



**Nahuel Moreno**

**Theses on the  
International  
Problem**

# Nahuel Moreno

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## Foreword

The text we are presenting, “Theses on the International Problem,” was written by Nahuel Moreno and approved by the Central Committee of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Workers Party, POR) on 23 December 1950. It was then edited and distributed as an International Discussion Bulletin in June 1951.

At the time of writing, only five years had lapsed since the end of the Second World War and one year since Mao’s victory in China. The bureaucracy headed by Joseph Stalin in the USSR was taking a leap as a world reference for the mass sectors of the workers and the oppressed. Not only for its decisive action in defeating Hitler and putting an end to Nazi-fascism, beginning with the victory at Stalingrad in February 1943, but also for its control of the countries of Eastern Europe. Due to the presence of the Red Army in these countries, which underpinned the dictatorial power of the communist parties, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie took place, and new bureaucratic workers’ states emerged. East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia made up what was called the “glacis”,<sup>1</sup> since it acted as a kind of defensive wall between the capitalist part of Europe and the western border of the USSR, against possible imperialist attacks. In other words, following the great democratic triumph that meant the defeat of Nazism, the main imperialist powers and the Stalinist bureaucracy, with the Yalta and Potsdam agreements, divided the world into spheres of influence, to stop the socialist revolution.<sup>2</sup> From the Trotskyist perspective, the counterrevolutionary Stalinist conception of “socialism in one country” (proclaimed in 1924) and the theory of permanent revolution were in full dispute.

As Ernest Mandel, who along with Pablo, headed the opportunist sector of the Fourth International since the early 1950s, has said, Moreno “was one of the last representatives of the handful of Trotskyist leading cadres who, after the Second World War, maintained the continuity of Leon Trotsky’s struggle, in difficult circumstances.” This text, based on a deep analysis of the postwar world situation, remains totally faithful and continues the policy of the founding text of the Fourth International in 1938, Trotsky’s *Transitional Program*, setting out the actions that revolutionaries should undertake. As the very text we present concludes: “If Trotskyism fully commits to accompanying and accelerating the experience of the workers, in the face of the all-powerful program, precisely for being the program of the Fourth International, it will become the program of thousands and thousands of exploited workers.”

All notes are by the editors.

**The editors**

July 2025

- 1 **Glacis** was the name given to the esplanade that protected the walls that surrounded medieval castles or early modern fortresses. Churchill popularized the name “Iron Curtain”.
- 2 See “80 Years Ago, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin Divided the World,” in *International Correspondence* No. 54, April 2025, pp. 16 and 17. Published by IWU-FI.

# Theses on the International Problem

## I. Character of the World Crisis of Capitalism

1.– Just as the communists foresaw at the Third Congress of the Third International in 1921, the last world war was indeed a true world war. Instead of covering Europe as the battlefield like in 1914, it covered three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa. As a consequence of the world war the capitalist and imperialist regime is in crisis, which, far from being paralysed, resulted in the following countries or sections of countries coming out from the chain of countries controlled by imperialism: East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, China, North Korea, East Austria, Hungary, Albania, part of Indonesia and the Baltic States. Possibly, international relations may allow for some of these countries or sections of countries to return to the imperialist orbit, as happened with Finland; in any case, this does not diminish the magnitude of the crisis of imperialism.

2.– The world revolutionary process has not had one fundamental centre, like after the last war, Europe, but two decisive centres: Europe and the Far East. This has been one of the reasons for the failure of capitalism and imperialism to regain a general equilibrium or to initiate an offensive on all continents similar to the one unleashed from 1923 onwards. While Western European capitalism was able to recover, strengthen its state and launch everywhere an offensive against the workers, thanks to the support of US imperialism, from 1947 onwards; in Asia the revolutionary crisis has advanced steadily, leading to the triumph of Mao Tse-tung<sup>3</sup> and opening a stage of violent revolutionary crisis and civil war in the whole of the Far East. The centre of the world revolution has shifted from one zone to another, from Europe to Asia, while in Europe imperialism is on the offensive without achieving any decisive victory over the proletariat, in Asia it is on the defensive.

The outstanding characteristic of the epoch opened up by the last war has been the impossibility for imperialism to confine the revolutionary crisis to a single country and the manifest impossibility of launching a general counter-offensive and opening a stage of relative stability.

3.– Out of the revolutionary crisis, a great mass revolutionary International has not yet emerged. This fact, in turn, becomes the greatest obstacle to the development of the world revolution.

Stalinism led the great mass parties in Asia and Europe, except for the English Labour Party, the socialist parties of Northern Europe and some countries of the Glacis, and the movement of Tan Malaka.<sup>4</sup> The general and non-partial revolutionary crisis tests Stalinist monolithism and polarises the currents of these parties based on the class struggle taking place in the countries where the Stalinist parties control the masses. This is the best guarantee of the possibility of the construction of a great revolutionary mass International.

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3 **Mao Tse-tung** (current romanization **Mao Zedong**) (1893-1976) headed the long struggle of the peasant guerrillas led by the Communist Party against the dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek from the 1930s onwards. After Japan's defeat in 1945, the influence of the guerrillas grew steadily. In October 1949, they succeeded in overthrowing Chiang and seized power. In the heat of the revolutionary triumph, progress was made in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and landowners, and China was transformed into a new bureaucratic workers' state. Mao held the reformist Stalinist conceptions of revolution in stages and socialism in one country. He was the supreme leader of the Chinese Communist Party dictatorship until his death.

4 **Tan Malaka** (1897-1949) was a Marxist politician, nationalist, philosopher, and fighter for the independence of Indonesia, a Dutch colony. He studied in his country and also in the Netherlands, was arrested numerous times, and spent most of his life in various exiles. He sought to reconcile communism and Islam. In the 1920s, he joined the Communist Party of Indonesia. He spent a year in Moscow in 1922, participated in the congress of the Third International, and was the most important international reference point for Southeast Asia. He later distanced himself from communism. He participated in the armed struggle initiated by Sukarno in 1945, which achieved Indonesia's independence in 1949. In 1948, he founded the Murba, a party opposed to Sukarno.

## II. The Economic Crisis

4.- The extraordinary revolutionary crisis is based on a general premise: the most general economic crisis of all time. The classical capitalist equilibrium was definitively broken in the First World War; the last one has accelerated the crisis of the bourgeois economic equilibrium.

The social and economic stability that imperialism achieved from 1923 onwards, thanks to the failure of the European, mainly German, revolution, led to the economic crisis of 1929. From this crisis, world capitalism has not been able to re-establish itself; no country in 1938 had managed to significantly exceed its pre-crisis levels of production. The inter-imperialist struggle intensified after the Great Depression. And as production levels increased, the margin of armaments production increased dramatically. That is, without reaching or exceeding the production levels of 1929, capitalism was relatively decreasing the percentage of social labour devoted to the production of means of production and consumption.

The imperialist war was a way of manifesting imperialism's impossibility of advancing the productive forces. The war prevented the outbreak of a violent cyclical economic crisis that was already approaching, because it caused a colossal demand for the means of destruction: armaments and consumer goods for the soldiers. The world war thus brought full employment to almost every country in the world, which allowed the bourgeoisie to make huge profits secured by state purchases but, on the other hand, it brought about a general impoverishment of society as a result of the brutal and useless waste of means of production, of the huge expenditure of the state with the mortgaging of the state and its immediate consequence: inflation. National income underwent an abrupt change with regard to the working classes of society.

The war transformed the inevitable eruption of a violent cyclical crisis into a chronic crisis. Instead of showing all the consequences of the capitalist regime at once, it regulated and postponed them, only to later provoke a violent, delayed crisis: the postwar period.

5.- The postwar period has meant, as we have pointed out, a violent chronic crisis for imperialism. Germany and Japan suffered a colossal loss of their economic potential. Germany also suffered the plunder and destruction of its economic equipment by the victors. The other countries of Western Europe, which suffered the war on their territory, also went through a violent crisis: inflation, the conquests of the workers' movement, strikes, and the loss of overseas and European markets. Russia and the Glacis were in a similar situation: a great destruction and disorganisation of their productive and transport apparatus.

The neutral countries or those that, while intervening in the war, did not fight it on their territory, have used the war to increase their production; among these countries, the USA and Canada are the ones that have increased their production levels the most.

The contradiction between industrial and agricultural production has been accelerated in the postwar period as food production has suffered an extraordinary decline, driving up the price of basic commodities for mass consumption.

The old balance of trade between Europe and the world was completely broken during the war and the postwar period. During the war, Germany and Japan were eliminated from the Atlantic and the Allies from Europe and the Pacific; subsequently, in the postwar period, Germany and Japan were completely eliminated from the world market. The metropolitan countries, in a complete crisis of their production apparatus, emerged from the war with an enormous trade imbalance, buying raw materials, consumer goods or means of production without being able to give anything in return, or rather giving up some of their large investments.

6.- When imperialism realised that the European proletariat was going on the defensive, it tried to extract a series of concessions from the USSR as part of its offensive against the European proletariat. The Cold War began, which was to bring as a further consequence a tendency on the part of the two blocs to create a closed economic circuit. The unity of the world economy, a product of capitalism and impossible to break, was thus seriously disturbed, aggravating the general economic crisis of imperialism, the USSR and the Glacis.

From the Cold War onwards, imperialism began to prepare ideologically and politically for the new war. Since the Korean War, the imperialist regime as a whole has entered into a new chronic crisis

characterised by a decrease in the production of consumer goods and a colossal increase in the production of means of destruction. The USA and Britain, the two pillars of the capitalist regime, best reflect the chronic crisis into which the world capitalist regime has entered as a result of the economic preparation for war.

7.– The European economy after the war depends on American loans, raw materials and machinery. The United States, independently of the political reasons it has for helping Europe, has an economic motive: Europe is its best customer. The same is true of many backward countries; they have their best customers in Europe. This dependence of Europe on the United States and the trans-oceanic countries turns into its opposite: into the need and dependence of the trans-oceanic countries on European purchases. Europe pays its debts through American loans, liquidating at exorbitant prices its unprofitable transoceanic properties and by forcing the colonial and semi-colonial countries to buy their manufactured products at enormous prices. Despite these measures, the European economy as a whole has lived in a permanent crisis in its international trade since it has not been able to place its manufactured products at the old price and in large quantities on the world market and thus increase its exports, the only way to balance its economy. Because of the decline of European technology, as a further consequence of protectionism, of the division of East and West, cheap production in large quantities for the international market can only be achieved by increasing to a great degree the exploitation of the metropolitan proletariat and the colonial peoples subjected to its exploitation. The whole question of European restructuring on a capitalist basis is a political problem; that of the crushing of the European proletariat with its consequences, a tremendous drop in the standard of living. The emergency plan accelerates the need for European capitalism to arm itself and lower the living standards of its workers.

8.– The Stalinist bureaucracy has been able to raise the economy of the USSR to its prewar levels; it has done so on extremely reactionary bases, plundering the Russian people (forced labour, lowering the standard of living of the proletariat and the peasantry), exploiting and plundering the countries of the Glacis.

On the other hand, the armament policy of the USSR and the raising of its economy to the utmost extremity forced it to give fundamental importance to the production of armaments and means of production, decreasing the production of consumer goods. To achieve these objectives, it tries to form as closed a circuit as possible with the Glacis, in order to use the latter as an essential supplier.

The Glacis, because of its subordination to the USSR, suffers in the structuring and development of its entire economy, with some countries having been plundered up to 1947–1948, and trade agreements having been concluded to date which are unfavourable to the Glacis. The liquidation of the bourgeoisie in a number of Glacis countries allows the Stalinist bureaucracy to carry out plans for the intensification of production; the bureaucracy controls these plans so that they align with its needs and not with those of the peoples of the nations where they are implemented.

The more production develops in Russia and in the Glacis, the greater and not lesser are the contradictions of all kinds that arise. In Russia, the bureaucracy's plunder of the working people, the unevenness between the branches of production, the exhausted and starving proletariat who consciously or unconsciously sabotage production: poor quality, theft, bribes, etc. In the Glacis, the need for all countries to have an economic policy independent of Russia, the urgent need to unite with other bordering countries, and the urgent need to trade with the West.

9.– The best foundation and support of the capitalist regime is the equilibrium in the living standards of the working masses: the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In its period of rise, capitalism was able to raise the standard of living or to hold a stable equilibrium — broken at short intervals when cyclical crises occurred — for broad layers of the working population. Every war breaks the routine, and the last imperialist war has shattered it into pieces. People change their habits, move from one class or class sector to another, decrease or increase their share in the national income, that is, they worsen or improve their standard of living; specifically, the present crises of the capitalist regime of production manifest themselves with greater intensity than ever before in revolutions in the standard of living.

During the last war millions and millions of men and women who had not gone through the factory school have done so; millions and millions of men have practically learnt the art of war or guerrilla warfare,



hundreds of millions have learnt in their own flesh what imperialist war is, and what a war of national liberation is. The breakdown of the equilibrium in the standard of living has awakened a series of concerns and aspirations in the working masses which are the best guarantee of this revolutionary epoch; the workers want a better standard of living, longing for the one they had, they want no more wars and, if they are colonial, they want the national liberation of their country from imperialism. Capitalism, in opposition to the aspirations of the workers, only predicts or promises them nothing but worse living conditions, preparations for another war, giving the backward countries the pretence of national liberation and, if they rebel, armed intervention, as in Korea.

10.– In the countries of Western Europe which suffered from the war, the most important social event is the liquidation of that layer of well-to-do petty-bourgeois in the cities, not in the countryside since the peasants, except for the Italians, have, thanks to inflation and the rise in prices, achieved certain improvements, which have made them the best support of the capitalist regime. In England, the war resulted in the liquidation of great masses of privileged workers, who thrived on the exploitation of large layers of colonial workers by British imperialism.

The tremendous inflation, which has overwhelmed these countries, has resulted in a change in the distribution of national income, greatly lowering the standard of living of the proletariat. The devaluation of the pound sterling and other European currencies is a new attempt to diminish the proletariat's share of the national income. The proletariat, which remains vigorous, is ready to defend itself against the bosses' and the state's offensive against its living conditions. The great strikes that take place year after year in these countries and which upset the capitalist equilibrium have this as their basis.

In Italy, the peasantry has rebelled in a gigantic movement against the oppression of the landowners.

In general, the working masses of Western Europe do not want a new war because they know that it would bring them to paroxysm in terms of misery and decrepitude. Hence, European capitalism rebels against the possibility of a new war.

11.– In the USSR and the Glacis, the social contradictions have been exacerbated and will continue to be exacerbated as production develops. To return to prewar levels of production, the Stalinist bureaucracy has been forced to generalise slave labour to an unequalled level and to subject the population of the Glacis countries to tremendous exaction and exploitation.

On the other hand, it has had to use German prisoners of war for reconstruction work. The more the bureaucracy assimilates Western technology, the greater the contradictions of the bureaucracy as it proves incapable of accompanying this assimilation with the free control and initiative of the working masses, the only guarantee of further and uninterrupted progress in production.

And for another thing, the policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy throughout the world brings the danger of war closer, and since the USSR has now become the first military power in the world, the production of armaments in the USSR is a decisive production to which the entire production of consumer goods for the workers is subordinated. The peasantry, both in the USSR and in the Glacis — especially in the latter — has managed to consolidate its positions amidst the chaos of the war and postwar by eliminating the landowners in the Glacis, stressing their tendencies towards primitive accumulation.

12.– In the colonial countries that have suffered the war on their territory — Indonesia, Indochina, China, Korea — the peasant masses, as a result of the war, have found themselves armed and ready to use these weapons in a full-scale combat against the landlords and imperialism, which want to re-establish the old equilibrium. The agrarian revolution is the fundamental basis of the movement in these countries.

The Chinese proletariat, enormously developed in the last 15 years, has had to endure the terrible dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek<sup>5</sup> and the Japanese occupation, and has not joined the national liberation movement through great struggles. The exploitation it suffers and the conditions of freedom and flirtation that the Mao government brings to it will lead it to intervene promptly in this struggle.

5 **Chiang Kai-shek** (1887–1975) was a Chinese military man and dictator. He succeeded Sun Yat-sen as leader of the Chinese Nationalist Kuomintang Party. He led the fierce repression against the workers' revolution of 1925–1927 and ruled the country ever since. At the end of the Second World War, and after the surrender of Japan, he tried to liquidate the guerrilla armies of Mao Tse-tung, who finally took power in October 1949. After the defeat, he took refuge on the island of Formosa, and founded the Republic of Taiwan, with the support of the main imperialist powers.



In Japan, the proletariat suffers all the consequences of the economic crisis and the liquidation of the Empire; the economic recovery, with its intensification of exploitation, provokes great strike movements for better living conditions. Logically, these strike movements will transform in the short term into movements for the withdrawal of the occupation troops from Japan.

13.– The neutral countries – semicolonial or not – and those which did not suffer the war on their territory, are truly privileged concerning the belligerent countries. They have taken advantage of the war to develop their production apparatus to the maximum, taking advantage of the bankruptcy of the traditional metropolises. Social antagonisms have been and are much less violent in these countries than in the others. The United States, along with Latin America, India, Canada, Australia, and Sweden, are among these countries.

The war, like the postwar period, has not substantially improved the standard of living of the masses; on the contrary, the production of means of destruction in quantities unequalled by the neutral or belligerent countries far from the field of war has caused a tremendous decrease in the production of consumer goods, which has been revealed in the fall of the standard of living of the masses. In the neutral countries, large numbers of petty bourgeois, peasants, or agricultural semi-proletarians have been incorporated into industry as a result of its development, and their way of life has thus been revolutionised. In the same way, large numbers of women have been taken from the home to be incorporated into capitalist industry. Inflation has been a phenomenon common to all capitalist countries, including the neutral ones; it has resulted in the continuous detriment of the working masses in the distribution of national income.

The disruption of the equilibrium of the world market during the war and the postwar period caused a serious crisis in agricultural production in the transoceanic countries, a crisis that affected the small producers who were the backbone of this production; this crisis has been assimilated by the development of industry. Any attempt to restructure the prewar equilibrium between agricultural and industrial production in the transoceanic countries will meet with a serious obstacle; the proletariat that has come from the countryside is not willing to stop being a city dweller, prepared to give up its civilised life as an urban dweller.

The strikes that have taken place in all these privileged countries were just another consequence of inflation, the rising cost of living, and these conflicts not going beyond the economic and sporadic framework in which they were raised and a more or less favourable arrangement for the proletariat.

The plan of armaments and aid to the countries of Western Europe by the United States has made it impossible for the biggest imperialism of the world to significantly improve the standard of living of the working masses of its country. The emergency plan forces the deterioration of the living standards of the workers, not only in Europe but also in the USA and Latin America. Thus, Yankee imperialism itself, the ultimate guardian of the imperialist bourgeois order in the world, is caught in the contradictions of its regime and unable to follow a plan for the gentrification of its proletariat, which would ensure internal social peace. On a much larger scale, this is the situation facing the working masses of Latin America, the natural suppliers of raw materials and food for the USA. There is no possibility of gentrification of the American proletariat; this is the greatest guarantee of the world revolution.

### III. The Crisis of International Relations

14.– Since the invasion of the USSR by Nazism, the counter-revolutionary united front of the Stalinist bureaucracy and Anglo-Yankee imperialism has emerged and solidified over time. This united front manifested itself during the war in the policy of national unity practised by the Stalinist parties throughout the world and, after the defeat of Nazism, in the counter-revolutionary occupation of Eastern Europe by the Red Army, coupled with the same policy of national unity in the rest of the world. Stalinist collaboration with imperialist counter-revolution came at a high price: free hands in Eastern Europe.

Having passed, thanks to Stalinism, the crucial moment of the revolutionary, economic and political crisis of the countries of Europe, imperialism needs the Glacis for the economic and political recovery of Western Europe; it needs a unified Germany dominated by it. The Stalinist bureaucracy is not far behind; to keep up the pace of its reconstruction it needed, more than imperialist loans, independence to

suck the economic life out of the countries of the Glacis. Thus, the Cold War arises; in other words, the violent friction between the USSR, the world's leading military power, and imperialism as a whole, headed by the United States. The USSR has in its favour the tremendous crisis of the old imperialisms, which has repercussions on the equilibrium of US imperialism itself. This allows the Stalinist bureaucracy, which controls most of the national liberation movements in Asia, to make speculations like the one in Korea, weakening imperialism without losing a single Russian soldier. Thus, in Asia, the Stalinist bureaucracy can take the lead in a series of skirmishes against imperialism or provoke and/or help them by speculating on the terrible crisis and weakness of imperialism. The main weapon of the Kremlin bureaucracy is not its military potential but the economic, social, political and colonial crisis of imperialism, which is why the Kremlin bureaucracy has a postwar aggressiveness hitherto unknown. On the other hand, the bureaucracy knows of its internal weakness and the danger that a new war would bring.

Yankee imperialism is unwilling in the cold war to capitulate to the USSR for three reasons: **Because of the technical and economic weakness of the USSR; because of the need to strengthen the world capitalist front by putting up a dam to contain the speculations of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the revolutionary movements; because it has no geographical, colonial or metropolitan borders with the USSR**, which would directly endanger America in the event of an attack by Russia or the colonial masses.

Although the US is feverishly preparing with an emergency plan for war, this does not depend on the subjective desires of the imperialist rulers but on a far more important problem: the domestication and crushing of the European proletariat. Without this condition, war is an unlikely possibility or, at best, extremely dangerous for the unstable equilibrium of imperialist capitalism. The European bourgeois gangs better understand this than anyone else, hence the difference in nuances between US imperialism and the European capitalists on the policy of appeasement.

15.— The policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy towards the Glacis has two perfectly delimited phases. Until the beginning of the Cold War, it carried out a veritable assault on these countries, combining the most scandalous exaction: war debts, dismantling of factories, etc., with the acquisition of highly significant economic privileges: joint exploitation companies with 50% control of the shares, favourable trade treaties, etc.

From the Cold War onwards, the Stalinist bureaucracy changed its policy of scandalous exactions for one of coupling the economies of the Glacis in a circuit as closed and controlled as possible. Logically, the Stalinist bureaucracy could not allow a country controlled by an independent communist party, like Yugoslavia. This small proletarian country is blocked, knowing that it is a small country and that it needs the help of the economically advanced countries for its industrialisation plans.

Concerning Mao's regime, which has the support of almost the entire Chinese population, the Stalinist bureaucracy is forced to treat it not as a satellite government, nor block it as if it were an enemy given the tremendous strength of China, but as a friendly government; agreements are made after discussions, showing that Mao has a great deal of independence.

16.— US imperialism has arrived late to the imperialist sceptre. Instead of arriving at the peak of imperialist and capitalist exploitation, it has arrived when the crisis of disintegration of the regime becomes more pronounced day by day. Instead of being able to replace its declining rivals and enjoy the exploitation of their colonies, it is forced, for its own political and economic salvation, to prop up with all its colossal forces the ramshackle structure of the old imperialisms. A blow, a defeat of any imperialism in the world, is a tremendous blow to all, and especially to the central axis of the capitalist world: America. To save themselves, the old imperialisms find it necessary to call on the USA for strong help in all aspects: military and economic. Capitalism has never been more united in the world, the proof of which is that it has a capitalist and imperialist united front organ like none that has existed to date, the UN; but it has never been, and this is precisely the reason for the unity, weaker than now.

Let us not believe that inter-imperialist rivalries have disappeared because their unity in the face of the crisis is greater than ever. Rivalries exist and, as long as capitalism and imperialism exist, they will continue to exist. British imperialism, which has recovered the most, pursues its own policy on many issues: recognition of Mao, imperial preferential policy, and against intervention in European unity. Between

France and the other two imperialisms, there is no agreement on the policy towards Germany. Faced with the Korean crisis, European imperialism as a whole, because of its metropolitan geographical limits with the USSR and colonial limits with Mao, is for a frank policy of appeasement and the opening of a waiting period until the European proletariat is completely crushed or tamed and the re-equipment of a European army becomes a reality. In opposition to this policy, US imperialism speculates in the long run on economic and military power.

US imperialism, faced with the danger of a war with Russia in Europe, with weak, badly organised European armies, speculates on a military alliance with Yugoslavia, camouflaged by the UN and the fight against aggression. In this sense, the USA is prepared, for the time being but only for the time being, to forget the socialist characteristics of Tito's<sup>6</sup> regime in order to come to an agreement against the USSR with the best European army; that is the aim of the loans to Yugoslavia, to form a military front in Europe against the USSR. It is a pity that Tito and the CPY [Communist Party of Yugoslavia] interpret these loans as a demonstration of the lesser danger of imperialism and the sincerity of the UN.

## IV. The European Revolution; its Main Results: The Glacis and Yugoslavia

17.— The end of the war opened in Europe a gigantic revolutionary period. The characteristic feature of this period is the active non-intervention of the German proletariat, as a consequence of the destruction, by the military defeat, of the objective and subjective premises of an organised workers' movement.

In those countries where there was an intense mass movement for the liberation of the country — as in Italy, France, Greece, Yugoslavia — the revolutionary crisis was more acute. In the case of France and Italy, the revolutionary crisis was accelerated by the tremendous economic crisis of the imperialist system in both countries. In Greece and Yugoslavia, the national liberation movement transformed into a civil war against the landlords and bourgeoisie.

In England and the countries of Northern Europe, the war brought to power, as a consequence of the rise of the workers' movement, socialist parties which, on the other hand, achieved the full support of the petty bourgeoisie. In the countries where the crisis was most acute, the leadership of the workers' and popular movements belonged to the communist parties.

18.— The revolutionary process in Western Europe does not have a definition. The offensive passed from one class to another, from the proletariat to the bourgeoisie, but without either class achieving a definitive victory.

We can delimit three periods: 1) 1943-1945, complete offensive of the proletariat; 2) 1945-1948, relative stabilisation with major strikes of an economic nature by the proletariat; 3) and finally, 1948-1950, offensive of the bourgeoisie against a proletariat which is far from having suffered a definitive defeat and offers tenacious resistance.

These three periods of the European revolution have been conditioned by the economic process: the complete crisis of the economies of Western Europe in the postwar period, the beginning of the economic surveys, and finally, the need for capitalism to lower the standard of living of the proletariat to create a new equilibrium.

The proletariat is far from withdrawing from the revolutionary scene because of the capitalist offensive; on the contrary, as in the case of Belgium, it shows that it is ready to face every reactionary attempt. What is important in the whole revolutionary process that the European proletariat has gone through is the experience that it has been able to acquire with regard to its leaderships, Stalinism and socialism.

6 **Josip Broz Tito** (1892–1980), was the main leader of the Yugoslav Communist Party and the resistance against Nazism. During the Second World War, he led the Yugoslav partisans, often considered the most effective resistance movement in German-occupied Europe. After the liberation of Yugoslavia in 1945, he served as prime minister (1945–1963) and president from January 1953 until his death in 1980. With the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, Yugoslavia was transformed into a bureaucratic workers' state. In 1948, Tito broke with Stalin and from then on took an independent position with regard to the two blocs that had formed after the war.

19.– As a result of the terrible fear of the European revolution, the general crisis of the imperialist regime and the impossibility of re-establishing the bourgeois equilibrium in Europe, imperialism was forced to give up control of all the countries and areas of Eastern Europe, so that they came under the control of the USSR and the Kremlin bureaucracy.

Thus, the extraordinary case arose of capitalist countries being controlled by a non-capitalist country: Russia. The existence of two socially antagonistic political powers: those of the national bourgeoisies of these countries and those dependent on Russia, created a *sui generis* dual power regime during the entire period of the Glacis. *Sui generis* dual power because the governments reflected the interests of the national petty bourgeoisies or national bourgeoisies, and those of the representatives of Stalinism, with the active support of the economic and political potential of the USSR. The Stalinist representatives reflected in a distorted way an anti-capitalist force. The reason why capitalism has allowed dual powers of this kind has been several: the crisis of imperialism, which prevented and prevents it from carrying out a violent offensive against the USSR and its sphere of influence; military, police and economic control of those countries by the USSR to stop the revolution.

Undoubtedly, it is a **sui generis** dual power because instead of two antagonistic social forces ruling the country in question, one of the antagonistic social forces of the dual power reflects an extra-national force. This *sui generis* dual power was something transitory; it could not be otherwise, the power reflecting the interests of the USSR liquidated the political power of the bourgeoisie, that is, it liquidated the dual power to its benefit. Having achieved this, the communist parties that responded to the USSR and relied on its power started a revolution in the field of property relations, liquidating the bourgeoisie as the ruling class in some countries, or tending to liquidate it.

Anyone who forgets the character of the crisis of imperialism at present is incapable of understanding the significance and dynamics that have been at work in the Glacis. To contain the revolution in Western Europe, imperialism was forced to allow effective power in Eastern Europe to pass to a non-capitalist country. By an agreement, the USSR and imperialism reached a compromise, that Eastern Europe would not be assimilated but that political power would rest with the USSR and the national bourgeoisies. This agreement within the countries revealed itself as an unstable dual power regime.

A brutal crisis in the inter-imperialist relations led one of the imperialist sectors, Germany, to authorise or agree that the USSR should simply assimilate countries or areas of capitalist countries, such as Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, and eastern Poland. The variant that has occurred currently is that a crisis, not in inter-imperialist relations but a revolutionary crisis – that is, in the relations between the antagonistic classes which shook and continues to shake the entire capitalist regime – is what forced imperialism to allow not outright assimilation but a regime of *sui generis* dual power where the effective political power belonged to the Kremlin bureaucracy, which ruled together with the weakened bourgeoisies of these countries.

The counter-revolutionary character of Stalinism and the Red Army in Eastern Europe has been nothing like fascism, that is, complete destruction of all independent life of the proletariat through a long process of civil war against the proletariat and its organisations. Stalinism has been counter-revolutionary because it has held back – not destroyed like fascism – the European revolution for long years. All the terrorist activity of Stalinism in Eastern Europe was aimed at controlling the proletariat, but not at definitively liquidating its activity in favour of capitalism. This contradictory activity in Eastern Europe is due to its nature: a bureaucratic agent of a degenerated workers' state.

If the activity of Stalinism had been to crush the proletariat to consolidate the power of the bourgeoisie, the subsequent liquidation of the bourgeoisie could only be explained by the assimilation of these countries as new republics of the USSR. The non-liquidation of the revolution in Eastern Europe, its slowing down, and its distortion by Stalinism until it controlled the revolutionary process, that is, the proletariat and the masses, explains the whole process of the Glacis.

The intensity of the mobilisations that Stalinism had to carry out in these countries, to liquidate the dual power stage in its favour, depended on the strength of the national bourgeoisie in each of these countries. What is important to note is that the process is or has been similar in almost all the Glacis countries: dual power, liquidation of dual power in favour of the Stalinist bureaucracy, that reflected in a distorted



way an anti-capitalist regime, the implementation of a revolutionary program by the bureaucracy in the capitalist property relations.

20.– Yugoslavia, together with Greece, are the only countries in Eastern Europe that have known an intense people's movement, an open war of national liberation. In Yugoslavia, this intense movement and war for the liberation of the country transformed into a real civil war, which forced the guerrillas to create their own state apparatus in the liberated areas. The fact that the CPY came to rule with the support of the masses and the creation of people's committees has, in itself, been the creation or the emergence of a stage of dual power within Yugoslavia. The people and the proletariat with their national liberation committees led by the CPY was one power and, on the other side, the national liberation movement of the bourgeoisie and the Nazi power reflected the other class power; the civil war divided these two powers territorially. The dynamics and emergence of dual power in Yugoslavia were similar to the Paris Commune<sup>7</sup> and not to the Russian Revolution. In the Russian Revolution, power throughout the country preceded the civil war, whereas in the Paris Commune, as in Yugoslavia, the war of national liberation and the civil war accompanied the dual power from the very beginning, merging with it.

Subsequently, from 1943 onwards, the power of the proletariat initiated a revolution in the relations of production and exchange, which transformed Yugoslavia into a true workers' state.

Due to its crisis, imperialism had to let this proletarian revolution in a small country pass without being able to place serious pressure on it. Those comrades, who ironically ask whether imperialism let its representatives deceive the Yugoslav government, forget that imperialism was forced to "let itself be deceived".

Due to the independence of Yugoslavia and the CPY from the Stalinist bureaucracy, as a result of the great support of the masses that this party had, a whole campaign was launched against it, blocking it economically. The Yugoslav proletariat, in the face of the bureaucracy's campaign against its party and country, continued to support its party and government more enthusiastically than ever. Since the break with Stalinism, the Tito government, which feels itself supported by an important mass base, has used democratic guarantees to the maximum to consolidate and expand its power base and to be able to resist imperialist and Stalinist pressure. On the other hand, it has tried and is trying to speculate with imperialism and small nations to further develop the construction of socialism, without appealing, as it should, in a serious and constant manner to the international workers' solidarity, to the International Workers Revolution, the only way to reach socialism. As a consequence of this, the Tito government engages in the worst kind of diplomatic speculations.

## V. The Colonial Revolution: China, Korea, etc.

21.– The crisis of imperialism in East Asia has manifested itself in the countries which suffered most from the war: China, Indochina, Indonesia, and lately Korea. US and British imperialism had to let Mao triumph since it was impossible for them to make a direct intervention or to support a government in a state of complete and unsalvageable decay, such as that of Chiang Kai-shek. The United States has had to settle for maintaining Japan as a sub-metropolitan base and intervening in Korea. Britain and France are forced to maintain a conciliatory policy towards Mao in an attempt to reach an agreement that would halt the support the Beijing government provides to Indonesian and Indochinese guerrillas. Everywhere in the Far East, imperialism is retreating in the face of the revolutionary impetus of the colonial masses; the revolution in the East has become, as Lenin and Trotsky saw it, the cornerstone of the revolutionary process in the capitalist world.

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7 **Paris Commune:** In July 1870, Louis Bonaparte's Second French Empire started a war against Prussia but his troops were quickly defeated. In response, on 4 September, there was a workers' uprising in Paris, which proclaimed the republic once again and allowed a weak bourgeois government to form, which paralysed the mobilisation and in January 1871 surrendered to the German empire led by Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. The German troops did not dare to enter Paris to disarm the National Guard. The defeated French government attempted to do so, which triggered a workers' insurrection that installed a revolutionary government that lasted 73 days.

22.— The Chinese civil war can be summarised as a class war: the war of the peasantry, mainly in the north, against their traditional oppressors, capitalism and the Chiang Kai-shek bureaucracy linked to them.

The Chinese peasantry, contrary to Trotsky's prediction, has played a much more independent role than the Russian peasantry. Trotsky's analysis, however, was correct since this development has been made possible by the existence of an extra-national factor, which allowed it to homogenise and centralise the decentralised Chinese peasant class in a modern regular army. The extra-national factor was the USSR, or rather the bureaucracy that benefits from the USSR since, with its technical, military and cultural aid, it allowed to bring the centralisation and efficiency of the Chinese peasant army to a high degree.

Undoubtedly, this does not negate the analysis of the peasant class as a class, and especially of the Chinese peasant class. The alternative of the peasant class is either with the proletariat or with the bourgeoisie, not only in the political field but also in the economic field. The peasantry in China, as elsewhere in the world, cannot escape its status as a class that is continually engendered by capitalism and which cannot adopt an independent policy.

Because of this momentary aspect of the Chinese peasantry, an aspect given to it by the aid and action of Stalinism and the USSR, the class basis of the national liberation movement and the fall of Chiang Kai-shek and the revolutionary movement was not, in its beginnings, as Trotsky foresaw, the Chinese proletariat but the peasant movement.

The decomposition of Chiang Kai-shek's regime has meant that important sectors of Southern landowners, of the military governors of various provinces and of the bourgeoisie have gone over to Mao's movement. This has been possible because the Chinese revolutionary process has so far been characterised by one transcendental event: the proletariat has not intervened as a major force in the revolutionary movement. When the proletariat begins to intervene and mobilise, the movement will be sharply confronted with the Trotskyist dilemma: defeat or proletarian revolution.

Mao's regime reflects perfectly well the character of the Chinese revolution at present, it is a semi-Bonapartist government which is fundamentally based on the army, which in turn reflects the general interests of the peasantry but which is becoming, by the very dialectics of the peasant movement itself, more and more the agent of the petty and middle bourgeoisie of the cities; a government which, in the end, flirts with the proletariat and the bourgeoisie to be able to pursue its timid and zigzagging program of agrarian revolution and national liberation.

23.— The war in Korea is nothing but a new manifestation of the war between the Asian peoples and their domestic and foreign exploiters, irrespective of the nuances which differentiate the two countries: the division of Korea into two and the formal aspect of the attack of one country on another, when it is a question of people's power, that of the North, seated in one part of the country against the power of the bourgeoisie, the landlords and imperialism, seated in another part of the country.

To wage war against the South, the North Korean government has been forced to adopt far more revolutionary measures than other Stalinist governments in Asia.

## **VI. The Workers' Movement and the Colonial Peoples: Stalinism and Its Disintegration, the New Stalinist Centrism**

24.— The workers' and colonial movement has reached extraordinary heights despite the betrayal and crisis of the leadership. The outstanding feature of the present revolutionary crisis is the lack of a mass revolutionary International. The lack of this International, the lack of clarity or the betrayal of the leaderships of the workers' and colonial movements, produces a contradictory result: false political and theoretical positions, terrible political mistakes by gigantic mass movements on the one hand, and the conquest of new positions on the economic and political terrain by national movements on the other hand.

Revolutionary Marxists must distinguish the revolutionary movements of the colonial masses and the proletariat, the vanguard of these masses, and the false leaderships, slogans, programs or strategies.

The workers' movement in Europe, which is forced to defend itself against a terrible offensive of the bourgeoisie against the standard of living, has so far not suffered any decisive defeat. As a result of the Stalinist and socialist betrayals, a whole process of reorganisation of the forces of the proletariat, of experience and selection of the vanguard has been opened up. The Trotskyist movement in these countries is playing, within its meagre forces, an extraordinary role in this process. The proletariat in Europe inevitably had to go through the Stalinist experience, an experience impossible to avoid given the relationship of forces between Stalinism and us. We can point out, as the most auspicious fact, that the proletariat in both France and Italy has already made or is in the process of completing its Stalinist experience. This event, coupled with our activity, will serve to shorten or leapfrog the Stalinist experience in other countries.

The revolutionary process in Asia has been channelled by Stalinism. The Stalinist experience has not yet been made by the Asian working masses. The slowness of the Stalinist experience as a theory and as a method of the Kremlin bureaucracy has an objective reason: the fact that the proletariat has so far not intervened decisively in the national liberation movement, especially in China, which means that the theory and aims of the Kremlin do not clash violently with the process of the class struggle for the time being. On the other hand, the Stalinist bureaucracy, faced with the colossal strength of the liberation movements in the East, adopts a careful tactic of united front and compromise.

25.— The Stalinist bureaucracy and Stalinism have survived longer than we thought. Does this mean that both will continue to mean and say the same things they did before the war? We have already seen how the USSR was transformed into a Workers' State, exploiting other nations and with a vast area to dominate as a consequence of the brutal crisis of imperialism.

Stalinist monolithism, the triumph of the Stalinist bureaucracy within the USSR and within the Communist International, was a particular consequence of a general world phenomenon: **The world counter-revolution, which began in 1923.**

Independently of its subjective basis, the prestige of the USSR, Stalinist monolithism had an objective basis: the defeat of the world revolution which isolated the revolutionary experiences in a single country, preventing the vanguard of the proletariat of that country and of the other countries, based on a constant and universal experience, from building revolutionary parties. This forced the vanguard of the proletariat, the colonial masses, to have a defensive mentality, which was concretised in the formulas: "let us take care of the USSR", "let us support the USSR, which served the Stalinist bureaucracy to strengthen its monolithism.

The coming to power, with powerful mass movements of the CPY, the Chinese CP and the whole East, poses for these parties the problem of Stalinist zigzags and bureaucratic pressure. Thus, the YCP was excommunicated by the Komintern for not being sufficiently disciplined and in the face of the of the Chinese CP the bureaucracy had to follow a careful tactic of blackmail and pressure and united front since Mao's party feels strong enough with its army, popular support and the colonial revolution in Asia to not accept orders. As the struggle of the proletariat becomes more polarised, the crisis of Stalinism in Asia will intensify.

26.— The ideology of Stalinism has changed with the new conditions. The USSR is no longer a backward state surrounded by an imperialist encirclement; on the contrary, it is the first military power in the world, the second power that controls the atomic bomb and has a relatively extraordinary economic power, which does not even come close to that of the USA.

The decline of Stalinism considerably increases the possibilities of the USSR. This is the reason why the status quoist ideology of socialism in one country has been replaced by that of manoeuvres, serious pressure on imperialism but without violence, to use the crisis of imperialism and the workers' and colonial movements to integrate other countries into the Stalinist orbit. The Stalinist bureaucracy no longer thinks of defending itself by retreating, but rather it thinks of attacking very carefully at the critical points of imperialism and of integrating new territories. This theory and strategy clash with the needs and aspirations of the entire world proletariat and the colonial masses since it makes the liquidation of imperialism and the capitalist regime dependent on the manoeuvres of the Soviet bureaucracy and the countries bordering on the USSR.



27.— As a consequence of the revolutionary needs and aspirations of the masses, from the clash of these needs and aspirations with Stalinist politics and monolithism, centrist currents emerge from Stalinism which reflect with greater or lesser intensity the aspirations of the masses. This contradiction and the emergence of these centrist currents are greatly emphasised when the communist party is brought to the head of the government as a consequence of a revolutionary movement of the masses. We can define these new Stalinist parties and currents as a new Stalinist centrism, and we can consider them as a highly progressive factor, even if they have serious political and theoretical mistakes. The CPY and the Chinese CP and the CPs of the whole East defend two Stalinist theories: that of socialism in one country, Yugoslavia, and that of revolution in stages, the Chinese. These theories have led and will continue to lead to tragic political mistakes and even to defeat, but in the name of these same theories, the CPY has not submitted to Stalinist discipline, and the Chinese do not submit to all the dictates of the Kremlin. The fact is that, regardless of the mistaken theories, each of these sectors reflects social interests which are disparate: the Kremlin those of the bureaucracy, the CPY those of the proletariat, and the Chinese CP those of the exploited masses of the petty bourgeoisie.

## VII. Tasks and Prospects

28.— The extraordinary world revolutionary situation is facing a very poor leadership of the masses. Hence, contradictory phenomena are taking place. It is indispensable for the World Party of the Socialist Revolution to know how to distinguish every authentic revolutionary movement independently of its leadership and the errors or false conceptions of the latter. Our conceptions will prevail to the extent that we live in sync with the proletariat, not physically but politically. It is not a question of practising a stupid tail-ending but of accompanying the proletariat by providing the best means to develop its consciousness.

The struggle against sectarianism, against the eagerness to maintain our cadres and positions, is the duty of the hour. We must be where our class fights in order to win them over to our positions. This winning over can only be the product of prolonged, slow, constant work. In this struggle against sectarianism, deviations will inevitably arise. These opportunist deviations will be the product of the pressure of the proletariat and its backwardness, and not of an alien class, the petty bourgeoisie, or of our isolation or routine.

29.— Our International has not yet become a mass International, that is, an objective factor in the historical process, which is the essential difference between this postwar period and the previous one. Out of the previous war, a mass Revolutionary International emerged: the Third International. Out of this war, colossal revolutionary movements have emerged, but not a mass International.

We must understand this situation and the need to work squarely on the cadres of the big workers' parties that exist in Europe and Asia. Regarding this task, we must eliminate the anti-Stalinist prejudice of our sections and militants, working on the Stalinist rank and file when their militants are the best and most conscious of the exploited of a country, even with all their prejudices. Our sections must study with all care the possibility of entryism in the countries of Asia and the Glacis, tending to structure, with all care and without haste, a proletarian tendency in these parties, working essentially on the proletariat and its vanguard.

In Italy and France, we shall maintain our sections in complete independence in order to work on the Stalinist rank and file, without, however, practising any entryism. We must enter the mass socialist parties, such as the English Labour Party.

In all countries where we practise entryism, we will logically do so because of our tremendous weakness. Where we are a mass party, we will not, as in Ceylon [now Sri Lanka], Bolivia, etc.

30.— In the countries of the Americas, not just in the USA, where the proletariat overwhelmingly follows the bourgeois parties, the slogan is the formation of a workers' party independent of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties, in order to accelerate the clarification of classes. We can and must tend to bring the trade union leaders of the proletariat as candidates in the elections, as the best way to speed up the achievement of this slogan.

31.— In Europe, the proletariat has gone on the defensive. We must understand this and act accordingly. This defensive attitude takes concrete form:

a) We must defend Yugoslavia from imperialist and Stalinist attacks by trying, by uncompromising criticism, to attract the CPY to our positions. Defending Yugoslavia does not mean compromising with the manoeuvres of the Yugoslav government. We must continually insist on this differentiation by attacking all petty-bourgeois attitudes of the government and the CPY, pointing them out as Stalinist inheritance and denouncing the speculations with imperialism. If Yugoslavia comes into a military alliance with imperialism in the event of a USSR-imperialist war, we will be against Yugoslavia, despite the character of the government and the workers' state.

b) Defence of the Glacis against all imperialist attacks to defend the socialist gains achieved: nationalisation of industry, internal and foreign trade, banks, land, liberation from all subjection to Russia; for the complete independence of these countries. Abolition of all bureaucratic obstacles to workers' democracy. This slogan can be extended to the USSR.

c) In Western Europe, we must point out the necessity of overthrowing capitalism to avoid war. We must prevent the lowering of the standard of living of the masses and the increase in working hours because of the armament plans. The struggle to defend present living standards and working hours is the first step in stopping the capitalist offensive and passing to the offensive.

32.— In Asia, we will uncompromisingly support all popular, peasant, and proletarian movements against the servile regimes of imperialism. We will support communist China, communist Korea, as well as the Indonesian and Indochinese guerrillas, etc. This support does not mean that we will stop criticising the Stalinist leaderships. We will fight within and outside our ranks the sectarian pedantry of not wanting to support general movements of one or several exploited classes for the achievement of their objectives under the pretext of the mistakes or betrayals committed by the leaderships of these movements.

All our efforts in Asia, given our small numbers, will be directed towards penetrating the industrial proletariat, not diluting them in the colonial revolution, thus in general, into all the classes or class sections involved in it since, according to our theory of permanent revolution, it is precisely this class, the industrial proletariat, which will have to end up leading the revolution. Regardless of the greater or lesser apathy of the industrial proletariat towards the colonial revolution, it is the only class capable of carrying out our program and bringing the colonial revolution to an end, and it is towards this class that we shall turn.

33.— With the Wall Street Emergency Plan, imperialism accelerates its preparations for war and accelerates the crisis of the capitalist and imperialist regime. This crisis, in turn, accelerates the crisis of Stalinism and the advance of the social and colonial revolution. The proletariat and its vanguard advance hard by making their experience of Stalinism, an experience which is inexorable and inevitable. If Trotskyism fully commits to accompanying and accelerating the experience of the workers, in the face of the all-powerful program, precisely for being the program of the Fourth International, it will become the program of thousands and thousands of exploited workers.