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The True Testament of Trotsky

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On the 8th Anniversary of the Assassination of Leon Trotsky

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He who leaves nothing to posterity incurs no risk of having his legacy contested. Only an important inheritance attracts forgers of testaments, in detective stories as in political life. In the last few months all types of periodicals, from the anarchist **Libertaire** to the cheap yellow sheet **France Dimanche**, have published grossly falsified documents as the alleged or even authentic testament of Leon Trotsky. Here we have clearest evidence of the immense political capital represented today by our heritage from the old revolutionary leader who met death at the assassin's hand.

After their death, the outstanding leaders of the revolutionary movement have been invariably subjected to attempts by "official" public opinion to appropriate their great names in behalf of the sordid struggle against the very movement which they had led. Trotsky has not escaped this fate, any more than did Marx and Lenin before him. Both wings among the intellectuals – the Stalinist wing and the "democratic" wing – are vying with each other over the mantle of Trotsky, which they seek to use as a cover in their struggles against the international Trotskyist movement. This trick only underscores the growing authority which the work of the revolutionary leader now commands, dominating completely the thought of our epoch, and signaling the potential danger which the living revolutionary movement represents, despite its apparent material weaknesses, for the ruling classes and all their agents. And as Marxism, despite all the falsifications, continued to develop after 1914 within the internationalist Social Democracy ; and as Leninism continued to live after 1923 in the Left Opposition, so, too, does the true heritage of Trotsky today supply the programmatic foundations of the Fourth International.

International Policies and the Class Struggle

To explain social reality and its evolution in history scientific socialism takes the *class struggle* as its point of departure. Trotsky left us masterpieces of political analysis precisely because he knew how to lay bare the mechanics of the class struggle, which determines, in the final analysis, all the stormy events of our epoch. Petty-bourgeois historians and journalists have long ago assimilated Marxist "techniques" which they employ, as they so ingeniously say, to illuminate "this or that aspect of social reality." But whenever it comes to rigorously applying this same method to present-day reality *as a whole*, their thought invariably collides with their own class character. Just as World War I and World War II appeared to them to be a struggle between "good and evil," or what amounts to the same thing, a struggle of "peace-loving, liberty-loving peoples" against "militarism (totalitarianism) and its unbridled expansionism," just so World War III, even before its outbreak, assumes for them the selfsame guise.

Indicative of how profoundly the "official" labor movement has degenerated is its utter abandonment of the criterion of the class struggle not only in evaluating international policies but even in trying to justify its own extremely tortuous "tactical" line. If we wished to reduce to a common denominator present-day interpretations of policies by the Stalinists, by the Social Democrats and by the countless shades of centrists from the right or the "left," we might say that they, like the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, operate with the formula of the struggle *between the major powers* as determining and dominating the social conflicts.

Let us note in passing that, significantly enough, it was in the *Spanish Civil War* that this profound modification in the "official" labor movement's method of thinking first became obvious. The Stalinists and the Social Democrats did not view it as a civil war at all. For them, it was rather "a defensive war by the Spanish people against the fascist aggressors." For their part, the ultra-lefts regarded this war as a "general rehearsal for the imperialist war, with the two contending sides representing the two future camps in the world war." Our movement, on the contrary, analyzed these events as expressing the civil war between the Spanish proletariat and bourgeoisie ; and we assigned, quite correctly, only a secondary importance to the factor of "foreign intervention." For the sake of objectivity, let us add that the best-qualified representatives of the world bourgeoisie came to the same conclusion.

The forward march of the "progressive" forces is measured by the Stalinists in the main by territorial, strategic and economic expansion of the Soviet Union and its "buffer zone." The Social Democrats apply wholesale (the converse theorem : The forward march of "democracy" is measured for them by the setbacks, of "Stalinist totalitarianism." It must be conceded that the Stalinists, in their ideas, apply their theorem with greater consistency ; and, moreover, unlike the Social Democrats, they do not chronically suffer from a case of bad conscience. But, in practice, the difference is trifling. These two main political forces in the labor movement today picture the social struggles throughout the world as if they were dependent upon each advance or retreat by either the "American" or the "Russian" camp. The different shades of centrists apply identical criteria ; and while some of them refrain from taking their positions on the basis of such a criterion, it is usually, as in the case of the Shachtmanites, because they consider the camp of imperialist democracy "ineffectual" against the Stalinist menace.

Following Trotsky's method, the Fourth International approaches the analysis of international policies in a fundamentally different way. For the Fourth International, it is the social contradictions which determine, in the last analysis, the international antagonisms and not the other way around. The great powers themselves – whom "official" public opinion and its huge suite of lackeys in the labor movement treat as independent entities – far from conducting a policy motivated by a "thirst for power," disclose themselves instead as being impelled by contradictions inherent in their social system. Imperialist expansion of the United States and Stalinist expansion of the Soviet Union alike are for the Fourth International indices of the *social crisis* convulsing these systems. In most countries throughout the world the social contradictions, having been aggravated to an unprecedented extent, are precipitating one political crisis after another ; and upon these *are grafted* international antagonisms, without ever depriving the social contradictions of their predominant character.

Two fundamentally different methods of analysis lead to diametrically opposite conclusions. It is by these end-it suits that the two methods are now being tested. Proceeding from formal, superficial and formalistic criteria, the noisy pack of petty-bourgeois journalists accepted the Finnish war in 1940 as proof of the strengthening of the Hitler-Stalin alliance. In their eyes, the "International United Front of Aggressors" was being consolidated on the blood-soaked fields of snow. On the basis of Trotsky's correct analysis of this event, it was not at all hard to conclude just the opposite, namely, that the invasion of Finland was Stalin's defensive reflex to his fears of Hitlerite attack. Ensuing events left no doubt whatever concerning the validity of this particular conclusion.

We have just passed through a similar experience. The "Prague coup" was taken by the professional Stalinophobes as "definitive" proof of the stabilization of Stalinism, of its drive for world domination, of the approach of war, and so forth. We never for a moment ceased to oppose to this impressionistic prognosis a perspective based on an analysis of the living social forces : The attempts of the Stalinist bureaucracy to "stabilize" its buffer zone were only a stage on the road to reaching a compromise with Wall Street ; this compromise was imperative for Stalin because of his own internal weakness and because of the contradictions tearing apart the Stalinist bureaucracy. Once again, one can no longer question which method has proved correct on the basis of results.

The Instinctive Revolutionary Upsurge of the

Proletariat

Trotsky transmitted to us the Marxist method, applying it with the hand of a master to the problems of our times. But he did more. He also left us the basic conclusion of this analysis : *the fundamental characteristic of our epoch*, lodged in the contradiction between the instinctive revolutionary upsurge of the proletariat and the profoundly and openly counter-revolutionary character of its traditional leadership.

Since the war's end, countless critics, reflecting all the colors of the political rainbow, have subjected to violent criticism Trotsky's central thesis and that of the program

of the Fourth International. Generally speaking, this criticism harmonizes with the obstinate refusal of its proponents to approach reality as a whole, to say nothing of their systematic distortion of the thesis they attack.

Let us begin by taking the second part of this thesis. The Stalinophiles (**Bataille Socialiste** in France, Nenni in Italy and others), on the one side, and the Stalinophobes (centrists of the Marceau Pivert type, Shachtmanites, ultra-lefts of various brands, anarchists, and so on), on the other side, vie with one another to demonstrate in the light of postwar events how revolutionary has been the action of the Stalinist leadership in relation to the bourgeoisie. The former regard it as progressive ; the latter characterize this revolution as barbarous and reactionary (there is nothing self-contradictory for them about the idea of a "reactionary revolution"). An analysis of events, which is in the least serious, will permit us to assay this criticism for what it is worth.

Never in its history did capitalism find itself so close to complete collapse on three-quarters of our planet as was the case during the critical months of 1944-45. Never did any political movement, including fascism, contribute so much objectively in averting this collapse as did Stalinism during those days. One need only observe the unexampled degree of decay so characteristic of most capitalist countries to this very day, three years later, in order to understand how consciously Roosevelt had acted as the leader of his class when he reached at Teheran and Yalta an agreement with Stalin which permitted a "cold" liquidation of the world war. What is there so astonishing about the fact that the Stalinist bureaucracy demanded and received "compensation" for this colossal service it rendered

to imperialism ? We never pictured the Soviet bureaucracy, any more than the reformist bureaucracy, as altruistic or idealistically motivated servants of imperialism. So far as the reformist bureaucracy was concerned, its "compensation" took the shape of privileges inside the bourgeois state apparatus. There is nothing at all extraordinary in the fact that this same "compensation" in the case of the Stalinist bureaucracy, owing to its social character, took the shape of territorial expansion of its "sphere of influence." Nor is it at all an unforeseen development that imperialism should desire, at the next stage, to regain positions it had previously surrendered in order to save "what is essential." Finally, the case of Tito abruptly laid bare the extremely tenuous character of these famous "conquests." One may twist and turn the issue as one pleases, but on a *world* scale the counter-revolutionary character of Stalinism is more apparent than was the counter-revolutionary character of the German Social Democracy after 1918.

When it comes to the first part of Trotsky's thesis, we similarly encounter a symmetrical criticism by Stalinist agents and by the more hysterical Stalinophobes. The former, to justify Stalin's policy, lecture us that "the proletariat has been caught up in the decay of capitalism" ; that because of modifications in its social composition, the proletariat cannot triumph without the support of the middle class as a whole ; and that it therefore follows (how ? why ? where ?) that the Leninist strategy is no longer applicable and it is necessary instead to apply the tactic of the "new democracy," etc. (See, for example. Gilles Martinet's article *From Trotsky to Burnham*, **Revue Internationale**, No.17, 1947. Paris.)

As for the Stalinophobes, in order to explain the mass support which the Stalinist movement continues to enjoy in most countries, they declare that the "decline of working-class consciousness" finds its reflection in the "inability of the workers to grasp" the phenomenon of Stalinism.

Both sides concur that the Trotskyist thesis has allegedly been invalidated by events "inasmuch as there has been no repetition of October 1917 on a grand scale."

In point of fact, Trotsky never predicted proletarian *victories* as a consequence of the war. Still less did he predict that the proletariat would tear itself free from its traditional leadership at the inception of the postwar revolutionary wave. On the contrary, Trotsky repeatedly stressed, especially in his final articles, that the initial revolutionary wave would still unquestionably occur under the leadership of the Stalinists. We find this forecast clearly formulated in the very last article he wrote, but never finished. This manuscript, a transcription of which was made by the Russian secretary from records dictated by Trotsky, was published in the October 1940 issue of **Fourth International**. Here is the corresponding passage :

May not the Stalinists turn out at the head of a new revolutionary upsurge and may they not ruin the revolution as they did in Spain and previously in China ? It is of course impermissible to consider such a possibility as excluded, for example, in France. The first wave of the revolution has often, or more correctly, always carried to the top those "left" parties which have not managed to discredit themselves completely in the preceding period and which have an imposing political tradition behind them ... (**Fourth International**, October 1940, p.130.)

Far from refuting Trotsky's "schema," events since 1943 have brought a confirmation of the. objectively revolutionary upsurge of the workers, despite the Stalinist leaders who doomed this first wave of revolutionary attempts to defeat. The argument that since the workers have followed the Stalinist leadership, it therefore follows that their upsurge was not revolutionary is nothing but a piece of sophistry. It is self-evident that the *instinctive* revolutionary upsurge of the proletariat is logically the direct opposite of a state of class prostration and is no way identical with a *conscious* revolutionary upsurge.

We have placed the main weight of our arguments precisely on the prediction that *even though* the workers would continue to follow their traditional leadership, they would, nevertheless, engage in *objectively* revolutionary actions – in attempts to take the factories and the state power into their own hands. He is a sorry revolutionist who permits himself to be led astray by a given *form* which the action of the masses may assume and who on this account fails to recognize the instinctively revolutionary upsurge of the masses, as for instance in the struggles of the Yugoslav and Greek partisans, with their committees, their equalitarian system of distribution, their fierce struggle against the native bourgeoisie. Or, to cite other instances, the Warsaw Commune, with its decisions on workers' militias and workers' control ; in the mass movements in France and Italy, with the arming of the workers and occupation of the factories ; or, again, in the powerful movements in the Far East : the insurrection in the fleet in India, the committees in Indo-China, Indonesia, Korea and elsewhere, in each case accompanied by the arming of the masses. He is, indeed, a sorry revolutionist who fails to grasp this revolutionary upsurge in the magnificent action recently undertaken by the Italian workers in order to defend – oh, horror of horrors ! – a Stalinist chieftain, in whose behalf, according to the counsels of our "cleverest" critics, it is not worthwhile even to lift a little finger. And how did the Italian workers do it ? By occupying the factories, by seizing capitalists as hostages, electing genuine Soviets, seizing railway stations and postal buildings, and so on. And they did all this of their own accord, spontaneously, without any kind of "conductor."

The whole period which was ushered in with the termination of World War II is characterized by this revolutionary upsurge of the proletariat. It is precisely this that enables us to envisage objectively the possibility of building the revolutionary party which will provide the workers with a new leadership. This is the conclusion which actually sums up the foregoing thesis of Trotsky.

The Famous 'Dilemma' of Trotsky

Here we come to the point where all our opponents and critics, regardless of coloration, assemble in serried ranks for an assault upon the celebrated quotation from Trotsky, which the forgers of the GPU have also seized upon. In September 1939, Trotsky wrote :

If this war provokes, as we firmly believe, a proletarian revolution, it must inevitably lead to the overthrow of the bureaucracy in the USSR and regeneration of Soviet democracy on a far higher economic and cultural basis than, in 1918. In that case the question as to whether the Stalinist bureaucracy was a "class" or a growth on the workers' state will be automatically solved. To every single person it will become clear that in the process of the development of the world revolution the Soviet bureaucracy was only an episodic relapse.

If, however, it is conceded that the present war will provoke not revolution but a decline of the proletariat, then there remains another alternative : the further decay of monopoly capitalism, its further fusion with the state and the replacement of democracy wherever it still remained by a totalitarian regime. The inability of the proletariat to take into its hands the leadership of society could actually lead under these conditions to the growth of a new exploiting class from the Bonapartist fascist bureaucracy. This would be, according to all indications, a regime of decline, signaling- the eclipse of civilization. (**In Defense of Marxism**, pp.8-9.)

To fully grasp the meaning of the above passage, let us here adduce Trotsky's own clarification which he made in the very next article he wrote at the time, entitled, "Again and Once More Again on the Nature of the USSR" (October 1939) :

I endeavored to demonstrate in my article, "The USSR in the War," that the perspective of a non-worker and non-bourgeois society of exploitation, or "bureaucratic collectivism," is the perspective of complete defeat and the decline of the international proletariat, the perspective of the most profound historical pessimism. (**In Defense of Marxism**, p.31.)

To put it plainly, Trotsky makes it clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that the alternative he had posed in his first article was neither a long-term nor a short-term *prognosis*, but a *historical analysis* which may be restated in the following way : EITHER the proletariat would prove its instinctive revolutionary upsurge and then there would open up an era of revolutionary struggles in which it would be possible to forge new revolutionary leaderships ; OR the proletariat would remain passive, permit itself to be reduced to slavery, and then it would be necessary to review the entire Marxist analysis of capitalism.

For us, there can be no doubt that this analysis has been completely corroborated and proved valid in the light of events. Gilles Martinet, theoretician of capitulation to Stalinism, thinks otherwise. For him, a mere admission of the "theoretical possibility" of bureaucratic collectivism constitutes by itself a revision of Marxism, converting Trotsky into a thinker spiritually akin to Burnham. Martinet is little concerned that his line of argument hits not at Trotsky so much as at Marx himself, who was the first to pose the dilemma "socialism or barbarism." The gist of Trotsky's foregoing passage is nothing but a restatement, rendered more precise, of this old dilemma of Karl Marx.

Inasmuch as capitalism finds itself in a condition of complete decay, and inasmuch as socialism cannot be installed except through revolutionary action by the proletariat. Trotsky, therefore, poses entirely correctly the following variant : *If the proletariat should remain passive for an entire historic era, then barbarism would triumph.* And then he immediately adds : We shall have no lack of opportunities to verify this apparent "dilemma" ; we shall see whether the proletariat will remain passive after the war's end, and so on.

For every conscientious person it is clear that Trotsky's own perspective is based on a complete confidence in the revolutionary fighting capacities of the proletariat. Trotsky's confidence has been entirely justified, in the face of all the available evidence. Martinet, on the contrary, has lost confidence in these capacities of the working class. He tries to demonstrate that the bureaucracy is a necessary stage on the road to – socialism ! After having in this way justified politically the role of the bureaucracy. Martinet uses it to accuse Trotsky, after the .casuistic manner of Jesuits who discover a "justification" for religion in such scientific dilemmas as the following : "*Either* we shall ultimately succeed in creating living matter in the laboratory *or* we scientists shall have to admit that supernatural . forces intervene in the creation of such matter."

Faithfully symmetrical to the criticism of the Stalinophiles, there comes anew the criticism of the Stalinophobes. For them, the above-cited quotation from Trotsky "limits" the revolutionary possibilities of the proletariat to the framework of capitalism. This is explained to us by Hal Draper in the December 1947 issue of **New International**. According to this writer, the tendency toward socialism existed in a Utopian form prior to the advent of capitalism. Under capitalism, this tendency acquired its scientific form. There is every reason to assume that it will retain this same form under a new exploitive society ("bureaucratic collectivism"), concludes the author. Because, you see, involved here is a struggle for political democracy, and since the means of production are concentrated in the hands of the state, the conquest of the state by the masses would signify the socialist revolution. We can scarcely believe that the originator of this new theory still continues to consider himself a Marxist. Draper's reproach – like Martinet's – is aimed at Trotsky but hits in reality at Marx and the **Communist Manifesto**.

The whole of Marxist theory rests on the fact that *capitalism* prepares both the objective and the subjective conditions for socialism. The decay of capitalism into a barbarous society of a new type is unthinkable otherwise than as involving the destruction of all these premises of Marxism. Such a regime will be that of the decay of civilization, of the stagnation and decomposition of the productive forces, of the reduction of the masses to the status of totalitarian slaves, and their being, beyond a doubt, progressively ejected from the process of production. It is self-evident that if one starts from the hypothesis that the proletariat will prove itself incapable of taking advantage of capitalist decay in order to inaugurate socialism, when conditions for the solution of this task are the most favorable, then the inescapable conclusion is that it is utterly Utopian to count upon any eventual capacities of totalitarian slaves for the building of a classless society.

These reasonings of a Martinet or a Draper may seem of little interest to our readers. However, they not only involve an evaluation of the greatest importance concerning the future prospects of mankind, but also have a direct bearing on the day-to-day activities of revolutionists. Obviously, Martinet and Draper alike count on the possibility (not to say, probability) that capitalism will vanish without receiving its *coup de grace* at the hands of the proletarian revolution. Where Martinet affixes a plus sign in front of the new regime, Draper puts a minus. The one like the other strives by means of incredible jugglery to demonstrate that a regime issuing from such a "bureaucratic revolution" would not close the doors to socialism. Both of them are equally compelled to revise the fundamental bases of scientific socialism. And to crown this truly remarkable symmetry, both Martinet and Draper conclude their "criticism" with attempts to pour ridicule on what they call our "faith" in the proletariat. Their own perspective is comprised in the perfectly vain hope that the bureaucracy will, one sunny day, abandon its privileges, "when society shall become mature for unified socialism," or that the "marvelous socialist dream" shall not have vanished from a society of slaves. To this sort of lucubrations, so utterly Utopian, we are indeed able to counterpose, with increased confidence, our own criteria, grounded on the thousand-times-verified theses of scientific socialism !

The Social Nature of Stalinism

Till now we have run up, time after time, against the problem of Stalinism. What is there surprising about it ? If all our critics – from the forgers of the GPU to the impeccable, moralists of **Libertaire** – trace all our sins down to our

original sin – our position on the Russian question" – then both logic and experience justify us even more in turning against them the converse proposition, namely : It is because they have long ceased to base their concrete day-to-day policies on the unimpaired revolutionary capacity of the world proletariat, that they are able to abandon themselves, to their heart's content, to such gratuitous acrobatics as their various "theories" on the Russian question.

For a program to be consistent, each of its component parts must lead toward the fundamental criterion. The application of the class criterion to international politics does not permit of denials that in most European and Asiatic countries the revolutionary aspirations of the *workers* have been expressed in their adherence to the Stalinist movement. The attitude of the revolutionary vanguard must, therefore, mirror the contradictory fact that the two basic tendencies of our era – on the one side, the instinctive revolutionary upsurge of the proletariat ; and on the other, the openly counter-revolutionary policy of its leadership – are being, so to speak, *concentrated* inside these parties for an entire epoch. This phenomenon loses its strange and paradoxical appearance once we regard Stalinism as an expression of existing Russian reality, which combines in itself the products of the most audacious revolution in history with the fruits of the most abject counter-revolution. The contradiction which our critics strive to expose in our characterization of Stalinism and in our revolutionary perspectives happens to be a material contradiction which exists objectively. It lives in the events of our day. Attempts to make it disappear by denying it with words will prove of no avail.

On the other hand, if one views Stalinism as a social force alien to the proletariat – representing either an old or an allegedly new ruling class – then one cannot avoid the conclusion that the "lack of comprehension" by the world working class in the face of this *enemy* social force would constitute a grave sign of the extent to which the proletariat has degenerated. That is why the position of our enemies and critics is likewise not lacking in logic. It is the logic of pessimism and prostration. It is impossible to combine a social analysis of Stalinism with an understanding of the instinctive revolutionary upsurge of the proletariat, without taking as one's starting point the hypothesis that the Soviet bureaucracy has not yet severed the umbilical cord which ties it to the working class. However repelling this hypothesis may appear in view of the monstrous crimes of Stalinism, it nevertheless remains the only one consistent both with the general premises of Marxist theory and with the sociological, political and ideological conditions pertaining to the phenomenon of Stalinism. Herein we obtain, on the *ideological plane* as well, the greatest clarity concerning the fundamental contradiction inherent in Stalinism.

So long as Stalinism continues to base itself on a *falsification* of Leninism, no material power in the world can prevent thousands of Communist militants among the youth from learning the *true* nature of Leninism and breaking with Stalin. This experience is being repeated literally every day in countries where Communist parties enjoy a large mass following, as well as in countries where Stalinism is for the moment the "official" ideology. It is not by accident that in these latter countries the "struggle against Trotskyism," even though it does not exist there as an organized force, has been placed permanently on the order of the day in all the Stalinist cadre schools !

The history of the young Albanian Communist Party, which we shall soon publish, will provide another proof of this. It shows how, twenty years after Stalin's victory, in a country completely bereft of Marxist traditions, under conditions of military control by the Stalinist machine, an entire generation of young Communist leaders has been brought – by their class instinct and by their education in Marxism, distorted though it was, received in the Stalinist schools – to a complete break with the policies and organizational methods of Stalinism. "When they used to accuse us of Trotskyism," we were told by their leader who has just joined the ranks of the Fourth International, "we did not even know what Trotskyism was, and we used to protest violently. Today I understand that at that time we actually were Trotskyists, without being aware of it ..."

How can words like these possibly fail to fill us with confidence in the destiny of our movement ! Yes, Stalinism must inescapably continue to distil "Trotskyist deviations," so long as it fails to break organically with the militant workers, and with working-class traditions, and with the scientific terminology and basic writings of Marxism.

While our Second World Congress was in session, our critics stopped the clock of history and declared that the "forecasts of Trotsky concerning the instability of the Stalinist bureaucracy have been proved false." Three months later, the Tito case brings with it a striking verification of Trotsky's profound analysis of the centrifugal forces within the Stalinist bureaucracy. The ponderous totalitarian lid still hides from the world the powerful process of discontent with Stalinism among the young Russian Communist vanguard. The amateurs of fixed calendar dates would do well to understand the meaning of the lesson which events have just taught them. Sooner or later the hour will strike when the truth will likewise break through to the surface because of the growing political ferment within the ranks of the Russian working-class vanguard. On that hour, thousands of young Russian Communists will turn out to be "Trotskyists who were not aware of it."

The Building of the Revolutionary Party

The ideological heritage Trotsky bequeathed us thus stands forth as completely consistent. It weaves together indivisibly : a lucid comprehension of the tendencies of decay in modern society ; the objective definition of those revolutionary forces which alone are capable of checking humanity's plunge into barbarism and assuring the ascent to socialism ; the scientific study of subjective conditions indispensable for the revolutionary victory, among which is the exact knowledge of the nature of the treacherous leadership of the proletariat.

But for Trotsky this monumental unified system of ideas was never anything else but a means of expediting revolutionary *action*, of equipping this *action* with crystal-clear objectives which are historically justified. Nothing is more alien to Trotsky and Trotskyism than fatalism, political abstentionism or passivity. In the case of the gross forgery of the GPU, as in the case of the subtler "interpretation" of Trotsky's ideas by a Martinet or by the Shachtmanites, the spirit which they seek to impute to him reveals itself as false, in the first instance, because it mirrors the profound demoralization of the authors themselves. It is in complete contradiction with the unshakable *revolutionary vigor* Trotsky personified to his very last breath.

At this point there reappears our old acquaintance, the individual with a stop-watch, mysteriously synchronized with the movement of history, in order to demonstrate, arguments in hand, that we have foundered in this task of construction. He had been expecting spectacular results, which Trotsky and all of us had promised him in a too brief space of time. And now he is disappointed. Alongside him there appears a whole swarm of newly-hatched gadflies, each of whom seeks to buzz in our ears his own pet panacea for solving this crucial problem. Fifteen years ago, there were the gentlemen of the "Sex-Pol," who are completely forgotten today. Now there are our friends of the ASR (the Socialist Revolutionary Action group in France) who explain to us that it is necessary to put aside our "unified" program and to dissolve ourselves in a much larger (and still non-existent) centrist movement. There is Martinet who lectures us on the niceties of "People's Front" policy as the way out ; there are the Shachtmanites who call upon us to rally together, by means of a tactic of universal entryism, "all socialist forces which are non-reformist and anti-Stalinist" ; and then there are the more naive ones who expound with considerable sincerity that we need only modify our position on the Russian question in order to obtain positive results.

The whole trouble with all these panaceas is that they have been tried many times before without yielding any results whatever. The whole trouble with our well-meaning advisers is that they have themselves tried many times to build parties along their own models and have each time failed lamentably. Their disillusionment with our movement is nothing but a rationalization of their own frustrations.

To evaluate correctly what has already been achieved it is necessary to discard every criterion of time on the scale of a human life-span. A different and far bigger scale is required for judging such historical tasks as the building of the revolutionary party. We have-become accustomed to speak of the "organic growth" of the Social Democratic movement toward the close of the Nineteenth Century. As a matter of fact, after the collapse of the Communist

League of Marx and Engels, a decade and a half had to elapse before the building of Lassalle's General Association of German Workers. The resurgence of the French working-class movement as an organized force did not come about until two decades after the defeat of the Paris Commune. And yet how trifling were the material obstacles of this past epoch in comparison with those facing us today !

In its turn, the resurgence of the revolutionary movement after 1914 assumes today, in the light of history, a form quite different from that which its contemporaries believed they saw. Actually, the masses that flowed into the various sections of the Third International were *instinctively* revolutionary masses whose degree of *communist* consciousness differed only quantitatively from those of today. The leadership of these parties was, by and large, a *centrist* leadership, among whom the number of genuinely Bolshevik elements was unquestionably smaller than the present number of militants in the Fourth International. Consequently, the fusion which was momentarily brought about by the *Russian Revolution* between the international revolutionary vanguard and the broad masses was only an *apparent* fusion on the whole. The years that followed proved this beyond any doubt. It was necessary to begin everything anew ; the program had to be defined anew ; new cadres had to be educated ; it was necessary to penetrate anew into the masses. And all this had to be done during a period of deepest reaction. Is it astonishing that this task required more time for its solution than was reckoned upon twenty years ago ?

In 1940 at the outbreak of war, our movement was reduced in all countries, with one or two exceptions, to tiny isolated groups of intellectuals, in emigration or under illegality, or in the best case, in conditions of semi-activity. Today we can take stock of the progress achieved since that time. We cannot list a spectacular gain in numbers. But our movement has become solidified in China and in many Latin American countries, where it has, after years of reaction and confusion, shed its old skin for an entirely new one, where shut-in circles and dilettante intellectual groups have been liquidated, where our movement has penetrated into unions and factories and has effectively commenced to regroup the vanguard of *workers* on a modest scale wherever this work is possible under the existing conditions.

Our movement has become solidified in France and in Italy by the emergence of a young generation of rising *Trotskyist worker-leaders*, the first of its kind since the birth of our movement. This has likewise taken place in India and in the United States where the Trotskyist cadres, after years of participation in the class struggles, have become genuine mass leaders in various sectors. Everywhere our movement is now taking root in its class, growing with its class, and its destiny is being bound so closely with that of the proletariat that in the end it must lead the proletariat to its historical destiny. This road is much longer and less spectacular than the one formerly envisaged, but it is the only road possible.

And the true testament lies in this : that throughout our epoch convulsed by revolutionary crises, the young cadres of the Fourth International must find their way – through multiple and successive combat experiences – to the high road of penetrating into and winning over the masses. It is this testament which we have started to execute.

August 1, 1948