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THE BLACK PROLETARIAT AND THE RED CHINESE

by

Doug G. and Rosemary S.

I. B. Tabata in his presidential address to the first national conference of the African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa, reprinted in the International Socialist Review, Summer 1965, briefly showed how the slave trade of millions of blacks was the foundation for the industrial revolution and thus for the rise of capitalism and the bourgeoisie as a class. The struggle began on a global scale with the central axis then being the enslavement of the black peoples -- and it will end on a global scale with the central axis of the struggle both inside and outside the United States being the super-exploitation of colored millions of the earth.

No other capitalist country has had the unique class development centering around the "dual and combined character of racial-national and class struggle" (this was the phrase used by Comrade George Breitman in his article, "The Colonial Revolution in Today's World," one of a series he wrote for the paper in answer to Harold Cruse's Liberator articles) manifested in the super-exploitation of the black masses that the United States has had. Its Marxist theory must be unique, therefore, to meet these peculiarities.

White Europeans committed genocide against the indigenous colored populations of Indians in the seizure of land. Millions of black slaves were imported to exploit this seized land. Later, in the industrial-capitalist stage, these millions of blacks became the super-exploited sector of the working class.

The rise of the United States to the main neo-colonial, imperialist power is due in large part to its ability to super-exploit internally the millions of black people it had originally imported. No other capitalist country could do this. The rise of other capitalist countries to imperialist status was accomplished primarily through its external colonial exploitation. The unique advantage which United States capitalism had, of both internal and external colonial exploitation, gave the white sector of the American working class as well as the white bourgeoisie their privileged position on top of their respective classes globally. In spite of the class contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the privileged white-workers, a mutual advantage nevertheless accrued to them from the super-exploitation of the black masses in a situation expressed correctly as the combined and dual character of the racial-national and class struggle, which has placed these black masses in a semi-colonial status inside the United States.

In the context of the imperialist stage of history the Negro movement as a whole, struggling against its semi-colonial status internally, becomes an integral part of the colonial revolution against United States imperialism externally. The Negro movement with all its internal contradictions is propelled by specific conditions internally as it is also propelled by the external colonial revolution, and in the imperialist stage of history the Negro movement becomes in fact an extension of the colonial revolution into the mother country and vice versa. The movement externally and the movement internally reinforce and are a part of each other.

The Negro movement as a whole, including both civil rights and nationalist sectors, is fundamentally the movement of the working class. It is the vanguard proletariat of the United States working class as well as an integral part of the external world colonial revolution battering at the colonial racist bastion of imperialism.

It is impossible to Afro-Americanize our Marxism unless these two basic and key phenomena are understood. They are clearly understood by the internationalist left-wing of the nationalist movement as we shall shortly demonstrate.

A failure to comprehend these phenomena is leading the party toward a growing estrangement from the left wing of black nationalism that threatens to become a deep and unbridgeable gulf.

The internationalist left wing of black nationalism is the vanguard element of the black liberation movement and an integral part of the colonial revolution inside the imperialist motherland.

Black nationalism, particularly the evolving internationalist and non-sectarian left wing of nationalism, is derived not from any previous national question in Europe, Russia, etc. but specifically from the semi-colonial condition of the black masses inside the United States who constitute not a nation but a national minority. Its roots are in the historical situation created by the importation of millions of black people from another continent, which continent is now in a revolutionary struggle against imperialism -- that is, the roots of black nationalism are in the great non-white colonial revolution encircling imperialism externally as well as in the semi-colonial status against which they are struggling internally.

Harold Cruse in his articles in the Liberator raised the question of the white sectors and the black sectors of the working class not only in a national context but in an international context relative to the role of the proletariat in the global class conflict. Comrade Brotman in his series of articles in the paper in answer to Cruse, for the most part avoided this aspect of Cruse's polemic, which was its central axis and point of departure.

In the last paragraph of his article "The Colonial Revolution in Today's World", Comrade Breitman speaks of the dual and combined character of the Negro struggle as both racial-national and class struggle and warns about any theory that does not take this into account, saying the synthesis of this duality should be worked out as it points in the right direction.

Comrade Breitman is correct. The writers of this bulletin made a start in this direction over two years ago in the appendix of their bulletin, "China: The Acid Test." However, there was one significant difference in our approach and that of Comrade Breitman. Whereas he confined his theoretical observations to the national scene, we placed this dual and combined character of racial-national and class struggle into both the national and international context where the history of the rise of capitalism and the present imperialist stage of history demands that it be.

Comrade Breitman's failure to do similarly prevented him from theoretically rounding out his reply to Cruse.

What is involved here is the question of capitalism and imperialism. Approximately a year ago several nationalist-oriented members of the SWP left the organization; one of their group in a letter to the paper (Oct. 5, 1964) criticized the party, saying that it couldn't meet the needs of the black liberation movement theoretically because it did not comprehend that the imperialist stage required that the struggle of the Afro-Americans in the United States be placed in an international context. This was a very valid criticism. The majority has indeed failed to comprehend black nationalism's derivative aspect as an integral part of the colonial revolution and its global place in the movement of the black proletariat throughout the world against United States imperialism.

Adolfo Gilly's articles in the Monthly Review (May and June, 1965) underscore the correctness of the criticism by these former SWP members. The Guatemalan revolutionaries make it quite clear that they think no national revolution can succeed unless it is correct in international theory and practice as well as correct in the national context.

However, had Comrade Breitman attempted to round out his correct theory of the combined and dual character of the struggle of the black masses in the United States as being both a racial-national and a class struggle on an international scale he would have run into a major obstacle of his own and the majority's creation.

Comrade Breitman in his article, "The Colonial Revolution in Today's World," states that the fate of the world is being decided by a combined operation of three factors: (1) The colonial struggle against imperialism; (2) The struggle for political revolution in the workers states, and (3) The struggle for social revolution in the imperialist states. These three

are all intimately connected, he says.

(We note in passing that in point 2 he inadvertently has included Cuba (!), no doubt a slip, but one which derives from the general sectarianism of Trotskyism in its view of the world situation.)

At this stage of world imperialism it is precisely on the question of the semi-colonial status of the black masses internally and their struggle for freedom as an integral part of the external colonial revolution that the most serious theoretical questions are posed. If, for instance, as our co-thinkers have said, "China is the motor force of the colonial revolution," then, of course, the nature of the Chinese regime is of fundamental and immediate importance to the American revolution which has as its central axis the movement of the black masses against their semi-colonial status.

That they believe this to be true has been clearly indicated by the most advanced of the revolutionary black militants today in such organizations as RAM and the OAAU. And in particular by the two black leaders most courted by the SWP, Malcolm X and Robert Williams, who along with other advanced militants and organizations look to for support and consider as leaders the Chinese regime in the struggle against world imperialism. The majority position on the Chinese regime therefore places the party in an ideological and practical obstructionist position to the colonial revolution externally and to the vanguard of the Negro movement internally, which as a whole is an integral part of the external colonial revolution.

The worldwide revolutionary regroupment now going on under the hegemony of the Chinese already has, and will in the future to an ever greater extent, extend into and encompass the Negro movement as a whole which is the central axis of the American revolution. Mao Tse-tung's statement of the solidarity of the Chinese people with the struggle of the black masses in the United States heralded this revolutionary regroupment. Its effect then and in the future will be to polarize the reformist and the revolutionary tendencies. As the polarization increases and the revolutionary sector comes closer to the Chinese, so will the worldwide regroupment under the hegemony of the Chinese reciprocally extend into the revolutionary tendency of the Negro movement.

As imperialism extends its racist counterrevolutionary war against the colonial revolution, with China the leader of the colonial revolution and United States imperialism its main antagonist, opposition to the war, accompanied by the regroupment encompassing the black vanguard, will become ever deeper and ever broader in scope. Already black vanguard elements have signified their refusal to serve in the imperialist counter-revolution against their colored brothers.

The Internationalist Left Wing of the Black Nationalist Movement

The following is an examination of two black nationalist organizations. Malcolm X and the OAAU are not included, on the assumption that comrades are fully familiar with them.

The Monthly Review article, "The Colonial War at Home" (May, 1964), dealt extensively with RAM and its leader, Max Stanford. It quoted from Stanford's "Towards Revolutionary Action Movement Manifesto" as follows: "RAM was officially organized in the winter of 1963 by Afro-Americans who favored Robert F. Williams and the concept of organized violence. Through a series of workshop discussions, the group decided there was a need for a 'Third Force' or movement that would be somewhere between the Nation of Islam (Black Muslims) and SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee)...". The Monthly Review article defined RAM's aims as being clearly revolutionary. It described its organizational practices, for instance, having rotating chairmen to help develop leadership. It explained its differences with other orthodox nationalists and why RAM intervenes in the civil rights struggle, pointing out that it was because intervention was not enough that it decided to organize a genuine revolutionary organization: "During the fall of 1963 RAM's field organizers helped groups throughout the south develop a perspective beyond the limits of the integrationist movement." (emphasis added)

The following passage is of great importance:

"RAM philosophy may be described as revolutionary nationalism, black nationalism, or just plain blackism. It is that black people of the world (darker races, black, yellow, brown, red, oppressed peoples) are all enslaved by the same forces. RAM's philosophy is one of the world black revolution or world revolution of oppressed peoples rising up against their former slavemasters. Our movement is a movement of black people who are coordinating their efforts to create a 'new world' free from exploitation and of oppression of man by man.

"In the world today there is a struggle for world power between two camps, the haves (Western or white capitalist nations), and the have-nots (Eastern or newly independent nations struggling for independence, socialist nations). There are two types of nationalism. One type suppresses or oppresses, that is, a nation or particular group reaps profits or advances materially at the expense, exploitation, slavery, or torture of another group or nation. In this nation and in the world today, this nationalism is considered 'white nationalism' or the cooperation of the white Western nations to keep the new emerging oppressed world in bondage. This is capitalist or reactionary

nationalism. The other type of nationalism is to liberate or free from exploitation. That is the binding force of a nation or particular group to free itself from a group or nation that is suppressing or oppressing it. In this country and in the world, this is considered black nationalism or revolutionary nationalism.

"We can see that black nationalism is the opposite of white nationalism; black nationalism being revolutionary and white being reactionary. We see also that nationalism is really internationalism today." (emphasis added)

The Monthly Review editors commented on this passage in the following manner:

"This extraordinary document shows that RAM, despite its original placing of itself 'somewhere between the Nation of Islam and SNCC,' has already left those organizations far behind. Max Stanford displays a profound understanding of the world situation... he is perfectly clear about (the fact that American Negroes) must have no illusions about the possibility of final victory except in conjunction with the final victory of the world revolution... this testifies to a level of theoretical understanding and clarity which is truly remarkable for the United States, where protest movements in the past -- Negro or radical or both -- can justly be said to be famous for their theoretical poverty." (emphasis added)

Monthly Review is correct.

In an article by William Worthy entitled "The Red Chinese American Negro" in Esquire Magazine (October, 1964), Worthy quoted a telegram from RAM to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam which said:

"Congratulating our Vietcong brothers for their inspiring victories against American imperialism in South Vietnam and declaring our independence from the policies of the American government abroad and at home... We of RAM do not seek assimilation or integration into this 'free world.' We do not want to share in the oppression of our brothers anywhere on earth; we will not join in the American counterrevolution that is attempting, at home and abroad, to crush the mounting revolutionary struggles."

In the same article, Worthy quoted Charles Johnson of UHURU as follows:

"I do not believe that Uncle Sam really wants this angry

black man in his Army...I certainly want no part of this white man's army,....I will not fight in the service of such a brutal, beastly white imperialist and racist aggressor nation....

"But if I am snatched in over my objections, I pledge for my people to agitate among black soldiers to unite them around the following revolutionary principles: 1. Self defense and vengeance; 2. All-black independent action; 3. To fight for 'integration': integrated pools of blood....

"The policy will be, as noted by Mao Tse-tung, brilliant leader of the Red Chinese, 'to give tit for tat....If we are attacked, we will certainly counterattack...to wipe you out resolutely, thoroughly, wholly, completely and utterly.' (emphasis added)

"There ain't no way in the hell that I'm going out like a fool and fight my nonwhite brothers in China, Africa and Latin America for White Devils....I support everything you oppose and oppose everything you support."

The refusal of black nationalists to serve in the imperialist counterrevolutionary army is profoundly revolutionary and could have, even if accepted on a moderate scale, an extraordinary effect on the class struggle nationally and internationally.

Speaking of the Communist party and its attack on Robert F. Williams, the article states: "Internationally, the Party's support of Moscow clashes with Williams' orientation toward China."

It is equally true that the position of the SWP majority on China clashes with Williams' orientation toward China.

In referring to the integrationist leaders' refusal to accept the aid of the Chinese communists in Peking, Worthy goes on to say, "Obviously these leaders were not speaking for the leaders of Williams' generation and those even younger. Nor were they articulating the views of many older Negroes who now see their destiny linked to all the world's have-nots. About a decade ago Langston Hughes formulated this budding liaison in a stanza remarkably prophetic of today's black nationalism:

...Forgive me
What I lack,
Black,
Caught in a crack
That splits the world in two
From China

By way of Arkansas
To Lenox Avenue....

"In openly shifting to this viewpoint, Malcolm X says that any Negro freedom movement not international in scope and perspective is foredoomed to failure" (emphasis added)

Worthy further quoted Malcolm as saying: "Outside the UN we have friends -- 700,000,000 Chinese who are ready to die for human rights." Malcolm said later in his Saturday Evening Post article, "Chinese will be the future leading political tongue of the world and Arabic the spiritual."

This simple statement was Malcolm's acknowledgment that he considered the Chinese under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung and the CCP to be the main and leading revolutionary force in the world today. Which it is.

The Worthy article goes on to give examples of other nationalist groupings and their understanding of imperialism, the colonial revolution and their own struggles inside the United States:

"In May of this year a conference of seventy-five Negro students in Nashville (convened by some of the undergraduates of Fisk University) called for unity with the African, Asian and Latin American revolution and for efforts to obtain 'financial help from friendly forces.' Another resolution was for the 'development of a permanent underground secretariat to carry out plans.'

"'Plans' include the 'elimination of capitalism in this country and the world and support for revolutionary black internationalism.' The conference was a natural outgrowth of a year of youthful intellectual ferment following the mass demonstrations of 1963. When the fruits of the demonstrations were considered to be minimal, nationalist groups who offered a revolutionary solution gained a growing audience on Negro campuses. For months, one such group known as RAM -- the Revolutionary Action Movement -- moved several roving organizers into the South, recruiting the dissidents in CORE and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and preparing for the conference of radicals that took place in Nashville. (emphasis added)

"At most, RAM probably has several hundred members, centered mostly in New York, Detroit, Chicago and Philadelphia. Its dedicated and well-read leaders see themselves as a vanguard group that will disseminate revolutionary ideas and will remain in communication with revolutionary forces everywhere. The leaders are not seeking to convert it into a mass organization."

The article demonstrated that these nationalists were becoming Marxist revolutionaries:

"The Negro owner of a bookstore near the University of Pennsylvania has watched the correlation between the birth locally of nationalist groups dissatisfied with the 'moderate' - Negro organizations and the purchase by these groups' youthful members of the basic works of Karl Marx. 'Those books are expensive, and most of these fellows can't afford them, but they buy them anyway,' the proprietor reported.

"Two English-language Chinese magazines, Peking Review and China Reconstructs, are standard reading fare of black-nationalists across the country. At a time when the government of the United States is seriously concerned with the - growing political and military strength of the largest Communist country, the likely successors to Wilkins, King and Farmer are openly seeking intellectual, ideological and strategic guidance from the Chinese revolution. Not at all inclined to temper their program in order to court white liberal allies, scornful of white respectability, they subscribe to Lenin's tenet that the proper path is that of struggle, not reconciliation." (emphasis added)

Following are some quotations from the April 29th issue of Black Flag. They are excerpted from the reprint of an article that appeared in Wohlforth's Bulletin of International Socialism (May 31, 1965):

"The current ideological struggle now being waged by the proponents of black nationalism can be shown to be more of a Marxist nature than even Marxists will be willing to admit. Why is this so? By approaching the question and the relationship of the black man in American society from a dialectical point of view...."

"It is our view, that the black man in America, while he is not a nation in the accepted use of the word, has had to relate to the capitalist system in a colonial or semi-colonial relationship. This has been due in the main to the 'boxing in on all sides by segregation and racial discrimination.' (Black Flag, #9 Observer)...."

"As we have held, the struggle for bourgeois democracy must continue. This struggle for democracy on the part of the black masses is not without a precedent in revolutionary history. In 1928, Mao Tse-tung recognized the need for the bourgeois-democratic revolution which had been defeated in

1926-27. (Selected Works, Peking 1964, page 64) Since the black masses are the most oppressed class who are badly in need of a bourgeois democratic revolution and since imperialist society cannot or will not allow this same revolution; this struggle for democracy takes the form of black nationalism."....

"We have recognized the contradiction of 'separatism' whether it is in the form of a state to be established within or an exodus for black people. Yet since the struggle for democracy must continue we call this 'separation.' A separation from capitalist society not in any physical sense, but it implies a corresponding struggle for socialism on the part of the white workers.

"By the very nature of the black man's relationship to the repressive capitalist/imperialist system, i. e., his separation, forces the upsurge of his nationalism."....

"This brings us to the reasons why the left has not been able to establish a base in the-white working class. It is precisely because of the semi-colonial relationship of the black man in capitalist society."....

"As we have already seen, the problem of the black masses has been one of separatism from the mainstream of the working class. This has allowed even the lowest paid, worst off white workers to feel and act superior to his black counterpart. Since the evolvment of capitalism into imperialism, the white workers could be allowed more benefits and a higher station in imperialist society than under laissez-faire capitalism."....

"No friends, revolutionary nationalists are not anti-working class per se but only to the extent that this same working class trails behind its own ruling class."....

"We hold that as the struggle of black people here in the U.S. continues to sharpen as well as the struggle for national liberation of colonial peoples and the contradictions of the national bourgeoisie and imperialism continue to mount, the compradore or pro-imperialist black bourgeois organizations and leaders will tend to become more and more conservative and in some cases reactionary, as some indications are already showing. This will have the effect of setting in motion much more obvious, the already class forces which exist within the black struggle."....

"Revolutionary nationalists in putting forward the demand for political power which the Bulletin criticizes, do so as a revolutionary step. The draft of the Freedom Now Party puts forth as a very minimum the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution as a start toward solving the economic problems faced by black people. No doubt some of this criticism which the Bulletin directs towards nationalist groups is valid in that in the same manner as any other force, black nationalism is not homogeneous. This is to say that while it has its progressive side its reactionary aspects should be struggled against. This should not surprise the editors of the Bulletin of International Socialism because is not the doctrine of the Communist-Party USA and those of the modern revisionists and other hangers-on also reactionary?" (emphasis added)

We have admittedly selected these quotes to bring out certain facets of of this particular black nationalist organization -- for instance, to show that they have obviously modified separatism to the point of losing what had been its essence.

These left-wing, non-sectarian black nationalist groups have a clear understanding of how the black liberation struggle transcends national boundaries in the imperialist stage of history and of how this affects revolutionary theory in the global class conflict. What is more, this left wing identifies the Chinese regime with world revolutionary leadership, looks to it as the central axis and main protagonist of the anti-imperialist struggle, and for this reason it studies the theoretical works of Mao Tse-tung. In this, the SWP majority has nothing in common with these vanguard black-militants. It is, of course, absolutely impossible to understand the Sino-Soviet dispute or the Chinese regime without a close study of the history of the Chinese revolution and of Mao Tse-tung's works. A close study of Peking Review is indispensable if one is to be informed on current policies and developments in the dispute.

The most devastating commentary on the SWP's position on China vis-a-vis the internationalist left wing of black nationalism is that it has a majority of cadres filled with irrational, false and absurd notions about the history of the Chinese revolution and its regime, a rank and file that not only does not read Peking Review but who have not even read Mao Tse-tung. Nor is such reading matter available to them through the literature tables of the SWP. On the level of being currently informed about China, the black nationalist organizations like RAM, UHURU, and Black Flag are becoming better Marxists than the majority of the SWP.

To go back to RAM, in his article in Liberator Max Stanford exhibits a tendency to make some rather hyperbolic statements regarding the extent of the racial aspect of the deal and combined character of the racial-national

and class struggle.

Stanford's views, however, are no more than extensions of the reality and are close to the viewpoints Robert Williams has expressed. In the Monthly Review article, "The Colonial War at Home," Williams was quoted as follows in connection with his vision of how the conflict would proceed in the United States: "It is no longer a truism that our people cannot win such a struggle. The world has changed and the favor of the situation has changed to the side of the Afro-American. . . . Our friends are growing throughout the world, while those of our oppressors are diminishing. It is important that we immediately create stronger ties with our brothers of Latin America, Asia and Africa."

Robert Williams, as we know, has put weight behind his words through his role in visiting China, making contacts with the Chinese leaders and encouraging the regime to formally support the struggle of Afro-Americans, which was most dramatically done through Mao Tse-tung's historic statement at the time of the March on Washington. In this imperialist stage of history when the Negro movement will have connections all over the world and the struggle will take on an increasingly complex international character, it would be a mistake to dismiss Williams simply because he is not in the United States and because many Afro-Americans have never heard of him. RAM received its initial impetus from Williams' struggle and his ideas. In any case he has already rendered great revolutionary service to the struggle of the colored masses, both nationally and internationally.

Although Robert Williams and Max Stanford may tend to hyper-extend and exaggerate the scope and degree of violence of the racial clashes to come in the United States, it is a fact that the whole history of capitalism and imperialism both internally and externally has constituted a form of race war that has been going on for over 300 years. The race war was and is also a class war. Given the racial-national and class struggle aspect of the Negro movement as a whole and the entire race-class war that is indigenous to the United States, it would be non-Marxist and wholly utopian not to understand that racial clashes in some form are bound to take place. Not the least of the contributing factors is the sharp stratification within the working class based on color lines.

Nationalist revolutionaries generally acknowledge that in the long run there will be an alliance with white revolutionaries. Their understanding of the broadness of the clash between white and black is based on irrefutable historic facts which were briefly examined at the beginning of this bulletin.

On the subject of RAM's viewpoints on the inevitability of racial clashes, the comments of the Monthly Review editors are much to the point:

"First, it is a fact that the worst forms of capitalist exploitation have from the very beginning run along racial lines and that they were forcibly imposed by whites on coloreds. It is also a fact that during the last hundred years the great majority of the white working people in the exploiting imperialist countries have been cut in on a share of the surpluses wrung from the labor of the exploited races and - therefore have a stake in preserving the system of exploitation. This is especially true of the United States which not only exploits a world-wide empire but has a super-exploited black sub-proletariat at home. Under these circumstances to wish for a world revolution which does not pit colored against white and which makes no appeals to the past history and the revolutionary solidarity of the colored peoples is exactly the same thing as wishing for no revolution at all."....

"It is of course true that revolutionary black nationalism has a rather low opinion of white radicals, but the explanation has much less to do with their race than with their past ineffectiveness. Where, as in Cuba and Algeria, real - revolutions have been led by whites, they have been unreservedly accepted by revolutionary black nationalists."
(emphasis added)

Radicals are not alone in their understanding of the semi-colonial nature of the struggle in the United States. The Monthly Review article's last paragraph points out that: "In his syndicated column of April 1, Joseph Alsop referring to the civil rights bill now before the Senate, wrote that 'this bill is the last, best chance to avoid something very like a colonial war in America.'"

Certainly there is a tendency on the part of RAM toward ultra-leftism but under the circumstances it is understandable and must be seen as a phase of development and not as a final, permanent feature of their position.

The majority's dismissal of Stanford and RAM and like-minded nationalists as ultra-leftists stems in part from the majority prejudice toward these black revolutionaries' correct understanding of the Chinese regime, but also from the majority's own growing reformism and in connection with this, the failure to place the Negro movement in its correct international global context in the imperialist stage of history and to comprehend that the Negro movement is the movement of the working class. While rejecting RAM, the party made an opportunist, uncritical adaptation to the Rev. Cleage -- whose black nationalism served as a cover for his social-democratic politics, which the majority couldn't see through -- that led to disastrous results.

A correct attitude toward such individuals and organizations as Max

Stanford and RAM as revolutionary allies is the mandatory first step in influencing them toward a more balanced viewpoint of the dual and combined character of the racial-national and class struggle of the black masses.

Integrationism and Separatism: The Interpenetration of Opposites

The interpenetration of opposites -- separatism vs. integrationism -- has been strikingly illustrated in the last two years.

It is significant that the internationalist left wing of the black nationalist movement (OAAU, RAM, Black Flag) has either dropped separatism as part of its ideology or has so modified it that it no longer retains its original meaning. These nationalist groups are also intervening in the racial-national and class struggle for black liberation. It is equally significant that the left wing of the integrationist movement has at the same time eschewed the goal of integration insofar as integration means integration into the system, and they are attracted to RAM, some having joined it, just as some were potential followers of Malcolm X.

The dropping of separatism, in its essence, by left-wing black nationalists was reflected in the split in the Muslims, and in the emergence of RAM, Black Flag and other organizations. On the other hand, the move away from the concept of integration into white society is reflected in the emergence of the left wing of SNCC. That a dead end has been reached in the integrationist movement per se is implicitly admitted by CORE in its turn to political action, which will for it be little more than an attempt to guide the Negro movement into reformist politics either in or as an adjunct to the Democratic party. (For several years CORE had an office in Harlem, but to this day they haven't made a dent in the black ghetto.) So opportunistic are they in making this turn that they invited the Black Muslims to their recent convention because they know the Muslims have some following in the ghetto. As the integrationist movement per se is seen increasingly stalemated and as it moves more and more toward reformist solutions, the most militant in that movement will move toward the non-sectarian, internationalist left wing of black nationalism, which supports independent political action against the capitalist parties. This synthesis is already taking place.

The struggle of the black-proletariat as a whole is now encompassing not only the sphere of bourgeois-democratic demands, which the system (the Southern section, that is) cannot fully grant, but is now moving into the area of the classical demands of the dispossessed: jobs, housing, schools. These are not in essence integration demands; they transcend integration insofar as they represent the traditional demands of white workers, who have not been victimized by the racial side of class exploitation.

As the struggle intensifies in this area, the revolutionary synthesis of - separatism vs. integrationism will emerge. The dominant force in this process will be the brand of black nationalism represented by Malcolm X and also by RAM and Black Flag, who place the struggle of the black proletariat at all times and at all levels in its proper international context.

It has been a major failure of the party not to understand this development of the interpenetration of opposites. If the party had a correct policy of programmatic intervention and a selected few cadres in the left wing of SNCC as it should have, it would be strategically placed to work toward a synthesis of the left wing of nationalism and the left wing of integrationism, which would be a progressive development.

One of the flaws in the majority's analysis of black nationalism in 1963, when the nationalists still were predominantly separatist in ideology, was that it implied that separatism was inherently revolutionary. We, the writers of this bulletin, accepted that viewpoint too in supporting the majority's 1963 Freedom Now Resolution. We admit the error.

On the other hand, the Kirk position of 1963 on the inherently revolutionary nature of integrationism, which was accompanied by the blanket rejection of all black nationalism, has been proved by concrete developments to have been incorrect also.

Only those nationalist groups that have dropped or modified the idea of separatism to the point where its original essence is lost have continued on a revolutionary course. Separatism can lead to extremely reactionary consequences. In California, separatists supported Goldwater; the Bay Area Afro-Americans have ties with the John Birch society, and the Black Muslims were exposed by Malcolm X himself as having ties with the Ku Klux Klan -- and probable ties to the CIA in Malcolm's murder. Dr. Max Yergan, a Negro sociologist and supporter of Goldwater, praised the neo-Fascist South African government's policy of "apartheid" for giving Africans "more dignity and respect"!!! (N. Y. Times, 11/30/64)

The majority's 1963 Freedom Now Resolution characterized the Muslims as "the most dynamic tendency in the Northern Negro community today." Majority spokesmen, including the '65 New York branch reporter, Comrade Dee, insist that the '63 Resolution was basically correct and have said nothing to correct its assessment of the Muslims, nor to alter the tactical approach spelled out in the '63 Resolution, i. e.: "Where we differ with them, we differ in a friendly way, and we seek collaboration with them on mutually acceptable projects." The summation of the majority's three-sentence re-evaluation of the Muslims as of 1965 is that the split led by Malcolm X "has drastically reduced the capacities of Muhammad's movement to contribute to the furtherance of the cause of Afro-American emancipation." (!!!)

The Muslims played a progressive role in the development of black consciousness, self-interest and dignity. At that point where it could no longer play a continuing progressive role, due to its internal corruption, religious sectarianism and other factors -- but primarily its political abstentionism and sectarianism centered around its separatist ideology -- a split took place. Malcolm X and his followers left the organization.

In the process of forging world-wide support for the liberation of the black masses in the United States and preparing for active intervention in the southern struggle, Malcolm X dropped separatism as an ideological goal.

The Muslims were faced with a new movement which threatened rapidly to supplant their own and which was in conflict with their separatist goal.

The bourgeoisie was confronted with a black revolutionary movement of great historic scope and potential.

A convergence of interests between imperialism and the Muslims took place, with the result that a counterrevolutionary assassination took place, and the potential revolutionary movement was beheaded.

This was a classical historical pattern familiar to one degree or another in the history of the First, Second, and Third Internationals and in the revolutionary parties associated with them.

Sectarianism, whether it is the particular Muslim brand or the particular brand of revolutionary parties, is the other side of the coin of opportunism. -- At some point, the interests of the class enemy and of sectarianism-opportunism inevitably converge.

The left wing of the integrationist movement has found it necessary to drop or severely modify integrationism as an ideology, since it lent itself to reformist and status quo goals. Unfortunately, neither the Kirk minority nor the majority has sufficiently understood and followed the dialectical development of both the integrationist ideology and the separatist ideology and their own internal contradictions and the overall interpenetration of opposites -- separatism vs. integrationism -- that is leading to a synthesis. It is impossible to keep on top of the various stages of the Negro movement unless this dialectical movement is understood.

At the very time the majority and minority '63 resolutions were being written, both ideologies, the integrationist as it affected the civil rights movement and the separatist as it affected the nationalist movements, were undergoing questioning and change. This was more profound and far-reaching in the separatist ranks than in the integrationist ranks.

In sum total, the 1965 Resolution is almost a total blank when it comes to

reflecting and analyzing the profound changes in the Negro movement since the '63 Freedom Now Resolution. This was inevitable in view of the fact that the majority refuses to admit the grave errors and deficiencies in the analysis in the '63 Resolution. This inability is further explained by the basic disaffinity in areas of fundamental importance between the majority and the internationalist left wing of black nationalism, as analyzed in this bulletin.

Monthly Review, in its '64 article, "The Colonial War at Home," had a better perception than the SWP majority of what was involved, as we have already examined. One of the ways they stated it was:

"In sharp contrast to the Black Muslims, the new Negro radicalism is moving toward a thorough-going revolutionary position, not only in methods but goals as well. And in the course of doing so it is rapidly shedding the traditional conception of Negroes as a minority struggling for their rights in America in favor of a radically new conception of American Negroes as part of an international colored majority struggling for a new world."

This is not the only area where the Monthly Review has a better perception than the SWP majority. It has a better position on the Chinese regime and on the Sino-Soviet dispute. The majority is solely responsible for the SWP being outflanked from the left by the Monthly Review on these two key national and international questions: the questions of the black proletariat and the Red Chinese.

The Black Proletariat and the Danger of Fascism

That the majority does not consider the Negro movement as the movement of the working class is not so much revealed in their documents, which have been ambiguous in this respect in the past few years, but on the negative appraisal of the danger of fascism, which is to say that the majority has an entirely incorrect conjunctural perspective. In fact it hasn't any at all.

For if one takes fully into account the impending worldwide financial - crisis, the squeeze on the middle class (manifested in their racist demonstrations against Negro equality north and south; the demonstration of thousands of whites against school integration in the north is particularly ominous) and the clashes between the bourgeoisie and the Negro movement- (the working class) which are mounting in intensity and violence on an ever-broadening and deeper scale, then it is impossible to come to the majority's negative appraisal of the danger of fascism. One can only come to such a negative appraisal if the Negro movement is not considered the movement of the working class.

In a three-part discussion on fascism held a few months ago in the New York branch, both the leader of the discussion, George Lavan, and the rank and file majority speakers made repeated references to the quiescence of the working class and to the fact that there were no clashes. They continually referred to the organized sector, never once referring to the Negro movement in negating the danger of fascism. This is quite remarkable in view of Comrade Vernon's constructive attempts to get the SWP to Afro-Americanize its Marxism and begin to think and understand in terms of the black proletariat as a decisive factor in the American revolution. It is ironic but also inevitable, given their reformist and opportunist tendency, that it is the majority sector of the party, with which Comrade Vernon aligns himself, that is guilty of these elementary basic errors in theory and attitude.

It is precisely the movement of the black proletariat contained in the Negro movement as a whole in ever-deepening clashes with the bourgeoisie that is deeply significant in the appraisal of the danger of fascism. It is the movement of the black masses that has in fact given impetus to all the neo-fascist organizations that are increasing in size and scope month by month. The murder of Malcolm X was an integral part of the bourgeoisie's counter-revolution. The McCarthy period crippled and house broke most of the trade union movement. There is little possibility short of fascism itself of so emasculating the Negro movement in the coming period. The bourgeoisie can housebreak only sections of the movement (as it has a large part of the integrationist movement and certain sections of the black nationalist movement to one degree or another) but not the combined thrust of the movement as a whole.

As for federal troops to the South and its extension to an indefinite period as advocated in the paper, what can one say about the majority that it does not comprehend the fact that the capitalist system cannot stand a black reconstruction now, based on the constitution, any more than it could many years ago? In the struggle for bourgeois democracy by the black masses and a new black reconstruction, the laws of the permanent revolution will prevail and the very federal troops that we asked to be there are going to be used in a counter-revolutionary manner against the Negro people just as they are in Vietnam and Santo Domingo where the laws of the permanent revolution also prevail in the national democratic stage of their revolutions.

While the newspaper advocated federal troops to the South for an indefinite period, the youth, during the so-called Harlem riots, distributed a leaflet calling for the deputizing of Negroes, thus making them an arm of the very police the Negroes were fighting in the streets.

These are examples of how absurd and at the same time very dangerous are the reformist politics of the majority. Again it must be said that such utterly disorienting politics stem from the fact that the majority does not consider the Negro movement as the movement of the working class, and from

this basic error a whole series of other errors, including a lack of conjunctural perspective proceeds.

Again the majority has nothing in common with the internationalist left wing of black nationalism, who generally comprehend quite clearly the danger of Fascism in the coming period and who have come to a revolutionary conjunctural perspective.

The Trade Unions and the Negro Movement

It is impossible to deal adequately with the question of the trade unions and the Negro movement in this bulletin. It requires a separate comprehensive analysis in depth. We will confine ourselves to a few general but fundamental observations.

We stated among other things at the beginning of this bulletin that due to the peculiar nature of United States capitalism and the dual and combined character of racial-national and class struggle in the super-exploitation of the black masses in a semi-colonial state, the ability to super-exploit internally the black masses was in large measure the reason for the ascendancy of the United States to the No. 1 capitalist power and that due to this unique condition a mutual advantage accrued to both the bourgeoisie and the white sector of the working class and that our theory must take this into account.

This has not been done by the majority with respect to programmatic perspectives, particularly with regard to the organized sector of the working class as the main repository of privileged white workers. (We do not overlook the fact that some unions have a number of Negro workers, which is a factor for special consideration.)

The majority views the organized sector (the trade unions) as the base and core for mass radicalization and the Labor Party as a key perspective for which it raises the slogan of the Labor Party. There are a number of things that are a serious error in this approach, particularly with regard to the Negro movement.

Externally the organized sector under the AFL-CIO in Africa, South America and Southeast Asia is nothing but a fifth column counterrevolutionary arm of United States imperialism, carrying out in varying degrees and methods the goals and aims of the CIA and very often in direct collusion with it. A major factor in the split in the greater New York branch of the Negro-American Labor Council was over the right of Africans to set up their own unions free of AFL-CIO influence. Randolph was against this and it was a factor in the witch-hunt carried out in the organization and the resultant split and disintegration of the NALC.

Internally in the United States, some of the big unions are little more than company unions, having in the last few years lost control over certain working conditions that made them viable unions in the first place. No serious analysis has ever been made of James Boggs' thesis (Monthly Review, summer of 1963) by the party, particularly with regard to the importance of the point just made.

The McCarthy period accomplished exactly what the bourgeoisie calculated. It smashed the left-wing and straitjacketed the union movement in a whole series of binding legal and extra-legal measures that eventually led to the loss of control over fundamental working conditions that Boggs talked about. It domesticated and emasculated the union movement, to a far greater degree than radicals are willing to admit.

The great and fundamental historic failure of the CIO was its failure to organize the South -- where they did organize they set up Jim Crow locals. Its failure in regard to the super-exploited black workers has been the Achilles heel of the organized sector of the working class. The degeneration of the organized sector has made it virtually impossible for the AFL-CIO to organize the South. This failure was further complicated both north and south by the seniority system which placed Negroes at the bottom of the list inside the union movement itself. There is a growing clash between black and white workers on this issue, faced with automation and loss of jobs.

We are all familiar with the various Jim Crow unions that black workers are demanding entrance into in order to get jobs. The fact of the matter is that aside from token gestures in this respect, it is impossible to make any fundamental change because there simply aren't enough jobs left for the white workers in these Jim Crow unions, let alone adding additional black workers. Thus a number of trade unions will remain both racist-white and privileged, desperately clinging to jobs they have. To hope that such unions will become a base for mass radicalization or that workers in such unions will become radicalized and provide the main base for a mass radicalization is mere wishful thinking.

Several years ago the party, with the rise of the NALC, placed great emphasis on the building of a left wing around the grievances of the discriminated against black workers on the job and in the unions themselves. (The party gave more lip service to this than real activity.) Within a few short years this entire movement collapsed. Doug (co-author of this bulletin) was deeply involved in this work and drew certain tentative conclusions from the experience.

This movement did not collapse primarily because of the social-democratic sabotage and witchhunting by its leadership, A. Philip Randolph, although this was an important factor. It collapsed at this stage also because of the overall degenerated character of the unions themselves, to which Randolph is

completely bound. The fact is black workers in the face of loss of work are of necessity primarily concerned in hanging on to the jobs that are left and in this case the black worker acceded to the rearguard actions of the unions, whose contract goals center around fringe conditions such as pensions, etc.

There is a complete gulf between workers thrown out of work and those still retaining their jobs. The organized sector pays little or no attention to the ex-employed unionists. And there is of course a chasm between the masses of unorganized black workers and the organized sector as there is in the vast unemployed youth, many of whom will never find jobs.

Trotsky's prediction of the state the trade union movement could reach in the United States is now largely a fact. There has been a whole series of strikes in the past few years, and a pattern seems to be emerging. In roughly 75% of the cases the workers go back to work with little more than they had before. This is due to the advanced state of degeneration of the unions and the straitjacket they are in, having lost control at various key points, not just to bad leadership.

Furthermore, if this were not enough for a reappraisal of the organized sector, the fact that the economy is now shifting to service industries where there is little or no organization demands a complete reappraisal.

In any case the party's holding action based on the organized sector as the core and base of mass radicalization and the concomitant labor party perspective must be reexamined.

It was this incorrect perspective that led the youth, prior to the recent student radicalization, to say that lack of student radicalization was due to the fact there wasn't a labor party, or organized labor hadn't moved. It is precisely the Negro movement (the movement of the working class) and the convergence of the mounting of the counter-revolutionary racist-imperialist wars externally and the mounting intensity of the clash between the Negro-movement and the bourgeoisie internally with the concomitant rise of neo-fascism that has been the basis for the student radicalization and will continue to be its base, not the radicalization of the organized sector. Black and white unity is already being forged between radicalized white youth and black militants in the convergence of the struggle against racist imperialist wars externally and the clash of the Negro movement with the racist bourgeoisie internally. Later this unity can be extended to the white unemployed youth, but probably the last in the alliance of black and white will be the organized sector.

That we are by no means alone in our viewpoints on this whole subject can be seen by a brief examination of some criticism levelled at the party. The first example was the long letter to the newspaper printed in the Oct. 26, 1964 issue. The following are brief excerpts:

"The Socialist Workers Party Election Platform is defective, it seems to me, in respect to its references to the American trade union movement. The SWP's formulations do not reflect the changes that have taken place over the past decades: the stratification of the working class; the economic and social consequences of 25 years of relatively steady employment for millions; the institutionalization of the unions and their conversion from the fighting, militant instruments of the working class particularly in the 1930s to the class-collaborationist organs of today; the domination of the unions by a labor aristocracy composed not only of the officialdom but of a vast number of workers who enjoy a privileged position and a relative affluence, however insecure it may be.".... (emphasis added)

The letter quotes Robert Williams as follows:

"Most white workers in the U. S. A. today have a vested interest in the status quo. The present system grants them special privileges in a jungle society.... The vast majority of the whites have also been mentally poisoned with racism. It is asinine to expect them to recover from their race psychoses without a severe shock treatment."

"Two things should be noted about Williams' comment: First, he relates the attitude of most white workers to their position in society and does not give an exaggerated emphasis to the labor officialdom and their misleadership; secondly, he distinguishes between 'most white workers' who have a vested interest and those who do not. It is among the latter group that the best potential lies now for developing allies for the Negro struggle.".... (emphasis added)

"Can anyone seriously expect the AFL-CIO, for example, as presently constituted, with its corrupt leadership and with a membership numerically dominated by the better paid workers, to come forward energetically, unite the oppressed peoples, support the revolutionary aspirations of the Negro people, stand against colonialism and create a proletarian party?"..... "Meanwhile, the usual experience where layoffs have taken place is for the union to turn its back on the unemployed member, preferring to orient its policies in favor of the dues-payers."....

"The ruling class may prefer to maintain its alliance with the labor movement, availing itself of labor's support for an imperialist foreign policy. With the Negro revolt

maturing into a revolution, it is questionable whether the ruling class will simultaneously wage a war of extinction with the unions. (This is what is behind the government's present move to end "right-to-work" laws.) (emphasis added)

"At any rate, it remains to be seen whether the unions will lead a significant democratic mass movement or whether the masses will be compelled to create new organizations to fight for their needs. If the latter, then the SWP's call for an independent labor party 'based on the unions' will lose all significance....." (emphasis added)

Comrade Warde's reply in the same issue was similar to the reply Comrade Breitman later made to Harold Cruse, which was referred to earlier in this bulletin. Warde did not really deal with the questions raised and was reduced to a reiteration of faith in the organized sector rising again as they did in the '30s with the rise of the CIO, and thence to the formation of a labor party, giving the example of the Canadian labor party. Thus, not only was Warde's article a reiteration of faith but the parallel with Canada was a fundamental error. Warde avoided the central viewpoint of the criticism. The whole point is that Canada does not have semi-colonial, super-exploited black masses from which workers in the organized sector derive a privileged position and material benefits above the rest of the class as a whole. (Canada has, of course, black workers, many descendants of escaping slaves, but not on the same scale or under the same conditions as the United States. There is a qualitative difference.) It is this brake on class consciousness of the organized sector of workers in the United States, deriving from their privileged, stratified position that is a major obstacle for the Labor Party perspective based on the organized sector. Warde's answer is a perfect example of the failure of the majority to really comprehend the peculiarities of the American class struggle centered around the axis of the super-exploited semi-colonial black masses.

Earlier in this bulletin we referred to a letter to the newspaper written by a nationalist, one of several who left the party, criticizing it for its lack of comprehension of the imperialist stage of history and thereby its inability to comprehend the class struggle and particularly the problems and movement of the black masses.

The following excerpts serve to underline the foregoing material on the organized sector:

"This is the age of imperialism. This is not the age of capitalism. Capitalism is only the minor aspect of world imperialism. Breitman argues from the standpoint of American capitalism, which is a thing of the past. And perhaps this is where and why he wanders astray from today's reality. The

same internal contradictions of what he calls capitalism can contain the seeds of its own negation. The same evils which he says will generate the effective revolutionary union of whites and blacks can be turned by the ruling imperialist class to contradict the struggle of the Afroamerican. The shrinking imperialist market which works such hardships on the heretofore complacent white workers is caused by the revolutionary work of the Black World Revolution. By the same token, the shrinking job market here which works such hardship upon the white workers will be blamed on black insurgents. More massive and militant black demonstrations which will make deeper and deeper inroads on the American economy, along with escalating 'adventuristic' revolutionary actions of Afroamericans will tend to heighten the traditional prejudice and hatred held for black people by the reactionary partners of the American Way of Life.

"Thus, the contradictions which Breitman feels will bring the races together will more likely make for more disruptive factors, more divisive factors. And the American white workers will become more and more reactionary -- until they are ready to join the fascist legions. The white South is ready right now. And the rest of white America is not far behind them. Up South, Down South, it is all the same...."

Despite the tendency toward exaggeration, the problem as posed by this writer must be paid the most serious attention.

This bulletin is not to be construed as a write-off of the trade unions as a progressive factor in the American revolution. We are not writing them off. The union movement must be paid attention to. Where intervention is feasible, -- not mere lip service should be given, but real intervention, following thorough-going appraisals of the possibilities for building left-wing formations in various specific unions. Black and white unity in the context of the peculiarities of the United States' social structure, as we have outlined in this bulletin, is something infinitely complex and therefore difficult of realization and it will undoubtedly take unusual and varied forms.

For too long the party, and in fact the entire Marxist movement, has tended to view the organized sector as homogeneous. When the privileged position of the organized sector on top of the world's and the American working class is taken fully into account, then an examination of which unions may not be viable and which unions may be viable becomes a primary task as does an examination into the question of at what stage and how movement of the ranks can be expected. For instance, the Teamsters -- which are not so immediately faced with unemployment due to automation -- has a sizeable contingent of black workers. These circumstances may allow it to play a

revolutionary role sooner. Racial composition of a union in terms of the peculiarities of American social class and caste structure is important. Some unions may overthrow their bureaucracies and play a decisive role at a later period in the mass revolutionary forces now beginning slowly to emerge. Other unions may never play a progressive role and will have to be neutralized in the struggle. This task of neutralizing sections of privileged white workers, if they appear not to be able to come over to the side of the mass revolutionary movement, thereby preventing them from obstructing the revolutionary process may become a very important task.

There may have to be in some industries new unions built, based on the unemployed and not the employed, or both. The variables are many.

The majority perspective that within the union movement as a homogeneous whole the rank and file will become radicalized, overthrow their bureaucracy, form a labor party and become allies of the black proletariat vanguard reveals that little real analysis in depth has been given to the stratification of workers on the basis of the dual and combined racial-national and class struggle, which should have been the primary theoretical task of Marxists in the United States through the years.

The nationalists, particularly the left-wing internationalist sections, have already contributed a great service in breaking down some of the dogmatism, traditionalism, and fetishism that have prevented radicals from applying the science of dialectics and study of contradictions to what is really happening in the class struggle. Unfortunately they haven't had nearly enough effect yet.

The 1963 Freedom Now Draft Resolution states:

"We both agree (speaking of the nationalists) that a gap has appeared between the Negro movement and the labor movement and that present relations between them are strained or cool. We disagree over the meaning of these facts, their significance for the future, and what to do about them. Since the relations between these two movements are key to the future of this country, and through it of the world they deserve the most sober appraisal and searching study."

The contents of the present bulletin are designed at least in some measure to fill the gap left by the majority's failure to give these questions "the most sober appraisal and searching study."

It was the painstaking analytical breakdown by Mao Tse-tung and his comrades of the various sections and stratification of the peasantry and proletariat (particularly the peasantry) leading to unorthodox but correct revolutionary strategic and tactical action and concepts which was basic to the success of the Chinese revolution.

Trotskyists in China and elsewhere took the position that the city workers were to be the main fighting force in the revolution and that the revolution should proceed from the town to the country, thus following the schema of the Russian revolution. This position was in direct opposition and contradiction to the actual course of the Chinese revolution under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung, which proceeded from the country to the town with the peasantry as the main fighting force. The alliance of the proletariat and peasantry followed an unorthodox pattern in the Chinese revolution. To this day the Trotskyist movement has not assimilated these lessons of revolutionary history and in fact the disputes that are tearing the movement apart are on these very questions of the respective role of the peasantry and the proletariat and the nature and role of the vanguard party.

Are we going to make similar errors in the American revolution, in a different way, and place ourselves in an obstructionist position to actual class developments in the American revolution? For instance, as we noted previously, the alliance of black and white is already beginning to take a different form from the perspective the majority and other radicals envisage. But the majority, through a failure to comprehend and analyze in depth the peculiarities of the American situation, is still hung up on traditional schema and projects a false perspective that is an obstacle to the vanguard party's proper intervention and building of a mass revolutionary movement.

Summary

A great historic convergence is now taking place. It revolves around:

- (1) The Negro movement (which is the movement of the working class) internally in the United States, struggling against its semi-colonial status, marked by increasing severity in the clashes with the imperialist bourgeoisie and the rise of a neo-fascist racist counter-revolutionary force; and
- (2) The great colored colonial revolutionary movements externally encircling United States imperialism, necessitating the mounting of a global counter-revolutionary, neo-fascist racist effort externally by the bourgeoisie itself, and
- (3) The impending world capitalist financial crisis caused by a shrinking imperialist market which in turn is caused by the successful and mounting colonial revolution.

It is precisely the historic convergence of these-three interconnected phenomena that is moving the United States to a pre-revolutionary situation.

July 29, 1965

THE DE LEONIST DEBENTURES

(A Criticism of the Majority Draft Resolution)

I. The Direction of the Majority Draft

"We are not yet a party in the full sense of the term; we are a propaganda group striving to become a party of revolutionary action. Our main functions at this stage are, therefore, propagandistic in character." (From "The Next Phase of American Politics")

The resolution takes note of other and even less promising propaganda groups at this conjuncture: "None of the existing groupings measure up to our programmatic criteria for a radical regroupment...although Progressive Labor appears to have drawn some worthwhile young people into its ranks."

The mass movement does not measure up to our programmatic criteria either, according to the resolution, except that some features of the anti-war and civil-rights movements merit our support: "Bitter experience will teach the militants, both those now taken in by Johnson and those who thrust aside politics to concentrate on mass action alone, that their struggle requires the combining of mass action with independent political organization."

The Party will evidently accelerate the educational process with an instructive propaganda.

Evidently there is considerable activity, because the resolution goes on: "Each new phase of the struggle will shake up existing leadership patterns within the movement and accelerate the rise of a left-wing leadership fighting to gain ascendancy over right-wing and centrist formations in a contest for mass support." The Party's function will be to assist the rise of a left-wing leadership with a propaganda.

A debenture is an instrument in the nature of a guaranteed bond, held against future income from specified sources.

A revolutionary combat party is an instrument for intervention in the class-struggle. The combat feature distinguishes it from purely electoral and propaganda instruments of the proletariat. Its intervention is necessarily organizational, and it develops tactics to support a strategical orientation corresponding to a Marxist study and estimate of the class-struggle conjuncture. While a propaganda is of inestimable value at one stage, it is no substitute for a tactic of intervention, investing the class movement with the Party Plan, ever since Lenin disputed the question with the Mensheviks in a treatise, "What is to Be Done?"

The astonishing disproportion, not alone of the SWP, but of the whole mainland left-wing in relation to the proliferating proletariat should give us pause for deliberation. The Khrushchev clique has buried the American CP and its wish-fulfillment petty-bourgeois orientation forever. Schizophrenia has seized the entire Telephone Committee of the SLP, despite encouraging income from the Home Study Course in Marxism. Nostalgia grips the old SP, while Spartacist tilts with Kremlin windmills. Sundry independents search vainly for a new "Peace Candidate". PL "does not measure up to the programmatic criteria" of the SWP, although both are propaganda groups.

The circulation statistics for all combined are not impressive. Meanwhile fresh forces of the class organize and act on the "go-it-alone" principle.

II. The De Leonist System

The strategy of De Leon's heirs has been to invest in debentures favored by a specified historical outcome. The method supporting this strategy is variously described as sectarian formalism or ultimatism.

Now it is quite possible that the Socialist Industrial Union, logically derived by De Leon from the socialized form of capitalist production and from the class antagonism in its social foundation, is an ideal instrument for "the administration of things." Equally valid, then, is the specified condition for its emergence as the proletarian state power on the terrain of that capitalist state enjoying the maximum development of its productive forces. Clearly a socialist society cannot be built on the narrow foundations of a cottage industry, or backyard ironworks.

De Leon had not intended that his instrument for a construction of the proletarian state power should be a barbed wire obstruction to the advance of revolutionary forces in under-developed countries. It was designed as an ideological instrument in the struggle against reformist concepts of the state and social evolution.

Nevertheless, this abstraction has nothing to do with revolutionary strategy and tactics as program corresponding to the logic of development, whatever the holders of De Leonist debentures may want to suppose. It became a residual form of socialist organization through which petty-bourgeois dilettantes might "safely" express their revolutionary fervor and detachment from the working-class.

In accordance with this schema (in truth a logical extension of the historical process in which the issue was cut from the whole cloth) all societies emerging as proletarian state power from the international struggle of oppressed classes are doomed to failure and, in substance, they reduce themselves to "state capitalist" formations. Nowhere have the maximum conditions and the ideal forms for socialist transition been established in what the Marxist sociology defines as "workers' states."

Is it accidental, then, that the "state capitalist" constructions in sociology have appeared repeatedly in the history of the "Trotskyist" parties. It is undeniable that the extant regimes for all of the "workers' states" extract value, pre-empt the function of accumulation, and invest on the basis of the state plan. By and large, "socialist" industrialization has been distinguished by gross inequalities in the social distribution of value, favoring the administrative strata, and reducing the producing classes to an auxiliary role in the administration of things.

Yet this is the form and content that the transitional revolutionary societies have taken in the epoch of imperialist wars and capitalist social disintegration. Not for nothing was Comrade Trotsky eminently aware of the "restorationist" dangers that lurk in every compromise and each attempt to solve the immediate crisis by resort to expedients. The law of value engenders the inequalities that must persist where industrial capitalism is aborted in the infant stage. The Maoists, too, perceive the Bukharinist method as an active threat to the socialist foundations of the U.S.S.R.; nor do they preclude the possibility of restorationist dangers appearing in China.

Harnessing the law of value has not proven quite so simple as bridling the Yang-tse - river of sorrows. Wherever capitalist methods of exchange, marketing, accumulation, and organization at the point of production are favored against initiative and direction by the producing classes, bourgeois privilege and inequality burgeon greedily as do summer weeds.

Had life not proven the virtual worthlessness of the De Leonist debentures, Shane Mage and Robertson et al. had necessarily affiliated their "Stalinist State" conception to the mortgage trust of De Leonism. They, too, came to understand the pure form for the evolution of society. They simply are not of its revolutionary substance.

They can only be Trotskyist pretenders who have defined a precise criterion for an ordered revolutionary process and seizure of state power, ideally narrowed down to a brief span in the Russian experience. Chiefest among these architects is Ernest Germain, a virtuoso in the keyboard construction of revolutionary norms.

It is indisputable that L. Trotsky's extensive critique of the transitional Soviet state in evolution is indispensable tooling for executing the tasks of socialist revolution. But it is upon this critique that the Trotskyist pretenders have super-imposed criteria for the most favorable forms of socialist transition and assumption of state power. How do these correspond to the urgent realities, to the actual unfolding of the world revolution as it evolves under the least favorable conditions?

The extended historical experience for the Socialist Movement of the West has been less than encouraging. Apart from their intense and mutual acrimony, the leadership of these parties has not once mounted a serious contest for power. Where petty-bourgeois osmosis and capitulation has not whored the leaderships, degeneration into sectarian and centrist propaganda groups has been the norm.

Equally essential to the Jebenture is development of norms for internal Party life and Party-state relations. A military party in the jaws of an imperialist-Stalinist juggernaut might evolve in accordance with its own necessities - even as the emergence of a Negro leadership of struggle in the American South bypassed the American Left. What is important, then, is the condition, origin, and direction from which the revolution unfolds.

There emerges, progressively, for those parties with a definitive construction of the historical issue a body of ideas that are entirely satisfactory as a formal system - but against which history has not tested out at all favorably.

History has already been abundant to show that those "socialist" parties which do not come to terms with the Living Revolution and, on the eve of October 1917, with the international fundamentals of Marxism, encounter aggravated difficulties - above all, a totally impermissible estimate of the political tasks at the best juncture for revolutionary actions. For all things there is a season - a time for reflection, and a time for action.

It is not at all excluded that we may experience the Party crankshaft driving a correct stroke on one pin. Yet, if the axis for the counter-stroke pin is out of balance with the primary pin, the throw is off, and the engine simply will not tolerate the internal wear. Centrist parties have always performed promisingly on one pin - until that day of bewilderment when the entire engine breaks down.

From the point of view of method, it is excluded that the Trotskyist Parties can enjoy the luxury of a non-Marxist position on the nature of the Chinese state, regime, and international struggle, without paying the cost of an incorrect orientation on the home front.

III. Centrists and Saints

Not all propaganda groups can be clearly defined as centrist in terms of their internal development and direction. But propaganda is the main stock in trade for all centrist parties supporting more or less correctly defined revolutionary objectives as opposed to purely reformist parties. Centrist parties are internally contradictory in that they embrace revolutionary tendencies alongside opportunistic shortcomings. Some, like the Independent Labor Party of Britain and the old French Workers' Party of the Seine (PSOP), earn a measure of popular support as "critical" or "left" parties in the bourgeois parliaments. The old Lovestone faction, ILLA, is a working example of a centrist formation in America. For it maneuvered to establish an independent Communist Party with an "American" program that owed nothing to Stalin and nothing to Trotsky. By contradistinction a reading of the Maoist literature leaves them wide open to the charge of plagiarism. Lenin would never permit such a circumstance to go uncorrected.

All centrist parties break down on the question of internationalism, method, and the strategical orientation requisite to mobilizing the masses for an armed struggle to seize state power.

The Complete Centrists Manual for the instruction of Latter Day Centrists on treating the question of Revolution in China appeared in the ISR for Spring 1962(!) curiously authored by Murray Weiss and a certain Bert Deck. Now this was a political manual and it said in essence: "We might as well admit that the Chinese revolution exists and might be of some serviceable value in our running Trotskyist argument against the 'false' politics of Moscow, especially on Peace."

Since principle is not involved and a party's preference in these matters is purely elective, the English found the whole thought disgusting, chose to rely on their old standby of a European "epicentre" and solid norms for improved "workers' states". They have opted for a sturdy sainthood.

But for the Americans, the unfaithful business of Weiss and Deck demanded a repudiation. One, nor a Party, cannot relate to a revolution in this trifling fashion, as to a marriage of convenience. Still, "playing the game" applauded the prevailing petty-bourgeois morality in the New York "epicentre" of imperialism -- and Murray chose to cheat. So it was only practical politics, much on the order of a salon "regroupment" which promises exciting rewards for skilled operators, and all.

Right then we needed a theoretical correction and a class orientation for the Party in the United States, where the social struggle had intensified with commendable force on a variety of new fronts. Still, some thought that what the Party needs too, and the International most of all, is a new regime, young blood, a fresh re-statement of the old formulas, the right push in the right place. Indeed, that was the especial conviction of the Robertson-Wohlworth centers of political thought; and they sought energetically to negotiate the matter with the Party Majority leadership. But Dobbs and the others are leaders too, with their own epicentre.

Now in the realm of theory and method the unfaithful business did not exactly "measure up to Trotskyist programatic criteria." It was even more disastrous for teasing the politicians of the Golden Mean with its urgent and smooth "re-groupment" appeal. If a repudiation was forthcoming - by 1962 the Party had already gained 13 years of experience in living without the Chinese Revolution. Here it is 1965. That little number by Weiss and Deck was never removed from the streets of New York; and so PL was conceived to "attract some worthwhile young people."

The retreat to autarchic concepts of development, the theory of internal economic self-sufficiency in relation to world economy or the theory of political self-sufficiency in relation to the world-wide movement of class forces, springs from a methodological error and extensive cohabitation with an original mistake. How many have suffered that fate. The Trotskyist Parties have lived too long without leading a revolution - or anything like it - and this condition is most grievously exposed in the failing social composition of these parties. This can carry the danger of featured normalcy where alienation of the Party from immediate, and fruitful, experience in the rough life of its class has throttled the Party long and long.

Centrist parties are inevitably half-Marxist, eclectic, on the one hand committed to "making the revolution" and on the other seeking to avoid a direct hold on responsibility for leadership of revolutionary action. They are to varying degrees sectarian or opportunist, as circumstance dictates. What means it that the Trotskyist parties are constantly undergoing internal division into right and left centrist formations?

There are evidently some live embers in the mutual recriminations of the SLL and SWP; for the acrimonious smoke billows ponderously grey where each submit the Living Revolution to the test of their empirical norms for the transition to socialist societies. Fair is fair; and it must be allowed that the Americans at least took a solid crack at enlisting Castro, Guevara, Malcom, and Ben Bella at the expense of Peking; but the English have a working "epicentre."

The effective power of an engine depends upon the balanced stroke of its pins. If the Party does not test in on the methodological pin; no matter how well the Party has performed for a given period on the basis of what is finished, tested, and true, the unity of theory and practice is badly off on the throw. The favored position of the SWP on the American "left" began to show wear with the eruption of the Peking-Moscow division of the workers' states and international organizations of the working-class. The international rupture coincided with the commencement of sharp Negro battles in America. This wear can only accelerate if the Party fails to develop a strategically consistent tactic of intervention for broadening the front of class-conflict on the American terrain. But this requires a Marxist estimate.

It had been axiomatic for us that a revolutionary Party knows when to be small and when to grow.. A substantial Party growth in 1945-47, favored by a correct orientation in relation to the Second Imperialist World War and subsequent upheavals within the labor and Negro movements, led to the promulgation of a 1947 Convention document entitled: "From a Propaganda Party to a Party of Mass Action.". How then can we justify the estimate contained in the Draft Resolution on American Politics in 1965. We are saddled with a perspective of moving from a regroupment party to a party of propaganda!

Lenin described working criteria when he explained that every conjuncture in the class-struggle is distinguished by new forms of class organization and struggle. That these exist in considerable array for the student and Negro movements the Draft Resolution allows. But the direction is up for grabs! And the Party remains a propaganda group. The draft must be described as pessimistic.

The general conditions for a revival of labor, socialist, and Marxist Party work in the U.S. were sufficiently mature to warrant adoption of the Freedom Now Resolution at the 1963 Convention. Today the internal contradictions built into the protracted Kennedy boom are sharply focused in the international monetary crisis. These will require an independent and more exact elaboration. But, in general, they flow from the inability of American imperialism to organize the world, economically, militarily, politically, and from the continuous advance of the international proletariat and colonial masses. The disintegration of bi-partisan unity following the Korean catastrophe and the subsequent split within the ruling circle of American capitalism permitted the judicial attack upon the witch-hunt in the U.S. and the opening-up of political disturbances.

As yet there is an insufficient basis, if only in terms of human forces, for a full-fledged, administratively controlled broad centrist party in the U.S. The administrative measures taken by the Party leadership and invested in the Police Powers Act are only part of a design to get the

Party off the ground - without coming to grips with the basic problems of international Trotskyism in the face of major world revolutionary achievements. These will dominate the ideological and organizational struggles in the world revolutionary parties.

For the Socialist Workers Party the question of the driving force in the international working-class will become an increasingly critical issue. Cheating will not solve the problem of hegemony. The heritage of Trotskyism, so earnestly funded by the American pioneers, courts that danger of being transformed into the debentures of a left-centrist propaganda party.

The Majority Draft makes scant reference to the fundamental features of the developing crisis in the U.S.. It reveals an excessive fear of the petty-bourgeois reactionaries. Whatever the reserves of American capitalism, nothing in the world economic or social conjuncture favors an effective restoration of social unity for the American bourgeoisie over any extended period. Not even the labors of the restorationist clique in the Kremlin can stop the count-down on the revolutionary launching pads. "The tasks are tremendous, but there is no reason to be pessimistic." (L. Trotsky)

IV. 1948 and the Aftermath

The experience of the SWP has been dominated through an extended period by detachment from its defined class base, by a slow contraction in membership as well as a membership retirement program, and by a social differentiation of its membership in a "healthy" capitalist environment. Proletarian comrades, too, tended to become consumers.

By 1948 the Labor Party Maneuver had collapsed as a tactic invested with any meaningful social-democratic content. Thereafter it became a propaganda tool. Unable to head-off the Wallace bubble, floating high with rainbow colors refracted in the Stalinist prism, the SWP in that year made its own debut on the national electoral arena. A certain uneasiness was manifest in some quarters of the Party; for everyone knew that the left sector of organized labor was trapped in the radical petty-bourgeois People's Progressive Party.

In reprise, Harry Truman rallied a civil rights mandate and a mandate for war in Korea - and the bubble burst. Then came reaction. By 1953 the Party's thin band of trade unionists suffered the common fate and was dispersed. In that year Bert Cochran spoke for the disoriented trade union candidates, spelling-out the classical Menshevik perspectives for socialism and demanding liquidation of the Party. They had regroupment visions, persecution fantasies, Pabloite bugs - and behind Pablo they took a powder.

Well you cannot make a revolution under the weight of mounting reaction; wherefore the worker-comrades took a beating. Thereafter the social composition of the Party was progressively altered, not in the pursuit of design but by default.

It is noteworthy also, in this connection, that the pablist and Cochranite formations never transcended the prevailing dogma in Trotskyist parties on the character of the Chinese Revolution. Their despair was bound-up with their inability to see the revolution unfolding; and their fancy turned to reform in the Kremlin as the basis for clearing the roadblocks to world revolution.

We will have to take a long look at Cochranism on the trade-union question; just because Cochranism was Majority leadership method in the trade-unions. Is it correct as Manuel Lyons contended to build a power base on the local social-democratic level, or to sally forth in the Cochranite style with a covey of revolutionary hot-shots to "seize power" in the labor movement? The proportions were invariably bad, as comrade Cannon noted on several occasions, in the Cochran era. A comparable method in the civil rights movement would produce comparable results

Commencing with the Party split for 1953, or if you prefer it with the expulsion of the Cochranite liquidators, Party tactics took on an essentially maneuverist character; except that the orientation to the Montgomery Negro rebellion corresponded to the movement of real class forces at the social-democratic level. Tactical intervention has not been rejected entirely by the Majority leaders. But the programmatic conditions and class orientation needed for their fullest elaboration (interventionist tactics) has been rejected.

The Minnesota experience, where the Party earned credits and blossomed on the basis of serious work and leadership in the organizational struggle of the class, was somehow lost. The Party's subsequent trade union objectives did not correspond to the real proportions of its effective cadre under the conditions imposed by high imperialism. The non social-democratic character of Cochranism was never understood; for it was touted as leadership on the grand scale when, in fact, opportunism and adventurism were its hallmark features.

A tactic can be described as social-democratic in character when it describes the objective of mobilizing class forces on the basis of concrete organizational needs of the proletariat. It is limited only by the condition that it does not contravene the universal needs of the class. A Party tactic should be designed to facilitate a merger with the class under all conditions. Failing in this the Party weakens in class characteristics.

Of course the bourgeoisie can be very thorough during a period of deep reaction and proletarian apathy. For that very

reason absolute ideological clarity was essential to preserving the proletarian base of the Party and to working out precise tactics in relation to the conditions of life in the class.

Comrade Trotsky, after the Revolution, expressed the view that "the German Social-Democracy is still the model for a mass worker's party." Discussion of the problem in building a "mass revolutionary party" is virtually extinct in Party quarters today. Regroupment straws have not the strength to pierce a rotten twig under hurricane propulsion - simply because the strain of grass is weak. Standar opponent's work directed toward healthy class elements waylaid in the various petty-bourgeois traps, united front actions directed toward substantial organizations of the working-class, and fusions with ideologically sound worker's parties are an entirely different matter. A fusion of proletarian internationalists on the basis of solidarity with the Chinese Revolution and its regime is not only feasible, it is a necessary point of departure for Trotskyists. It is a step beyond the narrow propaganda party concept.

V. Strategy and Tactics

In general, tactics are the concrete form for the expression of strategic principles or goals. But it is in connection with the definition of a tactic that "the method is all." A sound Marxist estimate of the economic, social, and political conjuncture in terms of its internal movement may describe the applicability of a given tactic. Yet the main orientation, composition, and level of the Party will decide its reality. A tactic can only be evaluated pragmatically; while it is the function of the dialectic method to define and determine the limits of any tactic in relation to an unfolding process. Often enough a tactic can do no more than test the capacity of a party to intervene in a situation for which the estimate describes a developing class-antagonism. Such was the case with the Freedom Now Party tactic. It may test the depth of an antagonism, expose the antagonism to a degree, or alter the relationship of contending forces expressed organizationally, or reveal its own emptiness.

Primitivism and sectarianism are always expressed in terms of "The one tactic" or a finished set of tactics nailed down as norms.

Subordination of the general labor party tactic in favor of the more concrete Freedom Now Party tactic would be unexceptionable from the point of view of Leninist method. At the same time the question of how broad is the basis for such a tactic confronts us. The estimate is all the more important because the Party was unable to bring any independent forces of its own to such a Party. That is to say that it did not have a Negro cadre or membership to throw in. Moreover the pull of class-collaboration expectations proved to be overwhelming among the white unionists and civil rights integrationists at this stage.

Now it is entirely possible that two apparently contradictory tactics, when defined in terms of their limits at a given conjuncture might effectively serve the same strategic goal. For example, it was correct to engage an independent electoral campaign against the Democratic Party at the general election of 1964 while demanding labor hegemony against the forces of George Wallace during the Spring primaries. Ed Shaw's contention that it is their capitalist party primary is wrong in any case. If we can blow-up "their" capitalist primary, that is the excellent thing to do! There was a division expressing a class antagonism within labor-Democratic ranks over the civil rights question - and a united Democrat campaign in the Fall. Propaganda is worthless when there is a hard tactic up for grabs! (Perhaps there was an over-riding administrative consideration that required that the tactic proposed in Milwaukee be shot down.)

A confident leadership is endowed with the capacity to err, and having erred, to move on! If tactical errors cannot be corrected without a death-struggle in the Party, a much more serious difficulty of a strategical character must be described. It is for this reason that the Party division of 1953, and the tactical binge against "fascism" for the Spring of 19⁵4, has a deep-going significance. It will not be an accident that the Cochranite liquidators reflected the ideological confusion in the Fourth International following the triumph of the Chinese Revolution; and that the Mc Carthyite faction in the U.S. sharply posed the same condition within the ranks of the bourgeoisie. "Where did it come from?" someone said. "The wind has blown it in, another made reply...." (Face On The Barroom Floor)

A flexible method describes a confident leadership. And there is no apparent reason why a defined intervention in the integrationist movement cannot supplement a tactic designed to intensify the black nationalist agitation. Unless, of course, the task is subordinated to organizational CONSIDERATIONS OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE CHARACTER. AND THIS WILL UNAVOIDABLY BE THE CASE WHERE THE LEADERSHIP DOES NOT ENJOY A FIRM CLASS BASE.

Whoever is serious will find an organizational relationship to the working-class, whatever the obstacles! The others will engage an administrative test against the worker members, or try their hand at professional factionalism. And to the extent that the latter condition obtains, the tactical orientation of the Party must expose its ideological weakness. Nobody can deny it, except that he has devised a new, i.e. non-Marxist, empirical method for the definition of tactics, a method that disassociates tactics from the Party's strategical class orientation.

A retreat to rigid formulas, so manifest in the Majority's abstention in relation to the Wallace Primary, or in tying Party tactics exclusively to the Negro nationalist movement,

can only signify severe organizational detachment from the living struggle. In connection with the "problematic" Negro movement, both integrationist and nationalist forms of action express the same will of the Negroes to organize for struggle, at varying levels of consciousness under varying conditions. It would be absurd to describe either form for the expression of a common will to struggle as conditionally "socialist in content from the point of view thir internal development. Fusion, on the other hand, of these two forms would signify a very sharp alteration of direction.

For Bolshevik-Leninists those tactics that respond most readily to the major forces shaping the movement of the international proletariat will be decisive. At the onset, these will necessarily be expressed programatically and organizationally. They will relate to the movement of ideas which are the embodiment of organized class forces. Freedom of choice is limited to the conscious recognition of necessity. It is therefore correct to say that necessary tactics flow from the strategical orientation, and the method which shapes the orientation

Given a correct strategical orientation, a considerable tactical fluidity is possible for a Bolshevik party. But, on the contrary, rigid formulas are a substitute for the dialectic method of defining and limiting a tactical line. In deed, comrade Trotsky had demonstrated this in his critiques for the Whole history of Stalinist tactics. Formula became substitute for Marxist method, only to serve the strategical requirements of the administration.

To confine the expression of our strategical objective, independent working-class politics, to a bare reiteration of the "labor party" formula shall have been barren and abstract where a segment of the Negro community expressed a readiness to break away from the Democrat straight-jacket. In purely propaganda form, it could conceivably become a trap with a spring equivalent in force to Arnold Pedersen's Socialist Industrial Union. The Mississippi Freedom Party has now exposed the social contradiction in relation to the war in Vietnam. It has also revealed that the Party's intervention at the organizational level in the South has been far from adequate. The Milwaukee proposal to agitate the escalation of the action behind the slogan of "A March on Jackson" was ignored by the Political Committee, permitting the action to unfold at Selma chaperoned by the Bowler-and-White Collar Committee. An agitation was absolutely feasible had the Party been engaged organizationally at the social-democratic level. That is the point of original motivation for a working tactic in the shops and in the neighborhoods.

VI. The Tendency Toward Beatification

The tendency to court beatification and a sectarian old age stands out bold in the history of American Socialist parties. What a way to go! This phenomena would be in part due to the resilience of American capitalism and the urgent need of these parties to thrive on the impending collapse of the American capitalist sector. It is a view predicated upon a general truism and something less than a Marxist estimate in the concrete. In any event "capitalism is rotten ripe for socialism" and sudden death is not unknown. It is best to make preparations.

A random sampling from a prodigious list of contenders for caboose man on the glory train points-up the IWW, Proletarian Party, SLP, etcetera, and then some less etcetera groups like those of Lovestone, Foster, and later the Guardian Clubs. All at one time expressed some degree of meaningful relationship to the class-struggle, either for a day or a decade. All claimed to be "Marxist," somehow, only to wind up as a publishing enterprise feeding on ceremonial reminiscences. Axe-grinders, all had a handle, however unreliable their blade. For one reason or another, none were amenable to regroupment; and perhaps that is because pathology describes the state of reminiscence as one of great severity. The Revolution robbed some, while Soviet backsliding and class-collaboration at home crushed all.

American capitalism has not always been helpful, producing something like a Bernsteinian caricature, curiously devoid of the "peace" component. Crises have been resolved by war and class-collaboration, and welfare-state emoluments that accrue to the members of the privileged imperialist power. Every species of bureaucrat has gotten some bag of bones to distribute in the poorest neighborhoods. Even James P. Cannon, in connection with the degeneration of the American CP, has noted the tendency of the American parties to grow soft politically while hardening administratively. And it may be taken for granted that the non-Trotskyist and non-Maoist parties will explore the Bernsteinian jungle again and even come-up with a fine bunch of bananas.

Some comrades have correctly noted the clear tendency toward restricting the area of Party organizational work and narrowing the field for tactical elaboration by the Majority leadership. It should be noted also that the Majority responded with great vigor to the tendency of their proteges born of ideological confusion, Wohlforth, Robertson, & Mage, when these partisans of youth leadership chose to devote full time to reformation of the SWP on the platform of British centrism.

Apart from the vulnerability of the SWP on a few questions in the open political arena, it is necessary to consider, nay, contemplate the depletion of Party forces. This condition can

only be attributed to fundamental social and political causes. If the Party fails to grasp the problem in the enormous disproportion between the combined American left and the working-class, between the Party and its task, it will fail to appreciate the basis for the continuing crisis in the Party. It will fail to understand the seriousness of the ideological and programmatic problems facing the Party. It may indeed pursue the administrative road and the adoration. The Police Powers Act pursues the assumption that Party problems are of an administrative character and susceptible to administrative solution. It does not proceed from an analysis of the basic problems and needs of the Party

The very best that might be said for the Majority leadership's reduced sphere of organizational and tactical work is that it demonstrates a more realistic sense of proportions and a recognition of the actual capabilities for limited Party forces. But this is not the case. At the 1963 Party Convention, Majority leaders undertook the gargantuan task of overthrowing the Chinese Communist regime, and with far less modesty in the matter than U.S. imperialist chiefs; and at a time when the Kremlin bureaucrats show sufficient realism to concern themselves solely with seasonable defenses against the threat of destruction to their own "more liberal" regime.

A new "regroupment" for the undecided left in residence would change nothing at all, save, perhaps, a mailing address. It hardly matters that the apple on the bough of Negro social upheaval is their desire, too. Whom, we may ask, owns the orchard? Least of all would such a device impress the Negro worker, or his white ally. On the other hand a re-unification without prejudice of serious Marxists on a program of solidarity with the Chinese Revolution and its international struggle would unsettle the stagnation on the left. Mere gimmicks, modifications here and tailoring there, and the editorial re-shuffle will not turn the trick.

Here we can point out that the Cuban bonanza has just about petered out, simply because the island had to go on Soviet rations. It is especially urgent that the Party establish a base within the American working-class by hard work; and that it elaborate a correct programmatic relationship to the center of international Marxist struggle. A propaganda is too limited.

VII. Lenin's Concept of Flexible Tactics

Lenin's familiar dictum, "flexibility to the point of conceiving everything as being its diametric opposite" to be the core of a functional dialectic method in action, has become an unfortunate casualty in the long struggle of the Trotskyist faction against the Soviet bureaucracy. For it was in the nature of Stalinist politics to conceal violations of socialist principle in the guise of tactical wisdom. It became

the vogue at home and abroad among petty-bourgeois scholastics to dress the politics of expediency with the garments of a "dialectic" terminology. Moreover, this latter practice is not a proprietary vice, As Harry Frankel artfully demonstrated for the Cochranites. In this way the dialectic method is stripped of any defined relationship to logic, to become synonymous with expediency and "common sense."

Lenin's dictum was destined to become a blooming umbrella, shielding a wide variety of people, sins, and constructions. And beneath its shade on a sultry day one might find a bloated torso alongside the likes of Brigitte Bardot. For revolutionaries the dictum describes the conditional element of time in defining the changing relationships between the contradictory components in a social or political process, and in their relation to strategic principles. Tactics are to be used like cutting-tools, requiring adaptation to any change in RPM and materials.

The Trotskyist recoil against the Stalinist vulgarization of method required a rigorous test against established strategic principles for each innovation of the Communist Parties everywhere. Nevertheless, It would be incorrect to say that during the period of Trotsky's direct intervention in the experience of the Trotskyist Parties, they had been deprived of that tactical flexibility which invested the preparation for the October insurrection. Testifying to this judgement are the rich histories of the Russian Left Opposition, the German and Spanish events, for which comrade Trotsky labored to equip the workers' parties with that flexibility essential to unification of their forces in action.

But the tasks of the Trotskyist Parties were then of a different historical character. The struggle was necessarily and increasingly directed to the methodological and political bankruptcy of Stalinism. It therefore fell like a ton of bricks, when in relation to the victory of the Chinese Revolution, Trotskyists could be found who would attribute the revolutionary victory to the politics and methods of Stalinism.

During the era of factional struggle against Stalinism, every effort at a turn toward mass work and onto the road of independent class leadership produced deep-going shocks and splits within our movement. These are recorded and in a certain sense can be stamped as inevitable. At the same time, spanning the era which is completed historically by the emergence of the Yugoslav and Chinese Revolutions, Trotskyist tasks were posed consistently in terms of the struggle for programmatic hegemony, for international socialism and the establishment of workers's power universally. Never had we viewed our relationship to the mutilated international communist movement in terms of the hegemony of our banner. This revisionist idea only begins to emerge with the clear-cut victory of sub-standard revolutions. The year was 1950

By 1950 the theoretical work of the Trotskyist pretenders had become saturated with empirical criteria for determining the existence of workers' states. It became standard to suppose that some worker's states emerged by default, automatic collapse of the old order, and without Parties leading the masses in revolutionary battle. The conditions which signify the social transformation and class-character of the state were defined as objective norms and divorced from the armed struggle for state power.

"In the question of the social character of the USSR, mistakes commonly flow, as we have previously stated, from replacing the historical fact with the programmatic norm. Concrete facts depart from the norm." (My emphasis - J.E.B.) (L. Trotsky, The USSR in War, 1940)

For the Party of Programmatic struggle against Stalinist degeneration, the war and revolution intervened. And these events revealed that the Trotskyist Parties were either unable to break through the combined power of the Stalinist and labor-democratic bureaucracies, or were unable to build independent parties equipped to act as the strategic leadership of the organized working-class.

At this point in world history, then, we can only state that the critical programmatic positions of the Trotskyist parties are heavily invested with Marxist formalism. At once it must be noted that the tactical orientation of these parties is equally formalistic, and even branded in many cases by sectarian rigidity. And there is absolutely no future in piecemeal attacks upon this or that position or tactic of the affiliate parties. The strategical orientation is wrong because the method is wrong. The debate has been going on since 1950 over title to the debentures. Wohlforth contends that they reside in London. The Posadas group contends, etc.

Sectarian rigidity has always taken on an aura of high-principle. More importantly it takes its strength from significant precedent, from what was true under diametrically opposed conditions. Sectarian positions can never unfold in the forms expressing the immediate social and political contradictions

The credits which the SWP has earned are endangered by a growing tactical rigidity flowing from the strategical orientation, an unfavorable social composition, and conservative habits acquired in the protracted isolation of the Party. History was harsh. Incidental political mistakes can be blamed onto such things as repression, immaturity, subjectivism, Boulton, etc. What we are confronted with is a political history - 15 years of experience in living without the Chinese Revolution.

VIII. Toward a New Turn for American Trotskyism

A critical re-orientation of the American party onto the road of strategic leadership shall have logically taken place in 1948-51. No one can dispute the sustained validity of central Trotskyist programatic positions up until the eve of world revolutionary upheavals. These unfolded in a way that confirmed our general strategic estimates; but they did not unfold under our banner. Is this a contradiction? It is the kind of contradiction that Marxists must immediately resolve by a critical re-orientation in relation to the forces of the living revolution. 1947 was the year of destiny for revolutionary Marxists the world over. And some found their place in the ranks of the combat forces. In 1951 a conference of Trotskyist co-thinkers in Paris concluded that "We must act now as the leadership of the working-class." But it failed to define the necessary strategic orientation.

Still, we must set-out one additional and salient consideration in relation to this question: Not only "correct" programatic positions go into the preparation of a strategic leadership. A method tested in an historical experience is the final component for victory. Formally correct strategic positions inevitably give rise to formally correct tactical positions. These in turn invest the organizational life with a quality of experience that molds a commensurate leadership.

From this point of view we will necessarily have to examine the problem of incompatibility between the strategic positions of comrade Trotsky and Mao in relation to the Chinese experience. Even if the formulations were antagonistic, there is no foundation for the view which describes Mao's method as Stalinist. The October Revolution gave Mao the forces with which to test his method in mass revolutionary struggle.

It is because they lack a mass social-democratic base and political content, as well as a programatic alliance with the international center of the socialist working-class, that the tactical orientation of the SLL and SWP become increasingly journalistic and propagandistic. They seek exclusive arenas. Even more sobering is the fact that their internal organizational life becomes increasingly administrative, with only vague perspectives for making the turn to building mass parties during a period of general ferment.

In this connection it is very much to the point to summarize the Ceyllonese debacle, where a Trotskyist Party had developed mass social-democratic potential only to founder on its isolation from the Chinese Revolution. For that was the basis on which to struggle for political hegemony in the Asian seas. Nowhere will a certified Trotskyist revolution emerge on one island, even in the Caribbean.

There is little to indicate that the main problem lies in any essential programmatic weaknesses during the period of direct intervention of comrade Trotsky. The apparent deficiency lay in the social composition of the Trotskyists and the unfavorable conditions under which they were compelled to evolve. And the pressure of high imperialism has borne down hardest on the main center of Trotskyism.

A proletarian levy is indispensable to the regeneration of American Trotskyism. We were once accustomed to proclaiming the Party as a section of the World Party of Socialist Revolution. Certain steps are required now:

1) A programmatic reconstruction of our positions on the living world revolution and the direction in which its political process is unfolding.

2) A tactical flexibility derived from the realities of working-class history in the advanced capitalist countries.

3) New and far-reaching estimates for the process of transition to socialism on a world scale - and on the relative weight of the advanced countries and the backward countries. It will become clearer that the question of tactical flexibility is contingent upon the estimates for a strategical development of the international class-struggle. The struggle for power obviously unfolds along different roads in the East and the West.

4) A break with the propaganda party concept. Preparation of hard work to build a social base at the organizational level in the Negro movements and industrial shops.

A mass revolutionary social-democratic party can emerge in the capitalist countries of the West provided that a leadership cadre has assimilated the historical experience of the world working-class movements and the method of Marxism.

Submitted by James Boulton
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