILE

We reproduce below a section of a report on the unification congress of the P.O.R. and the P.O.I., which took place in the middle of June. The continuation of the report and the documents adopted at the congress will be published in the next issue of the International Bulletin. The report reproduced below was sent to us by T.

Phelan, a member of the S.W.P. who transmitted to the congress the greetings from the I.E.C.

On June 13, inaugural session. Opening speech by chairman of unification negotiation committee, M. of the P.O.R., chairman of the meeting, rapidly sketched unity negotiations. S., speaking in name of the P.O.L., spoke with brevity, leaving principal speech to the P.O.R. majority leader, stressing immense importance of successful conclusion of unity by congress. The next speaker was the leader of the Northern Chilean left wing of the Partido socialista de trabajadores (left-reformist split-off from the Chilean Socialist Party, now in crisis, left-wing tending toward us, right wing pulling for re-entry into the S.P.) Arriving just at moment of congress opening, he brought a declaration from leaders of three P.S.T. branches in mining North, breaking with the P.S.T. and applying for membership in the new P.O.R. He spoke well, received an ovation. Main speech was then made by H., secretary of the P.O.R. A synthesis of the P.O.R. congress resolutions and a rapid survey of the situation and perspectives, it was politically sound, well-documented, effectively delivered and very well received. Your delegate completed the program of speakers with the speech of greetings.

On June 14, second session. After discussion on the question of under what headings to discuss certain subjects, agenda was drawn up as follows:

1. International political resolution
2. National political thesis
3. Trade-union resolution
4. Program of action
5. Press
6. Party organization: new constitution and finances
7. Election of a new joint executive committee

The discussion on the international political resolution was brief. Several speakers expressed the sentiments of the unanimity of the delegates that the programmatic international documents of the Fourth International had retained complete validity and timeliness; and that the Chilean section was in complete agreement with them, with neither changes nor additions to suggest. A motion was made and carried unanimously that a commission of three draft a brief strong reaffirmation of the basic international documents of the Fourth International. A suggestion was offered that, in view of the threatening tension reported in the bourgeois press between Germany and the Soviet Union, it would be advisable, in addition to a general reaffirmation of the basic documents, to add a brief but specific and forceful reaffirmation of our position of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union. This suggestion, presented as a motion, was unanimously adopted. The international resolution, drawn up by the committee, was presented to the congress at the opening of the Sunday session and unanimously adopted.

On the national political thesis, a draft version was presented, written by H. and officially presented by the P.O.R. This was the

document which aroused the greatest discussion, the period of discussion extending all through the Saturday and well into the Sunday session. It was decided to subdivide the discussion into four main heads: (1) economic analysis, (2) economic perspectives, (3) role of the Chilean political parties, (4) role and program of activity of the P.O.R.

After some discussion of the accuracy of the thesis's reference to a beginning boom in the nitrate and copper industries caused by war orders, the discussion, agreeing to the fact, moved to the political effects predictable thereon, a small minority contending that such a situation would permit a momentary pacification in the economic class struggle in, at least, those regions. The general conclusion of the thesis was, however, sustained. On the thesis's description of the tendency of Chile to become a Yankee "protectorate," there was some argument over the Chilean bourgeoisie's present sharp division in international orientation and a tendency to balance between the two imperialist camps. This point, however, was only lightly treated at this stage of the discussion, but formed the subject of a full-dress debate on the whole question of national liberation and the degree to which the national bourgeoisie could play a semi-independent role, during the Sunday session. There was considerable discussion on the thesis's reference to the blockade-caused stimulation of light and conversion industries. The fact itself was questioned by a few speakers; but statistics quoted from the government's annual report on Chilean economy by H. settled the point. Other speakers then discussed, but inconclusively, the anti-imperialist nature of further development of the exchange of industrial products among the semi-colonial countries of South America. Some rather startling statistics were adduced concerning the growth of such trade; but no one went so far as to suggest that its specific gravity was determinant within the whole economy, or that it was a serious threat to Yankee imperialism. The thesis's reference to the stratification of new industrial enterprise and industrial finance, in close conjunction with Yankee loans to the government, also gave rise to considerable discussion. The fact itself, doubted, was again demonstrated by H. and others from statistics. Other explanations of the significance of this development were suggested, but the majority approved the explanation of the thesis.

The discussion, which up to this point, had been principally informative and educational in nature, turned polemic with question of the role of the political parties, especially that of the radicals. Midway in the discussion it was moved and voted that the thesis, whether or not correct in general, was inadequate and insufficiently specific on this point, and its author was instructed to develop it in detail in accordance with the subsequent discussion, with greater attention to the parties not treated in the original thesis. A surprisingly long time was spent by the majority speakers in answering a delegate who drew a long and interesting parallel between the development of Mussolini and his wing of the Italian socialists and the development of the Chilean socialist leaders and party, and wished to have the thesis record that it was from this

quarter, rather than from the present fascist groups that the fascist danger in Chile would come. His points, though in the opinion of this observer and the congress majority false, were interesting, principally because of the tendency of the Chilean socialist party to insist in its present propaganda on "directed democracy" and certain proposals suggestive of corporatism.

The discussion on the situation within the radical party was particularly long and detailed. All the points in the thesis were questioned and examined. In general, the thesis's definitions and predictions were approved; but the writer of the thesis was instructed to clarify and amplify. Equally questioned and examined in detail was the thesis's prediction of a right swing in the government and an increase in exploitation and repression, a heterogeneous minority holding in various degrees that the stimulation of the mineral export industries by the war would sufficiently offset the crisis in agropecuary*exports to permit for still considerable time a period of democracy and of relative calm in the field of economic struggle. No definite motion or counter-proposal to the thesis's predictions on this point was made, the argumentation being inconclusive. Your delegate gathered the general impression that the revised thesis would take the argument into account, and be less categorical, while not abandoning the main position. At this point, very late in the Saturday night session, the discussion of the past roles of the political parties reached the question of the P.O.I. and the P.O.R. themselves. H. announced that he had a sub-resolution to present on this subject. It being evident that the discussion would be too lengthy to complete that night, the congress adjourned until Sunday at 9 A.M.

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*agricultural-livestock exports