



# Discussion Bulletin

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DECLARATION OF COMMUNIST TENDENCY

July 12, 1971

National Organization Secretary  
14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014

Dear Comrade Barnes:

We have read the "Declaration of Proletarian Orientation Tendency," which states that the documents of the tendency "clearly support the positions taken by the SWP on the developing mass movements." The document we are submitting must now be considered as a counter-resolution to the two political resolutions already presented.

Comradely,

s/David Fender  
(for the Communist  
tendency)

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y.

July 14, 1971

TO ALL ORGANIZERS AND NC MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

Attached is a letter from Comrade David Fender declaring the formation of the Communist Tendency which we received today.

The branch should be informed of this communication. It will appear in the next *Discussion Bulletin*.

We have not yet received the resolution which the Communist Tendency states it is submitting as a counter-resolution to the National Committee's Political Resolution and the resolutions defining the Proletarian Orientation Tendency. It will appear in the *Discussion Bulletin* as soon as we receive it.

Comradely,

/s/ Jack Barnes  
Organization Secretary

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- Marty Dec 2013

HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE DEGENERATION OF THE 4th INTERNATIONAL & OF THE CENTRISM OF THE SWP—FOR A RETURN TO THE PROLETARIAN ROAD OF TROTSKYISM

By the Communist Tendency

[We urge the comrades to consider our political resolution as a counter-resolution in opposition to both the National Committee and Political Committee and Proletarian Orientation resolutions.]

The major contradiction expressing itself inside the party today is the discrepancy between the party's claim to represent the heritage of Lenin and Trotsky, i. e. Marxism on the one hand, and the crass opportunism represented in its day to day political program on the other. While the party still dresses itself in orthodoxy on some questions, it has openly discarded—especially in those areas in which the party has been most active—whole portions of the transitional program. Garments have been hastily torn off at the seams, laying bare the party's revisionism, justified by simplistic observations—in lieu of analysis—such as "times have changed." In their stead the party has substituted a reformist and pacifist garb decorated with radical sounding phrases and trimmed in a call to action for action's sake.

The ever increasing rapidity with which the party impatiently tears itself away from even any formal adherence to its traditional proletarian program is an admission of the party's writing off of the American proletariat as the fundamental force for a socialist change, and is an attempt by those thoroughly imbued with such skepticism toward the proletariat to completely immerse the party in the petty-bourgeois milieu. The fundamental task of assuring the proletarian character of the party has long ago been discarded for the task of "building" the party of poly-vanguardism. Politics and building the party today are judged in terms of numbers devoid of any class analysis, class basis, or class perspective. Every political activity the party enters into is done on a multi-class basis, be it the women's liberation movement under the guise of "sisterhood," the Black liberation movement under the guise of "nationalism," the antiwar movement under the guise of "non-exclusion," the struggle of the Chicanos and other minorities under the guise of "third-worldism," etc. These non-class categories have nothing in common with Marxism. When the party does turn to the proletariat—and it eventually will to round out its poly-vanguard perspective—the multi-class approach will be no different, as has so clearly been indicated from our past activity and from what is outlined in the present N. C. political resolution. We will be blocking from the inside or from the outside with capital's lieutenants in the labor movement under the guise of fighting the bosses "first" in the "objective" struggle against capitalism.

The present day politics of the SWP have nothing in common with the revolutionary heritage of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky. The heritage of the party's theoretical analysis and political activity is social-democracy, Stalinism, and Centrism of all varieties, and the party can only be characterized as being right-centrist quickly on its way to outright reformism. The burden of preventing this eventuality rests on the cadres of the party.

\* \* \*

The present party crisis is not the result of an overnight occurrence which has just popped up like a mushroom

after a warm spring rain, nor can it be resolved by merely doing work among the proletariat. The party crisis, on the contrary, is a result of a combination of factors: the party's historical weaknesses, the historical weakness of the Left Opposition and the Fourth International, and external circumstances.

Up to the present the generally accepted reason for the weakness and isolation of the Trotskyist movement has been the exceptionally hard conditions under which we were forced to work owing to unfavorable circumstances beyond our control. There can be no doubt as to the great amount of truth contained in the above reasoning, and that even the best organization can not keep from becoming isolated to one degree or another during periods of reaction. But to continually blame the unfavorable external conditions without any critical evaluation of our own conscious intervention is to only beg the question and adopt a fatalistic attitude.

In the first place we cannot expect that some day the turbulent waters will separate and we will be able to walk freely and unmolested into the promised land of socialism—neither the bourgeoisie nor the Stalinist bureaucracies are going to roll over and play dead. In one very important sense it is the revolutionary party *itself* which creates its own favorable circumstances as well as unfavorable ones.

Furthermore, it is just not true that we have had to continually operate under unfavorable circumstances. During and after World War II there was a revolutionary upsurge of the working class, peasants and oppressed nationalities on a world scale. How is it that the world Trotskyist movement wasn't able to take advantage of such favorable circumstances? It was during this very same period that the French and Italian Communist parties became mass parties leading behind them not only the mass of the working class, but also some of its most conscious layers. But even more revealing are those instances where the Trotskyist movement has verged on becoming the mass party of the proletariat, specifically in Bolivia where the question of power was actually posed. In Vietnam the Trotskyist movement had gained a certain hegemony in the Saigon proletariat before and after WW II, only to be wiped out almost overnight by the Stalinist henchmen of Ho Chi Minh. In Ceylon the LSSP emerged as the leadership in crucial areas of the proletariat with as many as 14 MPs in 1956, only to be blocked today with the bourgeois SLFP in a coalition government which is now slaughtering the revolutionary youth in the country. In Bolivia the POR was founded long before the CP and firmly established its leadership position among the important sections of the Bolivian proletariat with as many as 8 MPs in 1949, only in the 1952 revolution—under conditions almost identical to those in Russia in 1917—to end up supporting the Bolivian Kerensky, Pas Estenssoro. This, plus many other opportunities, such as in France and Algeria during the struggle in Algeria, the Belgian general strike, etc., have given the Fourth International numerous opportunities.

No, the opportunities for the Trotskyists have not been lacking. The Fourth International must now take full

responsibility for its own failures to provide a valid alternative to the crisis in leadership which was the basis for the founding of the organization. The crisis in leadership of the proletariat during the last 30 years since the founding of the Fourth International has ultimately been the crisis of the leadership of the Fourth International itself.

This crisis in leadership has resulted in the complete fragmentation of the world Trotskyist movement. After the death of Trotsky the international Trotskyist movement failed to develop a competent leadership which could command the confidence and respect of the international cadres. The inability of the different Trotskyist leaderships, especially the International leadership, to provide a consistent Trotskyist analysis and program resulted in a good many zigs and zags as events took them by surprise. In certain countries where the Trotskyist parties did manage to accumulate a certain number of cadres, in spite of their program—a natural occurrence under favorable objective conditions—these parties were ruined beyond recognition or washed away completely like sandcastles after the first adverse wave. Such circumstances could not help but disorient even the best of comrades and raise protests from others. Alien class pressures ran rampant and each sharp turn produced both reaction and galloping runaways. Some comrades identified the disastrous politics with that of Trotskyism and began to question the whole validity of Marxism itself. While other comrades were able to make telling criticisms of their political opponents, most of the time they too proved incapable of providing a Trotskyist analysis and program. In this whirlwind of madhatter politics, cliques and counter-cliques were common, and the heated internal debates ended almost invariably with organizational means being resorted to by one side or another. Bureaucratic expulsions and Simon-pure splits became the norm; until today the world "Trotskyist" movement looks like an American junkyard containing every make and model of the last 30 years.

Today there are four international groupings claiming to be, or to represent, the true heritage of the Fourth International. In some countries there are as many as ten or more groups which claim some allegiance or other to Trotsky. In those countries where you find only one, the reason is simple: the Trotskyist movement has been crushed or there is just no history of Trotskyism. Instead of embodying the development of Marxism and providing a competent, reliable and representative leadership for the different sections of the International, the International leadership, has on the contrary, proved to be the kiss of death for almost every section. As we shall try to show in a brief sketch, this legacy still lives in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Most of the young Communist parties of the Third International had yet to completely break with ideologies of their origins, such as social democracy and syndicalism, or to substantially root themselves in the working class when the Stalinist bureaucracy began to manipulate these parties for its own ends. In fact, the bureaucracy used these very weaknesses to drive out the strongest, most knowledgeable and serious cadres who quite naturally tended to side with the Left Opposition. The names of Victor Serge, Rosmer, Nin, Sneevliet, Vereecken, Cannon, Shachtman, Peng Shu-tse, Chen Tu-hsiu and many others testify to the quality of the cadres which comprised the International

Left Opposition.

The International Left Opposition while containing communists with outstanding revolutionary credentials and abilities was, nevertheless, in most countries—especially in Europe, and in particular France, the center of the Left Opposition—primarily petty bourgeois in composition. The lack of any working-class base combined with the increasing political confusion and isolation from the working class, led to constant in-fighting with many of the outstanding militants deserting the Opposition for "greener pastures." Much of the in-fighting was over organizational and tactical questions carried on by personal cliques. Trotsky fought hard to straighten out the disputes, especially in France, although without much success. But Trotsky's major thrust was to integrate the comrades into the living politics of the proletariat, and it was for this reason that Trotsky supported the French comrades who proposed an entry tactic into the SFIO in 1933. The results of the "French turn" were more positive in the United States and Belgium than elsewhere. In France things looked very encouraging at first, but soon deteriorated as the bourgeois pressure from the impending crisis made itself felt.

After a fight with a minority similar to the Oehlerites in the USA, the Communist League voted at a national conference the 29th of August, 1934, to enter the SFIO "with their program and their ideas." Once in, however, a dangerous tendency began to express itself among many comrades. Many comrades began to adapt to centrist tendencies and to compromise the program to make blocks with them. A similar phenomenon took place in the Bolshevik-Leninist faction of the Socialist Party in the USA as Trotsky pointed out in a letter dated May 25, 1937. In "From a Scratch to the Danger of Gangrene," Trotsky quotes his letter and says: "In both of the documents [(a) the private letter of Max about the convention, and (b) Shachtman's article, 'Towards a Revolutionary Socialist Party'] mentioned in the above letter, Shachtman revealed excessive adaptability toward the left wing of the petty-bourgeois democrats—political mimicry—a very dangerous symptom in a revolutionary politician!" (p. 107, *In Defense of Marxism*). Cannon himself stated: "There is no doubt at all that the leaders of our movement adapted themselves a little too much to the centrist officialdom of the Socialist Party." (Cannon, *History of American Trotskyism*, p. 238)

The adaptation of the French comrades was more serious, however, and its consequences were more immediate. In less than a year Trotsky began demanding that the comrades prepare to leave the SFIO, but he met with considerable resistance. The tendency led by Raymond Molinier and Pierre Frank refused to leave, and Trotsky denounced them along with the centrists as having "capitulated before the social-patriotic wave." This was only to be a harbinger of the nationalism that was to manifest itself in the Fourth International through its predominantly petty-bourgeois composition and leadership—the traditional transmission belt of bourgeois ideology in the working-class movement.

While the Molinier-Frank faction capitulated outright, the other leaders of the Bolshevik-Leninists had paved the way for their capitulation. The latter had not wanted to criticise the centrists openly and had been tolerant of the politics of the Molinier-Frank faction. In spite of the

fact that the French section was able to increase its numbers, the petty-bourgeois leadership had proved that it was unable to root itself in the working class and to take real advantage of the opportunities that were open to it. "We possess at present in our own history an important example of a missed opportunity or rather a spoiled one," was Trotsky's comment. (Trotsky, "After the Crisis of the Bolshevik Leninists")

The petty-bourgeois composition of the International Left Opposition was no accident, but rather the result of the historical period which in itself left its imprint on the cadres. Until 1933 the Opposition was forced to concentrate its efforts in and around the Communist parties, cutting it off from the majority of the working class which in most countries still remained under the influence of Social Democracy. The gangsterism of the Stalinist CPs on the other hand not only made it difficult for us to reach what working class base the CPs had, but also cost us the lives of many of our outstanding cadres. On top of this the historical international defeat of the proletariat culminating with the rise of Hitler in 1933 left its mark on the already too few struggling comrades of the Opposition. As Trotsky pointed out earlier in regard to China: "the strangulation of the Chinese revolution is a thousand times more important for the masses than our predictions. Our predictions can win some few intellectuals who take an interest in such things, but not the masses." So it was with the International Left Opposition. The ebb of the working class movement internationally served only to isolate the cadres even further. It was the result of the pressure generated by these defeats as well as future ones that laid the basis for the desertion of whole groups back to Stalinism, Syndicalism, Social Democracy, and the endless swamp of Centrism—such as the SAP (Socialist Workers Party) of Germany which, soon after having signed in 1934 the "declaration of the four" calling for the formation of the Fourth International, rapidly degenerated to supporting popular frontism and becoming an outspoken enemy of Trotskyism.

The Communist Left in Spain, led by André Nin and Juan Andrade, in 1934 broke with Trotsky over the question of entry into the Socialist Party. Instead they made a fusion with the Spanish Bukharinists, the "Workers' and Peasants' Bloc", led by "the nationalist-Catalonian philistine" Joaquin Maurin, to form the POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification). The POUM criticized the politics of the Popular Front as class collaboration, only to do an about face in February, 1936, and enter into an electoral coalition, finally entering the Catalonian Popular Front government itself. Two of the organizations which signed the "declaration of the four" were from Holland (the RSP and the OSP). They then fused to form the RSAP (Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party) led by H. Sneevliet. Sneevliet also balked on the question of entry, supported the POUM, and flirted with the London Bureau. Vereecken in Belgium split over the question of entry, and the Polish section as a whole opposed the attempt to found the Fourth International and showed great hesitation on the entry question.

Sectarianism abounded. From everywhere came criticism from the "left" against Trotsky. But it was these very same "leftists" who refused to soil themselves by carrying out the entry tactic into Social Democracy that ended up being the merry bed-fellows of the hopeless centrists of the

London Bureau variety. For Trotsky the entry question was very important. It was the difference between complete stagnation and degeneration into a self-amusing discussion group of intellectuals on the one hand; and, on the other, the active participation in the life and struggles of the proletariat as a foundation upon which to build new parties equal to the historic tasks that they faced.

After the defeat in Germany with the rise of Hitler, the International Left Opposition became the Movement for the Fourth International, and its main center quite naturally became France. With the debacle of the "third period," 1929-1933, the Stalinists turned to the Popular Front tactic to deal with the new upturn in the workers movement and the threatening new world conflagration which threatened them. From 1933 to 1938 there was a slight recovery from the economic crisis which had shaken the world—due in part to the preparations for WW II—which produced in its turn a new rise in the class struggle. In the USA there were the two successive waves in the rise of the CIO, in Spain the revolution broke out in full thunder, and France witnessed the great strike wave of 1936.

Although world events dictated it, the French comrades were little prepared to become the center of the struggle for the Fourth International. "Before its entry the French section was in a state of complete stagnation." Such was Trotsky's opinion. The section did, however, "In spite of the two splits, both at the time of the entry and the time of the exit, as well as big mistakes and hesitations, . . . conclude the SFIO chapter with a large and incontestable gain." (Trotsky, *Writings*, 1935, p. 31) But the gains were not to last. "In France the regeneration began with the entry into the Socialist Party. The policy of the Socialist Party was not clear, but it won many new members. These new members were accustomed to a large milieu. After the split they became a little discouraged. They were not so steeled. Then they lost their not-so-steeled interest and were regained by the current of the People's Front. It is regrettable, but it is explainable." (Trotsky, *International Bulletin*, December, 1939, p. 26) The French section was neither capable of keeping the gains it made during its experience in the SFIO nor of making any significant gains during the mass strikes of 1936. The "general historical current" proved to be "too strong." Nor was the section able to improve its social composition during this period. "A new radical tendency directed against the general current of history in this period crystallizes around the elements more or less separated from the national life of any country and for them it is more difficult to penetrate into the masses. We are all very critical toward the social composition of our organization and we must change, but we must understand that this social composition did not fall from heaven, but was determined by the objective situation and by our historic mission in this period." (*Ibid.*, p. 25)

Trotsky went on to caution that the above did "not signify that we must be satisfied with the situation," and that he "did not wish to say that we must reconcile ourselves with the impotence of our French organization." On the contrary Trotsky was proposing at that very moment that the French section enter the PSOP (Workers and Peasants Socialist Party). But the short-lived entry into the PSOP also did not produce anything "because of the state of disintegration of the Trotskyist movement in France during this period." (*la Quatrieme Internationale*, Pierre

Frank, p. 39) The expulsion of the Trotskyists in November of 1939 from the PSOP followed Daladier's interdiction of all communist organizations in September. When the French section officially reestablished itself in June of 1940, they called themselves the "French committees for a Fourth International," and adopted a nationalist political position. Almost every section at one time or another during the war, including the International itself, was to concede the "profound revolutionary implications" of the "masses" struggle for "national liberation" in "France and the other occupied countries." The nationalism expressed by the Fourth International and its sections may not have been done in the same blatant manner of the Second International during World War I, but regardless of how subtly the nationalist position was expressed, the consequences were no less disastrous for the Fourth International than they were for the Second International.

The necessity of war that forces itself upon the bourgeoisie demands that all its forces be mobilized to their utmost, that society itself be regimented and disciplined and that any and all areas of possible dissent be ferreted out and suppressed. The whip must be applied by the bourgeoisie in accordance with the gravity of the crisis and the seriousness of the actual threat. The crack of this chauvinist whip is reflected first and foremost through the petty-bourgeoisie, and the national chauvinism demanded by the bourgeoisie is transmitted by the petty bourgeoisie into the workers' movement. The experience of the Second International in the First World War was conclusive proof of this fact. Unfortunately the newly founded Fourth International was to undergo a similar experience with the arrival of the Second World War.

The SWP was, perhaps, in the best position to deal with the national chauvinist pressure. The original founders of the Left Opposition in the USA contained a good number of comrades who had come from and had their roots in the working class movement. With the first wave in the rise of the CIO, these comrades were able to take advantage of the situation and lead a very important class-struggle fight in Minneapolis deepening their roots in the proletariat. The fusion with the American Workers Party also brought in fresh cadres, and then the entry into the Socialist Party under "the advice and guidance of Trotsky — a decisive factor in all this work —" (Cannon) was a success, with the party again increasing its ranks and learning precious lessons. The valuable work done by the cadres of the early Trotskyist movement was reflected in the more favorable social composition of the Socialist Workers Party

The SWP could claim a membership consisting of at least 50% working class, many of them with valuable practical experience.

The fact that the SWP was in the USA and not in Europe is another important factor that should not be under-emphasized. The impending and immediate crisis in Europe demanded that the respective bourgeoisies use the chauvinist whip much more severely. Unlike Europe the USA was in no danger of becoming a battleground and even its entry was not an immediate question. The economic crisis in the USA was not so aggravated as to necessitate a Fascist dictatorship such as in Italy, Germany, and Spain, or a Popular Front solution as in France, which only laid the basis for the reactionary governments

that followed. Whereas the government of France outlawed all communist organizations, Roosevelt prosecuted the leadership of only the SWP.

In spite of the SWP's more favorable position — it by no means escaped the nationalist chauvinist pressure. The first real blow came with the Burnham-Abern-Shachtman fight. The party split almost down the middle on a class basis. The petty bourgeoisie deserted to higher ground to avoid the sting of the chauvinist whip.

"The split in the SWP was followed by a split, although a very small one, in the International, where a series of elements like Lebrun, Johnson, Trent, and Anton, who had seats on the International Executive Committee, had in reality adopted the political and organizational positions of Shachtman." (Pablo, "Twenty years of the Fourth International," *Fourth International*, no. 3, Summer, 1968)

The capitulation "before the social-patriotic wave" occurred as early as 1935 in France, as we pointed out, in relation to the Molinier-Frank tendency inside the SFIO. In 1940, only a few months after Shachtman split from the SWP, the French section as a whole openly capitulated, lock-stock-and-barrel, to nationalism. In the "Bulletin of the Committee for the Fourth International" (No. 2, Sept. 20, 1940) we can find a report adopted unanimously by the "Central Committee of the Committee for the Fourth International" (ex-POI) from which the following is excerpted:

The French bourgeoisie has rushed into a blind alley: to save itself from revolution, it threw itself into Hitler's arms, to save itself from this hold, it has only to throw itself into the arms of the Revolution. We are not saying that it will do so cheerfully; nor that the fraction of the bourgeoisie capable of playing this game is the most important: the majority of the bourgeoisie secretly awaits its salvation from England, a large minority awaits it from Hitler. It is to the 'French' fraction of the bourgeoisie that we hold out our hand.

We must be the defenders of the wealth that the generations of French peasants and workers have accumulated. We must also be the defenders of the splendid contribution of the French writers and scientists to the intellectual patrimony of humanity, the defenders of the great revolutionary and socialist tradition of France...

Among the many quotes to choose from we will satisfy ourselves with only one more. On the occasion of the anniversary of the Paris Commune, the April 1, 1941, issue of *La Vérité* (No. 11) had the following to say: "We know like our predecessors of 1871 that we will have to take in hand the struggle for national independence, betrayed by the bourgeoisie. . . ."

The above should be sufficient to show that the political line of the French section had nothing in common with internationalism. The Leninist concept of revolutionary defeatism — the defeat of one's own country being the "lesser evil" — is diametrically opposed to the "struggle for national independence" so clearly stated above.

In 1944 three "Trotskyist" groupings (POI, CCI, and Groupe Octobre) unified to form the PCI (Parti Communiste Internationaliste). From a bulletin put out jointly in July, 1943, by the POI and CCI, one learns that although the POI used some "dangerous expressions" (or formulations), the fundamental political position was correct and even farsighted in that the POI saw as early as



1940 the transformation of the national movement into the class struggle. In the unity declaration which appeared in the March 25, 1944, issue of *La Vérité*, one discovers that the unifying organizations had, since the beginning of the war, maintained an "internationalist position politically and in action." In "correcting their errors, by means of a Bolshevik self-criticism" they noted "some episodic errors of this or that group." The truth of the matter is probably that it was not so much a question of refusing to make a self-criticism, but rather a simple inability to do so. The comrades were hopelessly caught up in the national chauvinist politics of the petty bourgeoisie of which they were only a part.

In August, 1945, the French section published a pamphlet entitled *La Lutte des Trotskyistes sous la Terreur Nazie* (*The Trotskyists' Struggle under the Nazi Terror*), the main theme of which is to document the "Trotskyist" struggle against German fascism. The pamphlet contains an open letter to the president of the Press Federation reprinted from the Sept. 30, 1944, *La Vérité* (No. 74). The letter is written in defense of the PCI's demand that *La Vérité* be allowed to appear legally inasmuch as "LA VERITE WAS THE FIRST RESISTANCE ORGAN" against the Nazis. "During four years, in 19 mimeoed editions and 54 printed, *La Vérité* led the campaign against fascism and the occupying imperialism. These campaigns were oriented in the following direction:

Point #3 reads:

**3rd STRUGGLE FOR THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION:**

This right being valid for all peoples, including those of the colonies."

One would search in vain to find anything that even resembled a revolutionary defeatist position in this pamphlet, the 73 editions of *La Vérité*, or the politics of the French section in general during or even after the war. Even the demand for fraternization was not based on the concept of turning the war into a civil war on both sides but rather of both sides joining together in a "determined struggle against Hitler!" As we shall see, the French section's complete capitulation to nationalism was only one of the extreme manifestations of what took place in the International as a whole.

Comrades of the German section, the IKD (International Communists of Germany) also adopted a straight nationalist line. They wrote in their infamous "Three Theses" document dated Oct. 19, 1941: "There is no more burning problem in Europe than the national freedom of nations enslaved by Germany and its solution with the help and through international socialism is important and indispensable for three reasons." "However one views it, the transition from fascism to socialism remains a utopia without a stopping place, which is by its contents equivalent to a democratic revolution."

In the Dec. 1945-Jan. 1946 issue of *Quatrième Internationale* in their article "On the European Revolution" the German comrades state:

The retrogressive development of capitalism leads to the destroying of national independence and of democratic rights in the main European countries. Under these circumstances, class struggle must exchange its old traditions for new methods. Instead of the more or less free play of the different social and political forces of the old democracies, instead of the existence of polit-

ical parties and trade unions, what we are dealing with now is a national democratic movement of liberation including the whole population in its struggle against national and political oppression. . . ."

For the German comrades the countries of Europe again had to undergo bourgeois democratic revolutions. The national revolution was "the order of the day." Even within their nationalist theoretical wanderings the German comrades did not remain "Trotskyist." They did not even retain the theory of the permanent revolution to deal with the national question—unlike the International—but rather opted for the Menshevik theory of stages with the democratic revolution being "a stopping place." The "important and indispensable" forces of "international socialism" were to "help, and through" them was to be accomplished the "national and democratic" stage which would then, and only then, open the door to the "socialist and proletarian" stage.

In February, 1944, a six day European conference was held in France. One of the points on the agenda of this conference was the unification of three Trotskyist groups in France, to which we referred earlier. This conference attempted to make some criticisms of both the POI and the CCI's positions on the national question. In the "Theses on the Situation of the Workers Movement and the Perspectives for the Development of the Fourth International," we find point 29 which states:

"29. It was, above all, during the present war that the movement of the Fourth International underwent the most difficult and decisive test. On the basis of internationalist principles, it had to defend on the one hand, against the infection of the nationalist and patriotic epidemic, which in the beginning seized the masses, and on the other hand against the terror of the bourgeoisie.

"Under the pressure of the conditions created after the defeat of French imperialism in France and elsewhere, one can notice a certain weakening in the internationalist behavior of certain sections, especially the French section, which often expressed in its day to day politics the nationalist influence of the petty-bourgeois masses exasperated by the defeat of their imperialist masters.

"The position taken by the French section on the national question, the theses put out in the name of the European Secretariat of the Fourth International, controlled exclusively during this period by the French comrades, represents a social patriotic deviation which must be once and for all openly condemned and rejected as incompatible with the program and general ideology of the Fourth International.

"Instead of distinguishing between the nationalism of the conquered bourgeoisie which remains an expression of its imperialist preoccupations and the 'nationalism' of the masses which is only a reactionary expression of their resistance against the exploitation of the occupying imperialism, the leadership of the POI considered the struggle of its own bourgeoisie as progressive, did not at first separate itself from Gaullism and was content with giving it a more 'revolutionary' terminological form. In putting the conquered and imperialist French bourgeoisie on the same plane as the bourgeoisie of the colonial countries, the leadership of the POI took on a completely erroneous conception of the national question and spread dangerous illusions as to the character of the nationalist organizations which, far from constitut-

ing potential 'allies' for the revolutionary proletariat, reveal themselves as the counter-revolutionary avant-garde of imperialism.

"In the same way, in starting from the entirely correct point of view of the necessity of the revolutionary party to take part in the struggle of the masses and to tear away large segments of the working class from the bad influence of nationalism, the leadership of the POI allowed themselves to get carried away with dangerous ideological and tactical concessions, and did not understand that the first condition for conquering the masses consisted in the clear and revolutionary language of the internationalist class struggle, in opposition to the confused and treacherous language of social-patriotism.

"It is necessary to add, nevertheless, that, if this condemnation of a right-centrist deviation is forced upon us, the Fourth International must equally condemn with all its energy the 'leftist'-sectarian deviation that manifested itself, for example, in the politics of the CCI in France on the national question, which under the pretext of keeping intact the patrimony of Marxism-Leninism, stubbornly refused to distinguish the nationalism of the bourgeoisie from the resistance movement of the masses.

"In condemning the struggle of the proletarian and petty-bourgeois masses for their day to day interests as 'reactionary and nationalist' from the moment that this struggle directed itself against the occupying imperialism and under the cover of petty-bourgeois slogans, sectarianism paralyzes precisely those revolutionary efforts for combatting the nationalist ideology and automatically cuts itself off from the real struggle of the large masses.

"Nevertheless, the social-patriotic deviation was, from the beginning, energetically thwarted by the healthy resistance of the revolutionary base of the French section as well as by the rest of the international organization." (*Quatrieme Internationale*, No. 6-7, April-May, 1944, p. 8-9)

If we have taken the time for such a long quote, it is for definite reasons. One is that such criticism emanating from official bodies and leaderships of the Fourth International are quite unique on any question. Second is that while ostensibly criticizing the "social patriotic deviation" of the French section, the European Secretariat's criticism showed its inability to deal with the origin of the French section's deviation, and lays bare the basis of the Secretariat's own capitulation to nationalism. The criticism does not in any way attempt to investigate or explain why it was that the French section was so influenced by "the petty-bourgeois masses exasperated by the defeat of their imperialist masters." It, on the contrary, makes believe that it was only a deviation of the French leadership while "the revolutionary base" remained healthy and "thwarted" the deviation. Just how this healthy "revolutionary base" "thwarted" "the social-patriotic deviation" of the French section is not explained. That it did not thwart the "social patriotic deviation" of the French section can be seen from two sources already mentioned above, both of which appeared *after* the above criticism was made. The first was the "Open Letter to the President of the Press Federation" printed in issue No. 74 of *La Vérité*, Sept. 30, 1944, and the second is the pamphlet, *The Struggle of the Trotskyists under the Nazi Terror*, published August, 1945, which also contained a reprint of the "Open Letter." But these

are not the only items that can be used to show that the nationalist infection of the French section went deeper than its leadership, as we shall see later on.

The inability of the European Secretariat to make an incisive criticism of the French section is in itself an indication of "the infection of the nationalist and patriotic epidemic which" "seized" almost the whole of the International. The Secretariat criticizes the French section for not distinguishing "between the nationalism of the conquered bourgeoisie . . . and the 'nationalism' of the masses. . . ." It is true that one must differentiate between the nationalism of the *oppressed* and that of the "capitalist and his journalist," lawyer, etc. But is this the real content of the Secretariat's differentiation? The Secretariat also criticized the POI for "putting the conquered and imperialist bourgeoisie on the same plane as the bourgeoisie of the colonial countries. . . ." Here we can see the real content of the Secretariat's differentiation. The Secretariat is not criticizing the POI for taking up the struggle for national liberation, but merely for assigning a progressive role to the French bourgeoisie. You see, according to the Secretariat, the national liberation struggle of the French bourgeoisie "remains an expression of its imperialist preoccupations," and therefore, is barred from playing a progressive role, while on the other "plane" "the bourgeoisie of the colonial countries" can and do play a progressive role in the struggle for national liberation. Here is clearly the theory of the permanent revolution, in essence, applied to the imperialist country of France—which smacks of the more subtle chauvinist positions in the 2nd International during WW I—while the essence of the Menshevik line (Stalinist) is adopted by the Secretariat for the "colonial countries."

The Leninist theory of revolutionary defeatism in the imperialist countries and the theory of the permanent revolution which states that the bourgeoisie in the underdeveloped countries cannot play a progressive role in the epoch of imperialist decay, are both thrown out the window for an almost pure classical social-democratic position on nationalism.

Elsewhere in the Secretariat's Theses one can corroborate this analysis of their above criticism. The Theses as a whole undoubtedly reflected the growing militancy of the masses, the growth of the partisan movement, and some growth in our own ranks as well. While stating several correct things, such as the task of projecting a "policy to transform the imperialist war into civil war" and condemning the "slogan of 'national insurrection,'" the idea of national liberation is, nevertheless, smuggled in: "While the proletariat must reject any alliance with its own bourgeoisie, it cannot remain disinterested in the struggle of the masses against the oppression of German imperialism. The proletariat supports this struggle in order to facilitate and hasten its transformation into a general struggle against capitalism," and the Theses go on to project entrism into the partisan movements.

By supporting the struggle for national liberation as the first step to "a general struggle against capitalism" the Secretariat ends up tailending the nationalist and partisan movements in that the Secretariat projects "democratic demands" as "the most effective instrument for the mobilization of broad masses of the people against the bourgeoisie, . . . [which in turn] opens the road to power for the workers and peasants."

As the Theses prepares for the revolutionary crises,

everything is stood on its head. Instead of the position that transitional demands become all the more necessary and decisive as the old and partial or democratic demands come more and more into conflict with "destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism," the Secretariat projects democratic demands as taking on a revolutionary quality in-and-of-themselves: "Precisely because it [the Fourth International] knows that in the epoch of imperialism there is no room left for bourgeois democracy, the revolutionary vanguard transforms the struggle for *democratic demands* on the part of the masses into a powerful instrument against the bourgeois state."

The Theses even goes so far as to say that: "In certain countries and under certain circumstances . . . extreme democratic demands, such as the demand for immediate elections or for the convocation of a constituent assembly, can become powerful means of mobilizing great masses of people around the proletariat." As history has shown, democratic demands in imperialist countries in crisis have "become powerful means of mobilizing great masses of people around [not] the proletariat" but rather the bourgeoisie. History proved this very fact to the so-called "revolutionary base of the French section." As we stated above, the French section continued to follow a national-democratic position clearly using the political position outlined in the 1944 Theses. Tail-ending the CP and under the cover of fighting for democratic demands, the PCI called for a "yes" vote on making the National Assembly into a Constituent Assembly in the referendum of October 21, 1945. The PCI demanded all candidates for office be qualified and immediately recalled at any moment. It launched an appeal to form Defense Committees of the Constituent Assembly. And in the referendum of May 5, 1946, it again appealed to the masses to vote "yes" for a bourgeois constitution. To defend bourgeois democratic demands was to block the reaction. The capitulation of the French section was only a more gross expression of the capitulation of the European Secretariat as well as of the International.

The Fourth International was founded in 1938. Trotsky had wanted the International founded in 1936, but for many reasons, some mentioned above, it had been impossible to do so. The new International was small, isolated, mainly petty bourgeois in composition and beset with many problems. Nevertheless, the strength of the International was to be found in its theoretical and political clarity on the historical and current questions of the day which was summed up in its founding document *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*—drafted by Comrade Trotsky.

Trotsky was the all important figure in the founding of the International. It was the probity of Trotsky's theoretical work, and, based on this, his incisive political analysis, that put the International on a solid Marxist basis. Trotsky's theoretical analysis of the Soviet state, Stalinism, and Fascism, laid the basis for principled class-struggle politics, without which there would have been no Fourth International. Trotsky was the new International's theoretical and historical link to the Bolshevik Revolution which embodied Marxism's richest traditions.

On the eve of the war the International (with certain exceptions) found itself even more isolated than before. The cruel defeats of the French and Spanish proletariat set the stage for the imperialist war and our even greater isolation from the working class.

The declarations of war were almost everywhere accompanied by crackdowns on the Trotskyist movement. Several militants in France were picked up, and in September, 1939, Walter Dauge, secretary of the Belgian section, the PSR, was arrested by the Belgian police. The organizations of the Fourth International were for the most part forced underground.

The Stalinists before the war had been able to murder some of the most capable young Trotskyist cadres, but after the war had broken out, the bourgeoisie, under the cover of war, carried out with the Stalinists' consent a wholesale slaughter by comparison. Hundreds of Trotskyists lost their lives by outright murder, firing-squads, or from internment in prison. Whole leaderships were destroyed and among them the young International's most capable and promising figures.

"We lost during the war a large number of the leading cadres of our movement, long-time revolutionaries, such as Comrade Marcel Hic, general secretary of our French organization, dead in a concentration camp in Germany, the Belgian comrades Lesoil and Leon, who suffered the same fate, the Italian comrade Blasco, victim of Stalinist repression at the moment of the "Liberation," the Greek comrade Pouliopolos, executed by the fascists in Greece in 1943, the German comrade Widelin, and so many others." (Michel Pablo, *The Fourth International, What It Is, What It Aims At*, 1958, p. 18)

"The only public trials attempted during the war and the only condemnations to death or to prison of revolutionary leaders and militants accused of opposition to the imperialist war, *in both camps*, had Trotskyists as their victims. It was thus that in Holland the Gestapo assassinated, after a public trial on April 12, 1942, nine well known leaders of the RSAP, Trotskyists and pro-Trotskyists, among them Comrades Sneevliet and Dolleman. In Vienna, Trotskyist militants were executed after a public trial, as well as in Germany." (Michel Pablo, "Twenty Years of the Fourth International: III," in *Fourth International*, Autumn 1958, No. 4, p. 61.) "In the United States, Britain, Ceylon, and India, countries on the 'democratic' side, only Trotskyist leaders were imprisoned for their consistent struggle against the war and against imperialism." (*Ibid.*, *Fourth International*)

The resounding blow, however, which shook the newly founded International the hardest, was the assassination of Trotsky, August 20, 1940, by an agent of Stalin's GPU. The International would undoubtedly have been able to weather the storm with Trotsky at the helm, in spite of the tremendous losses and theoretical and political confusion resulting from the war. Without Trotsky, the theoretical and political helm of the badly battered, storm-tossed International naturally fell to  
the SWP.

The SWP had worked closely with Trotsky during the last four years of his life. There were frequent meetings and discussions with the leaders of the SWP. Many of Trotsky's body guards and secretaries were provided by the SWP. Because of his closeness to the SWP and the potential it offered, Trotsky took a keen interest in the affairs of the party and gave it his theoretical and political guidance even to the point that a sort of division of labor was created. This, we can be sure, was not Trotsky's intention, but rather to teach and educate the party so that it could better stand on its own two feet as it grew older. Nevertheless, the division of labor existed—Trotsky pro-

vided the theory and politics; the SWP leadership the machine to put them into practice. That this was the case can be seen in the fight with Burnham-Abern-Shachtman — Trotsky provided the theory and Cannon the organization. This division of labor is admirably reflected in the two books issuing from this struggle: *In Defense of Marxism* by Trotsky which deals mainly with the theoretical and political problems in dispute, and *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by Cannon which concentrates on the organizational problems raised.

In spite of all its short comings the SWP remained the Trotskyist organization with a promise of great potential. Unlike most other Trotskyist groups the SWP had kept its leadership intact during the war. It was essentially a proletarian party with a proletarian leadership. It was a party that had gone through an important struggle *at the beginning* of the war with its petty-bourgeois layer which reflected the chauvinist whip. With the split of the petty-bourgeois Burnham-Abern-Shachtman opposition, which took about 45% of the ranks, the party became even more homogeneous, proletarian in composition, and experienced in serious political struggle. Trotsky himself expressed great hope in the American section when he complimented Cannon by saying that he was the only man outside of Lenin to have built a proletarian party. The years after international contact was restored (beginning in 1944) were to be crucial and were to prove whether Trotsky's hopes for the SWP had been well founded or not.

While the SWP did not break with revolutionary defeatism in the USA during World War II, it did bend somewhat to social patriotism. For example, the slogan "Turn the imperialist war into a war against fascism" which began to appear in the March, 1941, *Militant*, lends itself to some confusion at best. There is obviously a distinction being made in this slogan between fascism and bourgeois democracy. Otherwise, the authors of the slogan would have stated: "Turn the imperialist war into a war against imperialism!" But this slogan is at best vague and nonsensical. Each imperialist power claims it is fighting imperialism, just as the Allies claimed to be fighting fascism. "Turn the imperialist war into a war against fascism" is not the same at all as the Leninist slogan of "Turn the imperialist war into a civil war!" In the latter there is no room for doubt as to who or where the enemy is, while the former gives some credence to bourgeois democracy's struggle against fascism. The slogan might have been acceptable for our German comrades *in Germany*, but coming from the USA where there existed a bourgeois democratic government, it meant to reflect in our political program the strong social patriotic atmosphere created by the bourgeoisie under the guise of fighting fascism.

It is one thing to have a revolutionary defeatist program against imperialist war and yet quite another to be critical of the war. But at times our propaganda came closer to the latter than the former. The party sometimes criticized American capitalism for holding back and sabotaging the war effort. There is nothing wrong with this, *per se*, if it is done in the right context—that is, if it is done in the context of not criticizing but of opposing the imperialist war by exposing capitalism and the imperialist nature of the war. But if it is not done specifically in the context of opposing the war such an approach becomes, in essence, a formula for supporting the war since it only criticizes the capitalist government for not pursuing the war more effi-

ciently. Even a teamster strike, for example, could be considered as holding back and even sabotaging the war effort, if not put in the proper context of a program in opposition to imperialist war. But it is not enough just to be in opposition to an imperialist war. No one can deny that the party generally stood in opposition to the imperialist war. But so did Shachtman's Workers Party. The important thing is the nature of this opposition, that is, what political content filled this abstract slogan.

The real position of the SWP during the war cannot be gauged just by its political line in relation to the USA. What is just as important is the position the SWP took in relation to the national question posed by the European sections and European Secretariat. The national problem was not posed in the United States since the US was never in danger of being occupied. The war was a "foreign" war, and we had entered it to help the "good" guys against the "bad" guys. It is, therefore, instructive to look at the SWP's position on the European situation and what our position might have been if occupation had been a question.

Point 13 of "the section on Europe from the Political Resolution of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party" begins:

"The aspiration of the masses of France and the other occupied countries for national liberation has profound revolutionary implications. But, like the sentiment of antifascism, it can be perverted to the uses of imperialism. Such a perversion of the movement is inevitable if it proceeds under the slogans and leadership of bourgeois nationalism." (*Fourth International*, Oct., 1942, p. 319)

In other words, the struggle for national liberation by the French masses was a progressive struggle as long as it was not perverted by the slogans and leadership of the bourgeoisie. The idea that the struggle for national liberation in imperialist France was in-and-of-itself a bourgeois slogan was not even considered. The struggle for national liberation *at the time of war* could ultimately only tail-end the national liberation struggle being led by the national bourgeoisie. The problem of national liberation in the imperialist countries could not have been posed by Marxists until one imperialist power or another had won a definitive victory resulting in the political subjugation of all of Europe, thus imposing a *de facto* empire. After a certain period then, and *only* then, could Marxists have even *considered*, as Lenin pointed out, the possibility of the struggle for national liberation being placed on the order of the day. That is, then, and only then, could the struggle for national liberation be considered as part and parcel of the struggle for socialism. But the SWP saw it differently. Continuing from the above quote:

"The task of the workers of the occupied countries is to put themselves at the head of the insurgent movement of the people and direct it toward the struggle for the socialist reorganization of Europe."

That is, the struggle for socialism flowed from the struggle for national liberation led by the working class, in the advanced countries just as in the under-developed countries. Here again we see, as in the European Secretariat's Theses, the theory of the permanent revolution being applied to the imperialist countries of Europe.

The SWP did criticize the "Three Theses" of the German comrades in somewhat the same fashion as the European Secretariat, but has to our knowledge never mentioned the

"nationalist deviation" of the French section. On the contrary, the SWP glorified the French section's role during the war as well as that of the European Secretariat. Point #29 of the European Secretariat's Theses of the 1944 European Conference (quoted above) was not reproduced in the March or May (1945) issues of the *Fourth International* along with the other parts of the Theses. In the "Editor's Note," an introduction to the Theses, one reads the following:

"The record of Trotskyism in Europe is an inspiring record of relentless, unyielding, heroic struggle in the face of overwhelming odds. For years our co-thinkers in Europe had to conduct their struggle under the Hitler dictatorship. This struggle for socialism is exemplified by the French Trotskyists who published illegally 73 issues . . . of their central organ *La Vérité* in a period of 4 years beginning with August 1940."

In spite of point #29 of the Theses which criticized the French section for "a social-patriotic deviation," the SWP's *Fourth International* states that "the French Trotskyists" "exemplified" "the struggle for socialism." The lengthy introduction is, for the most part, nothing more than a paraphrasing of a document we have already referred to several times above—the "Open Letter to the President of the Press Federation." This, it will be recalled, was the letter "written in defense of the PCI's demand that *La Vérité* be allowed to appear legally" since it had been such a valiant campaigner "against fascism and the occupying imperialism."

The "Editor's Note" even repeats point #3 which we ourselves quoted above:

"From the first the French Trotskyists fought deportations, racism and anti-Semitism. They advanced the slogan of the right of all peoples, including those in the colonies, to self-determination."

For the French as well as for the SWP, the struggle for national liberation in the occupied imperialist countries was the first order of business. The idea that the French working class should be organized around a revolutionary defeatist position which should include as one of its major and most urgent tasks, the struggle for the right of the colonies to self-determination, is turned inside out. The struggle of the colonies for the right of self-determination is added as if it were only an afterthought, almost as if to say that the struggle of the colonies would be included once France had won her own right of self-determination.

That the SWP had essential agreement with the United Secretariat on the national question in Europe is seen in the last part of the "Editor's Note":

"Out of the European Conference come the theses, sections of which are published below for the information of our readers. It will be apparent to the readers of *Fourth International* that in the main essentials there is a solidarity of ideas between the theses of the European Conference and the programmatic documents adopted by the Socialist Workers Party at the November 1943 Plenum and November 1944 Convention (. . .)."

It should be obvious that the SWP as well as the European Secretariat was unwilling or unable to deal with the origins of the French Trotskyists' deviations on the national question, let alone the national question in general. Not completely, but partly due to this failure to deal with the national question, there developed another petty-bourgeois opposition in the SWP which was only a reflection of

similar tendencies

not the least of which was the majority of the French section with its position of voting "yes" for the bourgeois constitution. It was no accident that the Goldman-Morrow faction made its way to the Shachtmanites. The Goldman-Morrow tendency should have been an ominous warning of the dangers that still existed in the International from the petty bourgeoisie adapting to the prevalent pressures of the moment.

While the tendency represented by the Goldman-Morrow faction was due essentially to the pressure generated during the war, another petty-bourgeois tendency began to take form after the war. This tendency was ideologically akin to Shachtmanism and resulted from almost the very same pressures that had produced the original bureaucratic collectivist ideology of Shachtman. The tail-ending of the Stalinists by our European sections, the growing prospects of WW III spurred on by the cold war and the rape as well as suppression of the working class of Eastern Europe by the Stalinists, created pressures similar to those that were present on the eve of WW II; all of which acted as midwives to the new outburst of petty-bourgeois despair in the International. The state capitalists were represented in the SWP by the Johnson-Forest faction which after the war left Shachtman and re-entered the SWP bringing all their ideological baggage with them. This same tendency took form in France in August, 1946, during the preparation of the PCI's third party congress. Tony Cliff was sent to England by the International Secretariat to straighten out the RCP (Revolutionary Communist Party) leadership who had been toying with the ideas of state capitalism. The RCP leadership, however, ended up rejecting state capitalism and Tony Cliff ended up becoming one of its foremost advocates and leader of the state-capitalist faction in Britain. The new Shachtmanite tendency was like adding fresh iridescent paint to the already obvious.

At the end and immediately after the war, there was an upsurge of the masses through the world which was reflected in the growth of the Trotskyist movement. The RCP in England, for example, had a sizable proletarian base for its size. Out of roughly 500 members, the RCP was approximately 80% workers. After the reunification in France the PCI began to grow and was able to recruit a base—even though small—in the working class. Certain sources put the French section at 2,000 strong. In the United States the SWP too began to grow, and by 1946 the party reported a membership of 2,000.

Optimism abounded. Opportunities seemed to be opening up everywhere. Trotsky's predictions about the war throwing capitalism and bourgeois democracy into a prolonged and aggravated crisis seemed to be coming true down to the last letter. The enthusiasm and confidence of the period was best summed up in Cannon's speech to the 12th National Convention, "The Coming American Revolution," in which he stated:

"Our economic analysis has shown that the present boom of American capitalism is heading directly at a rapid pace toward a crisis; and this will be a profound social crisis which can lead, in its further development, to an objectively revolutionary situation."

The crisis from which the revolution would leap was just around the corner. "Onward to a party of 10,000," was the slogan of the SWP convention.

But the analysis of the SWP and the International proved

to be wrong. Nevertheless, the SWP and the International dogmatically clung to what they thought Trotsky had predicted. Long after it had become abundantly clear that the capitalist crisis was not around the corner, they continued to argue that it was on its way. Ernest (Germain), the economic theoretician of the International, confidently defended the International's position at the 2nd World Congress in 1948 against the RCP majority which as a minority of one maintained that the boom would not be so ephemeral. Such farsighted analysis by the British section was, however, branded as disillusioned petty-bourgeois skepticism.

Nobody could defend Trotsky's anticipations of the events down to their last letter. Trotsky, like all the great Marxists, anticipated the future not with the intention of being history's script writer, but of indicating the general development of events given certain preconditions. Sometimes even the general flow of historical development is interrupted by historical accidents. Nevertheless, Trotsky's prediction of the crisis of capitalism and bourgeois democracy and the subsequent rise of the masses under the banner of the Fourth International, was not without foundation. The rise of the masses did occur. What was missing was a presupposition that was understood in Trotsky's prediction: that the Fourth International would be sufficiently prepared to provide the masses with a revolutionary alternative. In fact, in 1937 he clearly stated, "If in the event of a new war, the masses are not headed by a revolutionary party . . . a new revolutionary situation would throw society back." But as we have seen, in the most important countries such as in France, the sections of the International were incapable of taking advantage of the opportunities open to them. The politically bankrupt sections were unable to provide any valid alternative to the treacherous leaderships of Social Democracy and Stalinism which allowed the breathing space capitalism needed to secure its wobbly legs. But according to the SWP and the International leadership, the Fourth International had not yet had its chance to lead the masses in the storming of the bourgeois bastions and, therefore, the crisis was still around the corner. A dogmatic interpretation of Trotsky—sterile orthodoxy—replaced a critical analysis of the objective situation and our own historical role.

To ignore the physical as well as political disintegration of the International during the war was to attempt to build upon a foundation of sand. The results could only be an ever continuing collapse of the structure, politically and organizationally, regardless of how impressive the facade appeared at any one time. The Second World Congress in 1948, however, sanctified the role of the International to that time and oozed with optimism about the "more or less rapid transformation" "of our sections" "into mass parties."

In the activities report of the I. S., "10 Years of Fighting," adopted by the 2nd Congress, we find the following sanctimonious excerpts:

"c) In the face of the occupation of Europe by the Nazis and the reactions it provoked among the masses, the International defended the principle of the link between the struggle against national oppression and the struggle for the socialist revolution . . ."

"d) Against the tide of chauvinist propaganda flooding the whole world, the Trotskyists held aloft the flag of revolutionary internationalism . . ."

While having stated the above the authors felt no compunction in stating further on:

"At first the pressure of the war and of the occupation of Europe by the Nazis completely bewildered the pre-war leadership of the French Trotskyist movement. A few of them deserted the organization and others abandoned all political activity. Among those who stayed, some leading comrades developed positions which essentially constituted a complete retreat from the revolutionary positions of the 4th International . . ."

Under the heading "The National Question During the War," the report continued, officially stamping as good coin the International's own deviations on the national question:

"The question was to organically combine the masses' national demands with the proletarian socialist program. The sections or the tendencies which hesitated to audaciously take the initiative to write the struggle for national demands in their program, or which showed their incapacity to do so, to organize this struggle or to participate in the 'national' movement of the masses (strikes, partisan armies, insurrections such as the Greek one of December 1944) made serious sectarian mistakes which weighed on their development . . ."

And we learn that, outside of possible tendencies here and there, the Greek section seems to have been the only one to have raised objection to the International's deviations on the national question, and it was branded as sectarian. The Greek section, however, outside of having been small to begin with and losing its leadership during the war, found itself in three parts at the end of the war. To say the least, it was not able to have any preponderant influence in the International as a whole.

The 2nd World Congress held ten years after the founding of the 4th International maintained that the International was alive and well. The political documents issuing from the 2nd World Congress, however, proved that the International was not well, and even raised speculation as to its total demise. The young International was weak in cadres at its founding, but its strength was not in its numbers but in its unrelenting revolutionary program. The 2nd Congress of the International could brag of an increase in cadres, but the program had for all essential purposes become a religious relic. It had been replaced by a concoction born of social patriotism, enriched by pragmatism and impressionism and couched in sterile orthodoxy. Future events were to prove that the demise of the International was more than mere speculation.

The new leadership of the reorganized European Secretariat and subsequently, in 1945, of the International Secretariat, was personified by Michel Raptis (Pablo) who took over as general secretary of the European Secretariat after the arrest of Marcel Hic in 1943 and his murder in 1945. Leaving aside political considerations, one could not help but be suspicious of this new leadership from the organizational wheeling-and-dealing that was carried on under the guise of reorganization. Negotiations were opened up with the POUM. Negotiations with the Shachtmanites were placed on the agenda for the SWP. A phony Irish section was set up consisting of one individual who turned out to be sympathetic to Shachtman. An Italian section was concocted which proved to be largely Bordighists. But these and other organizational gymnastics were only a portent of the organizational and political

acrobatics yet to come.

The 2nd World Congress began to take up the most important theoretical question to face the Trotskyist movement since the war. This was the question of the nature of the Eastern European states occupied by the Soviet Union. The Congress documents held that these states remained capitalist, that "structural assimilation" by the bureaucracy was impossible except for, possibly, "one or another country," and that the bureaucracy must withdraw under the pressure of imperialism, or "the real destruction of capitalism . . . take place only as a result of the revolutionary mobilization of the masses." (Here it is impossible to take up the question of Eastern Europe and the many fallacious theories advanced, such as the theory of "structural assimilation." To the present, the Eastern European question has not been dealt with satisfactorily.)

One can see from the above how unprepared the International was for the actual march of events that took place in Eastern Europe. Outside of "one or another" exception, there could be no "structural assimilation"—a thoroughly reformist concept in its own right—in Eastern Europe, and the Soviet bureaucracy remained "compelled to maintain the bourgeois function and structure of the state, not only because its destruction is impossible without a revolutionary mobilization of the masses, but also in order to defend its own particular exploitation [sic] of the workers of these countries." The transformation of the Eastern European countries into deformed workers' states—in process at the time the documents of the 2nd World Congress were being passed—took the International by surprise. The underestimation of the capabilities of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the general framework of the world situation—which itself had been misunderstood—laid one of the bases for the zig-zag which became known as "Pabloism." When it was finally decided that the Eastern European countries had been transformed into workers' states—determined precipitously and empirically—the International leadership, without retracting a single comma that appeared in the 2nd World Congress documents, now began overestimating the potential of the same Stalinist bureaucracy. Both positions showed a lack of understanding of Stalinism and its bureaucratic rule.

The change in the International's position followed the Second World Congress by a matter of weeks. Before the ink was dry on the Congress documents, the International Secretariat (IS) was writing open letters "To the Congress, the Central Committee and the Members of the Yugoslav Communist Party," in which the IS was, according to the British section, "forced by events to proceed from the standpoint of the British Party, that the productive and political relations in Yugoslavia are basically identical with those of the Soviet Union." The British comrades continued in their "Letter on Yugoslavia sent to the I. E. C.":

"If indeed there exists in Yugoslavia a capitalist state, then the IS Letters can only be characterized as outright opportunist. For the IS does not pose the tasks in Yugoslavia which would follow if bourgeois relations existed there as the dominant form. The Letters are based on conclusions which can only flow from the premise that the basic overturn of capitalism and landlordism has taken place.

"The second Open Letter gives several conditions necessary if Yugoslavia is to go forward with true revolutionary and communist progress. Yet nowhere does it

call for the destruction of bourgeois relations in the economy and the overturn in the bourgeois system and regime." "The comrades will remember that the Congress document gives as its first reason why 'the capitalist nature of the buffer zone is apparent,' that 'Nowhere has the bourgeoisie as such been destroyed or expropriated.' Why no mention of this in the Open Letters? Of all the seven conditions given in the Congress document as making 'apparent' the capitalist nature of Yugoslavia and other buffer countries, the IS mentions *only one*—the nationalization of the land. But even here, the question of the failure to nationalize the land is raised, not from the point of view of proving the capitalist nature of Yugoslavia. It is raised to point out, correctly, that the nationalization of the land is necessary in order to combat the concentration of income and of land in the hands of the kulaks. The question is raised in the general context of the Letter, as an aid to the socialist development of agriculture in a country where capitalism and landlordism have been overthrown, but the danger of a *new* exploitation is still present in the countryside.

"Not only are the main tasks posed in the Open Letter identical to those to be carried out to cleanse a state similar in productive and political relations in the Soviet Union; but, we must add, that the impression given is that these relations are a great deal healthier than in Russia.

"The articles appearing in our international press revealed one thing: *the thesis adopted by the World Congress failed to provide a clear guide to the problems that arose from the Cominform-Yugoslav split and the tasks of the revolutionaries in connection with the regime and its economic base.*"

It is evident from the quote that the comrades of the British section, along with their other disagreements, disputed the position of the International on the nature of the Eastern European states. While we cannot agree with the British section's alternative political analysis on the question, (an analysis similar to the Vern-Ryan tendency of the SWP that red army equals workers' state) the letter of the British comrades, nevertheless, exposes the International's total disregard, without the slightest compunction, for their own political evaluation. The letter exposes as well the Secretariat's crass opportunism and is a premonition of the adaptation the IS was going to make, not only in relation to Yugoslavia, but to Stalinism in general.

The attitude that the YCP was on its way to reforming itself, under the leadership of Tito, flowed from what seems to have been the assumption that any opposition to the Kremlin by another CP had, of necessity, to be from the left. The ideas of the British comrades that the Yugoslav "bureaucratic regime, resting as it does mainly on the peasantry, can have no independent perspective between the Soviet Union and American imperialism," and that the struggle of the YCP was a "desire of the Yugoslav leaders to maintain an independent bureaucratic position and further aspirations of the own," were completely dismissed by the International leadership. The IS leadership behind Pablo and Healy, as well as the French section behind Bleibtreu and Lambert, threw themselves into the work of establishing contacts with Yugoslav government officials, organizing work brigades to go to Yugoslavia, and sycophantically praising in their press the "courageous" position taken by the YCP and its leader Tito. Tito's portrait even

decorated the walls of the offices of the IS and French section. The attitude to Yugoslavia was only a precursor to positions that the IS would take in relation to China, Bolivia, Cuba, Algeria, Vietnam, etc.

As can be seen from above, the British section had a number of differences with the International. It was the first substantial section to clash with the new International leadership—a clash which started in 1945 and raged until 1949. The differences also encompassed the perspective for the British section itself. The International supported a small minority in the British section centered around Gerry Healy, who favored an entry tactic into the Labor Party. Healy, who became the International's man on the scene, was encouraged by both Cannon and Pablo. After this grouping declared itself a faction, Pablo managed to have it equally represented on the I. E. C. The minority, with status in the International essentially equal to the overwhelming majority of the British section, along with the open support of the International, threatened to carry out their line of entry regardless of the majority decision at the RCP Congress in 1947. The result was, of course, a split by the minority with the International giving the approving nod; thereby, in essence, recognizing the small entry faction as the official section. The majority of the party was by now demoralized and its cadres completely disillusioned with the International. Its total demise was only a matter of a short time.

The organizational procedures as well as political gyrations of the International from 1944 to 1949 should have been enough for any healthy leadership to at least surmise that something was seriously amiss. It would take the SWP, however, almost another five years before it "discovered, in a period of weeks," that the International had run amuck with "Pabloite revisionism."

The "Open Letter" to the YCP by the IS was the beginning of what was later to become known as "Pabloism." With the Tito-Stalin break, the Chinese revolution, the purges in the Soviet-occupied states and their transformation into deformed workers' states, "the beginning of the world economic depression," the heating up of the "cold war" along with the outbreak of the Korean War, "the changing of the international relationship of forces and the speeded up pace of American imperialism toward the preparation and the unleashing of the Third World War," set the stage for another revision of Trotskyism emanating from the lineage of petty-bourgeois leadership of the International. The crack of the bourgeois whip sends the petty bourgeoisie scurrying for shelter, and Pablo along with the rest of the International leadership, with the endorsement of the SWP, found shelter under the mantle of Stalinism.

Pablo very early became convinced that the major problem in the 4th International was Stalinophobia, and he led the other leaders in "correcting" this shortcoming.

Comrade Mandel states in "Three Years of the New Course of Trotskyism (Report on the Activity of the IEC and IS between the 2nd and 3rd World Congress)" that:

"The discussion on the Yugoslav affair very soon aroused a discussion on the problem of the evolution and the nature of the buffer-zone countries. This discussion did not correspond as much to a need of re-examining what the 2nd World Congress had declared on the question of these countries as to the need of taking into consideration the new developments which had taken

place since the 2nd World Congress and especially since the eruption of the Yugoslav affair. The resolution adopted on this subject by the 7th Plenum marked a first important stage in the readjustment of our position. The discussion opened by that Plenum, as well as the events which followed in the buffer-zone countries, has enabled the IS to present to the 3rd World Congress a unanimous draft resolution on the nature of the buffer-zone countries which you have already discussed. The Thesis of the 9th Plenum as well as the discussion documents written by IS members—"Where Are We Going?" by Comrade Pablo and Comrade Germain's "Ten Theses"—have attempted to place this re-evaluation of the nature of the buffer-zone countries within the framework of our conception of Stalinism as a whole and of the contemporary world and have demonstrated that this does not in any way destroy the cohesion and unity of structure of our program."

Regardless of what was meant by this last phrase about our program, "Where Are We Going?" by Comrade Pablo is very instructive as to where we went. Pablo describes Stalinism's "contradictory character" (p. 9), and relates how "the Communist parties retain the possibility, in certain circumstances, of roughly outlining a revolutionary orientation" (p. 11). Furthermore, our "general attitude toward" those Communist parties "being compelled in the course of events and under the pressure of the masses to partially change the line" in countries "currently going through a revolution," is "by and large that of a Left Opposition which gives them *critical support*." (p. 17)

In other words, Stalinism was not counter-revolutionary through and through, and any Communist party could in a revolutionary situation under the pressure of the masses reform itself and become centrist if not revolutionary. The same logic held in the case of the Soviet Union. Under the pressure of the masses the Soviet bureaucracy would be forced to "share" power with the proletariat, i. e., reform itself. If this were true, the role of Trotskyists was not to build an independent party but rather to revert back to being the Left Opposition. Since these parties would more likely than not outline only a "roughly" revolutionary orientation, it would be our role to purify the political line by being the left critic. The logic of this position was, of course, the liquidation of the 4th International since a left oppositionist struggle was all that was required. It is not accidental that Pablo and the International leadership had arrived at a liquidationist position similar to that of Isaac Deutscher of the Polish Left Opposition which had opposed the foundation of the 4th International from the start. The Polish section wanted to stay outside from the beginning, while Pablo and his political cohorts entered only to exit by the back door.

In the pamphlet *The 4th International*, Pablo affirms that:

"The Third World Congress, held in 1951, occupies an important place in the post-war history of the Fourth International. In re-evaluating the international situation it affirmed that the global relationship of forces between imperialism and the Socialist Revolution in all its forms — workers' states, colonial revolution, revolutionary movements in the capitalist countries — was changing in an almost *irresistible* and *irreversible* way in favor of the Revolution."

Here is the summation of Pablo and the International leadership's basic analysis of the world situation since the



war, on which all of the IS's deviationist theories have been founded. This analysis flowed from an impressionistic interpretation of world events (even if imaginary) such as: the Yugoslav affair, the Chinese revolution, the establishment of deformed workers' states in Eastern Europe, the impending world economic collapse, the forcing of imperialism into a world war it could not possibly win, etc. Due to the "irresistible and irreversible" character of the socialist revolution, there would be less room to maneuver for either the capitalists or the Stalinist bureaucracy. The flow of the world revolution would then force the mass Communist parties (or any mass workers' party) as well as the Soviet bureaucracy, under the pressure of the masses, to place themselves squarely, even if hesitatingly, on the side of the revolutionary forces. This was the consequence of the "new world reality."

(The groups of Posadas remain essentially in a state of infantile "Pabloism." For them the "irresistible and irreversible" development of world revolution is causing a proliferation of workers' states everywhere, causing even military-bureaucratic regimes such as Torres to take the road of revolution and forcing inevitably a nuclear showdown between the Soviet Union and imperialism in which, Posadas advocates, the Soviet Union must make the first nuclear strike. For the Posadasites, these "irresistible and irreversible" forces have increased to such a magnitude that they have been elevated to the most important general law governing socialist transformation in our time. These views are not so illogical once the given premises from which they flow is understood.)

The theories of the International leadership were, of course, founded upon imaginary as well as false premises. It is ludicrous to even consider the notion that the balance of forces on a world scale had shifted in favor of socialism—the same idea as above stated elsewhere—without the working class first having taken power in at least one of the most advanced imperialist countries. To pose the question as such, even then, would be to dabble in intellectual calisthenics since it would have no bearing on the attempt to sharpen the blade of the revolutionary party to fell the bourgeois masters in the remaining imperialist countries. The International leadership applied the rationale of the balance of forces changing in favor of socialism to explain away their own inabilities to deal with the theoretical problems they faced. How else explain, for example, the assumption of power by the counter-revolutionary Stalinist parties in Yugoslavia and China? Very simple, according to them the world relationship of forces had shifted in favor of socialism to such a degree that 1) mass parties of the left could be pushed onto a "roughly" revolutionary road and that 2) only a rough revolutionary program was sufficient. In other words, the role of a Bolshevik combat party became only incidental to the victory of the revolution, since blunted instruments as in Cuba would now suffice. Liquidation of the 4th International into specialized pressure groups was a natural conclusion.

The practical application of the theoretical and political innovations of the International leadership was very logical. Entrism was posed as an absolute necessity in any country with a mass working-class party; such as the Socialist Party of Belgium or the Communist parties of France and Italy. This was not a tactical question of entrism dependent upon an episodic situation which would,

of necessity, be short-lived; but rather entrism *sui generis*, in-and-of-itself. The cadres of the 4th International were to play the *new* Left Opposition in reforming the existing mass parties. Entrism became a practical form of liquidation.

A sizable tendency in the world movement took the new innovations to their logical conclusion. The Cochran-Clarke tendency in the USA, for example, stated publicly in April, 1954, in "Our Orientation" that:

"... now it is a fact that our whole tradition . . . is of no interest to the existing labor movement, it is foreign to them. They do not see or believe that any of it is pertinent to the solution of their problem . . . and have to draw the necessary lessons . . . the very formations of the International Revolution must lead us to the conclusion that the revolutionary parties of tomorrow will not be Trotskyist in the sense of accepting the tradition of our movement."

In other words, history had passed us by, and it was necessary to integrate ourselves into the existing social movements which would be or were moving "irrestibly" and "irreversibly" toward revolution.

Clarke proposed the liquidation of the Trotskyist organizations all over the world into the existing mass parties. Clarke was supported by Lawrence of England, Mestre of France, and Dowson of Canada. Liquidation of the cadres they represented was swift and direct.

For the rest of the cadres of the International, liquidation took a slower pace. Entrism continued in most countries in Europe until the late 1960s, but as reality proved to be more hard-headed than the impressionist wizards of the International leadership, the immediate political reasons justifying entrism were continually changing. Contrived political analysis was the tool used to justify the ludicrous theoretical innovations, and the organizational counterpart remained a constant. When entrism was finally ended it was done on a very empirical and pragmatic basis. Many of the cadres who had originally entered were no longer around; they had simply been lost. Others opposed not only any and all attempts to leave but resisted anything which might force them to do so, and still remain in those organizations to this day. Those new cadres that did exit after the long years of entrism, were recruited almost entirely in the last years from, mainly, students, that is, the petty-bourgeois milieu—an arena in which open work would have been more fruitful than entrism. In France, for example, the PCI's main entry work was in the Communist students of liberal arts, while Union Communist which was considerably smaller than the PCI after the war, became the largest Trotskyist organization in France by orienting to the industrial proletariat.

It would be false to maintain that "Pabloism" was *only* a pro-Stalinist tendency. The myth that the Pabloist tendency was only pro-Stalinist was due in part to its predominant enthusiasm for the Stalinist CPs of China, France, etc. (including Yugoslavia), during the period of 1949-53 as well as its theoretical position that Stalinism could reform itself. In many countries "Pabloism" expressed itself as an adaptation to Social Democracy. This was evident in the USA where the Pabloist tendency of Cochran and Clarke took the form of a combination based on an adaptation to Stalinism by Clarke and his followers; and on an adaptation to the trade-union bureaucracy by Cochran

and his predominantly working-class following, who had no love for Stalinism whatsoever.

In England, "Pabloism" took the form of an adaptation to a left wing in the Labor Party around the demagogue Aneurin Bevan.

In the Bolivian revolution of 1952 we have a prime example of the essence of "Pabloism" when an historical moment opened itself up to the world Trotskyist movement. Not only was it the first revolution in which a Trotskyist party played a major role, but a golden opportunity for the dictatorship of the proletariat to be established under the banner of Trotskyism. The blame for letting this historical moment slip away from the Trotskyist movement with the defeat of the Bolivian Revolution must be placed squarely on the shoulders of the International leadership. The IS, along with the leadership of the SWP, did not only *not* criticize and attempt to correct the POR for its class collaborationist policies, it openly encouraged them. The political line of the POR was not just a tragic mistake by the comrades in Bolivia, but rather the applied theory and logical conclusion of the adaptationist policies of the IS.

The Bolivian Revolution had all the earmarks of a classical proletarian revolution from the start. It began when the ruling class could no longer continue to rule in the old way due to the pressure of strikes, demonstrations, and the disintegration of the army. A new bourgeois government came to power under the control of a radical petty-bourgeois party, the MNR. Dual power arose based on the armed organizations of the workers and peasants under the leadership of the COB which was controlled by a Menshevik leadership. The POR, like the Bolshevik party in the Soviets, was a small minority.

Such a classical revolution should have obviously required a classical policy from the comrades in the POR, but instead of exposing the Menshevik leadership in the COB for its collaboration with the bourgeois government of Pas Estenssoro, the Bolivian Kerensky, the POR demanded that the COB be represented in the government. Instead of insisting that the COB break with the bourgeois government, seize power, and create a workers and peasants' government, the POR extended critical support to the MNR.

An unsigned article in the 1953 Jan.-Feb. issue of the *Fourth International* stated the politics of the IS (with no criticism from the SWP) toward this class collaborationist line.

"The POR began by justifiably granting critical support to the MNR government. That is, it desisted from issuing the slogan 'down with the government'; it gave the government critical support against attacks of imperialism and reaction, and it supported all progressive measures. But at the same time it avoided any expression whatever of confidence in this government. On the contrary, it propelled the revolutionary activity and independent organization of the masses as much as it could.

"The POR limits its *support* and sharpens its *criticism* insofar as the government proves itself incapable of fulfilling the national democratic program of the revolution, insofar as it hesitates, capitulates, indirectly plays the game of imperialism and reaction, prepares to betray, and for this reason tries to harry and deride the revolutionists." (p. 16)

This is not the line of Lenin, Trotsky, and the Bolshevik Party on their way to creating the dictatorship of the proletariat, but rather the line of Muranov, Kamenev, and Stalin when they took over the editorship of *Pravda* before the arrival of Lenin. In the *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky writes: "In the programme announcement of the new editorship, it was declared that the Bolsheviks would decisively support the Provisional Government 'insofar as it struggles against reaction or counter-revolution.'" (p. 305) The policy of the POR was a mirror image to that of the Kamenev-Stalin faction, which Trotsky said was "steadily converting itself into a left flank of the so-called revolutionary democracy, and was taking part in the mechanics of parliamentary 'pressure' in the *coul-oirs* upon the bourgeoisie, supplementing this with a similar pressure upon the democracy." (p. 306-7)

"Pabloism" was in no way *just* pro-Stalinism. "*Pabloism*," like its precursors and successors in the leadership of the *International*, represented the politics of a petty-bourgeois leadership which adapted itself to the prevalent petty-bourgeois leaderships in the workers' (or "leftist") movement. Its pro-Stalinist phase only reflected the dominating Stalinist influence at that time (1949-53) but did not contradict nor exclude, as we have seen above, an adaptation to other petty-bourgeois tendencies in the working class. Even its theory of the change in the balance of forces in favor of socialism served as well for an adaptation to Social Democracy as to Stalinism. All that was needed was the opportunity to do so. Bolivia was a most tragic example — others were to follow.

It was quite in the keeping of things that the petty-bourgeois leadership of the *International* should first and foremost come into conflict with the parties adhering to the *International* containing the highest concentration of workers. We have already seen the conflict between the IS and the British section and the organizational subterfuges to which the IS resorted — complementary methods to its petty-bourgeois politics. The French section and the SWP logically followed as next on the list to run into a head-on conflict with the IS.

In spite of the French section's enthusiastic support for the IS's position on Yugoslavia, they began to rebel against the adaptation to Stalinism once the question was posed in relation to the French CP. Being closer to home, the question became much less abstract and posed serious problems to their functioning. As the struggle developed, Pablo took the initiative in suspending the majority leadership of the PCI (Bleibtreu, Lambert, etc.) receiving the endorsement of the IS majority only afterwards. The majority leadership of the PCI had had the temerity to try to discuss their differences with the IS at their own party congress. The suspensions amounted, in fact, to an expulsion of the majority of the French section.

The split in the *International* was precipitated overnight by the SWP only after a long struggle with the Pabloist Cochran-Clarke tendency. This struggle was terminated by the expulsion *en masse* of this tendency (25% or better of the party) for the action of the New York section of the minority in having boycotted a party banquet! The party leadership had carried on the fight with this tendency by claiming that it, not the tendency of Cochran-Clarke, represented the political line of the *International*. Cannon wrote on May 29, 1952, to Renard, a leader of the French majority that:

"It is the unanimous opinion of the leadership of the SWP that the authors of these documents [of the 3rd World Congress and 10th Plenum of the IEC] have rendered a great service to the movement, for which they deserve the appreciation and support of comrades, and not mistrust and denigration."

The July, 1952, SWP convention passed a resolution which stated:

"The 15th National Congress of the SWP considers correct the estimation in the different theses and resolutions of the Third World Congress on the nature of the coming war, on the rhythm of the preparations for war, of the analyses of the contradictions of the Kremlin and the national Stalinist bureaucracies, of the characterizations of the class nature and evolution of Yugoslavia and the countries of Eastern Europe, of the significance of the Chinese revolution, etc. The tactics developed by the resolution flows as the logical conclusion of the political premise."

This was the open and declared position of the SWP leadership until a few months before the SWP issued its Open Letter, splitting the International. But regardless of how often or how earnestly the leadership of the SWP affirmed and reaffirmed their support for the IS and its theoretical and political positions, they could not gain the factional backing, or at least neutrality from the IS, that they desired. Clarke,

determined to carry out the new line to the very end. The dispute then broke out over the practical conclusions inherent in the new line, and was followed by a growing disenchantment on the part of the SWP leadership with the International leadership when they ("covertly") supported the Cochran-Clarke tendency. For the SWP any support given the minority tendency by the IS was tantamount to "creating disruption," since the SWP's conception of the International was more that of an ideological federation than a democratic centralist body. (A position which is still, more or less, adhered to by the SWP leadership today.) Cannon in a report at the Majority Caucus meeting, May 18, 1953, stated:

"One difference was a tendency on their part toward 'Cominternism' in organizational matters—a tendency to set up the International as a highly centralized body, on the order of the early Comintern, which could make decisions, enforce orders and so forth, in the old Comintern fashion. We said to them all the time, 'You can't do that. The International is too weak. You can't have that kind of an International under present conditions. If you try it, you will only end up in weakening your own authority and creating disruption.'"

". . . Under these conditions we believed it would be better for the center there to limit itself primarily to the role of ideological leader; and to leave aside organizational interference as much as possible especially outside of Europe."

Cannon opposes a democratic-centralist structure mainly for organizational reasons — "The International is too weak." But it was precisely because the International was weak that it was all the more imperative that the International be a highly centralized body, just as the smallness of the party makes it all the more imperative that the party be rooted in the proletariat. One of Trotsky's main struggles in the last seven years of his life was over the founda-

tion of the 4th International as a democratic-centralist organization as opposed to the objections of centrists of all stripes and varieties.

Cannon is not opposing, in this statement, the bureaucratic-centralist methods of the IS, but is opposing centralism in general. The SWP leadership could agree to any political position (or disagree and keep quiet about it) as long as they themselves would not be forced to carry it out in practice. It was alright for the IS to enforce the decisions of the International in Europe perhaps, but 'Don't Tread on Me!' were the colors flown by the SWP. This position went hand in hand with the SWP's abstaining from taking the ideological lead in the International after the war. Instead the SWP leadership commended and helped build up the prestige of the individual leaders of the International, supporting them up and down the line. "We went so far as to soft-pedal a lot of differences we had with them . . ." said Cannon. You support us and we will support you, seemed to be the generally understood agreement that the leaders of the SWP wanted.

The SWP after the war failed to live up to the expectations Trotsky had had for it. Instead of taking a serious and critical attitude toward the political problems raised during and after the war, the SWP leadership glossed over the problems, made light of them, supported the new, unknown, inexperienced and untested leadership to the point of consciously lending the SWP's prestige to them while hiding political differences. This, combined with the SWP's own negative position on the construction of a democratic-centralist International, were decisive factors in the crisis of the international Trotskyist movement.

The crisis took a cataclysmic organizational form with the appearance of the SWP's "Open Letter" denouncing the "revisionist danger" of the "Pabloist minority." The "Open Letter" was the first indication to any section that the SWP had any criticisms at all. In a matter of weeks the SWP seemed to have discovered that the elected leadership of the Fourth International was "consciously and deliberately working, . . . to liquidate the Fourth International." The "Open Letter" was, in effect, an open declaration of split by the SWP, inviting all sections to do likewise. The issuance of an *open* document attacking, calling for a break with, the International leadership *during* the internal discussion period of the forthcoming 4th World Congress, could only be interpreted as a declaration of a split. Such organizational methods only served to confirm (along with the earlier expulsion of the SWP minority) that the SWP leadership was indeed incapable of leading a political struggle against the petty-bourgeois centrist leadership of the Fourth International.

A serious political struggle against the politics of the IS would have involved too many embarrassing questions for the SWP to answer—some of which were even posed by the IS itself in the pamphlet, *In Defense of the Fourth International*: "What is to thought of a revolutionary leader who for years has been incapable of distinguishing between 'the conscious and deliberate liquidation' of our movement and a 'big step forward' of the same movement? How can one attach any value to such judgement? How can one believe that the sharp change of front by the authors of the Open Letter had a political character when these quotations are placed side by side?" (p. 7) Did the leaders of the SWP discover, "in a period of weeks, that for years they have been supporting and approving the

actions of Stalinist agents, filling their press and their bulletins with the writings of these same agents"? (p. 6) "The real reason for the expulsion, as the Open Letter cynically explains, was that they 'supported and defended' the International's analysis of recent events in the USSR. In other words, [were not] these comrades . . . expelled for their ideas, and only for their ideas"? (p. 23) "Why did not the SWP act this way in accordance with the normal rules of functioning of any revolutionary organization? Why did it prefer to address itself at once to the public and to publicly betray the cause of international Trotskyism?" (p. 25)

But the real questions the SWP leadership would have had to answer are: How is it possible for such "revisionists" to gain the leadership of the International? What are the social origins of this "revisionism"? What is the connection between the "revisionism" of the IS and the politics and role of the SWP? In answering these questions, the SWP would have had to face squarely the origins of the crisis in the International and its own responsibilities for the crisis. In that it did not face up to these questions, the SWP proved itself incapable of leading the International out of the centrist swamp. It satisfied itself, instead, with a couple of documents and articles in the "Militant" for six months, denouncing the "revisionism" of the "Pabloite Secretariat," after which the whole affair was quietly forgotten. The SWP comfortably fell back into its own insular self-righteousness with the International Committee being in actual fact what the SWP had envisioned for the International—"a sort of bureau of 'contacts and ideological exchanges' leaving to each one, in fact, full autonomy and freedom of action." The lack of seriousness with which the party dealt with the problems of building an International organization is testified to by the paucity of International bulletins issued after the split in 1953 to 1963—a total of 6.

The inability of the SWP to carry on the struggle in the International against the "revisionist" theories, to search out the historical and social origins of the "revisionism" and to critically examine its own role, sounded the knell for the SWP's own sliding into the centrist swamp. The Cuban Revolution would be the major event which would bring the SWP back into the theoretical

fold of the IS. The analysis the IS made for Cuba was not essentially different than the one it had originally made for China and "belatedly" for Yugoslavia. The SWP agreed, and was forced to admit that the "balance of forces had changed in favor of revolution."

in 1963, they proceeded to support the participation of Pablo himself in a bourgeois government in Algeria—shades of Bolivia turned into brazen class betrayal. If the SWP leadership has any differences with the International leadership today, they are only the result of historical prejudices which they will get over in time or, perhaps, will satisfy themselves with a discussion at a future date when the differences can be discussed more objectively, without undue factionalism.

The party's supporting the IS, not to carry out the struggle it should have carried out ten years previous, but rather on the basis of essential agreement with the very politics from which it had originally split, can only confirm the SWP's centrism. Centrism was aptly defined by Trotsky in the *Writings 1939-40*:

"Centrism is the name applied to that policy which is

opportunist in substance and which seeks to appear as revolutionary in form. Opportunism consists in a passive adaptation to the ruling class and its regime, to that which already exists, including, of course, the state boundaries. Centrism shares completely this fundamental trait of opportunism, but in adapting itself to the dissatisfied workers, centrism veils it by means of radical commentaries."

A shorter definition Trotsky used elsewhere, "Orthodox in words, reformist in deeds," is tailor-made to fit the party's politics. As we shall see below, the garment of centrism fits the party's domestic policies as well.

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One of the underlying justifications for the policies of the SWP has been the economic theories of Ernest Mandel, generalized under the title of "Neo-Capitalism." These ideas are used to evade the necessity of turning to the working class, to allow opportunistic deviations in the backward countries, to permit adaptationism to petty-bourgeois currents in the imperialist centers and, generally, to thoroughly revise the historic traditions of Trotskyism. The excuse usually offered in Mandel's behalf is that, although Mandel has taken some bad political positions, he is a great Marxist whose theories accurately reflect reality. The only problem with this is that it is false. There is no way that the economics and politics of Mandel can be neatly segregated, divided into secure watertight compartments of "good" economics and "bad" politics. The right hand man of Pablo, the leader of "the new youth movement," and the long distance chief of the guerrillas are the same man who invented "Neo-Capitalism." Germain, or Mandel, all the same, once you understand the importance of being Ernest.

"Neo-Capitalism," other than being Mandel's special contribution to the revisionist current in our movement, is nothing more than the empirical reaction to the capitalist boom of the last thirty years. This was based on the tremendous destruction caused by WWII and consequent openings for investment which, in turn, was made possible by the failure of the European revolution under the misleadership of the Stalinist betrayers. (A similar occurrence took place after WWI, when the failure of the revolutionary wave, permitted a period of capitalist stabilization.) Mandel looks at the boom, sees how big it is, marvels at its strength and endurance and forgets to look for causes, for reasons, and is left completely helpless for the time when the boom will end. He sees only the part and not the whole, the form and not the essence. His "method" resembles nothing so much as that of a small boy who, upon seeing a city for the first time, assumes that this must be the greatest city in all the world, and who is much dismayed when he discovers that it is only Brussels.

One of the central concepts of "Neo-Capitalism," and the central axis for the SWP's turn from the workers, is the concept of the "proletarianization of intellectual labor." According to this concept, the "Third Industrial Revolution" (electronics, atomic energy, etc.) has caused the reintroduction of intellectual labor into the process of production. Consequently, the petty bourgeoisie is wiped out, and all its old strata (students, intellectuals, salesmen, engineers, etc.) who still retain a social function, are incorporated willy-nilly into the ranks of the proletariat, along with

new layers (technicians, computer programmers, lab assistants, etc.) created by the "Third Industrial Revolution." In other words, since these individuals no longer have a role as small proprietors, farmers, professionals, they are proletarianized. Within limits (high functionaries, police) then, the status of *employee* is synonymous to that of *proletarian*. This fundamentally wrong analysis ignores the social reality as well as the fact that the question of these new layers had long ago been posed and answered. Marx, in Vol. IV of *Capital*, already mentions the role of the "new middle classes," those who work for others and yet are not exploited. *Exploitation* is the basis for proletarianization—directly of the industrial proletariat, indirectly of the unemployed and poor as well as of the commercial proletariat, whose work is necessary so that surplus value can be realized, and of the service proletariat who each day do the dirty work of capitalism so that the world can run.

The role of the "new middle class," far from being one of an exploited layer, is primarily one of parasitism—parasitism of the capitalists, as in state functionaries and the advertising field, etc. and, especially, parasitism of the working class, as in the vast number of technicians who in one way or another increase the exploitation of the workers, such as industrial engineers, computer programmers, etc. Trotsky in his article "Ninety years of the Communist Manifesto" and in his pamphlet, *Marxism in Our Time*, has pointed out the artificial, hot-house nature of this layer, which is deliberately maintained to cushion the class struggle. Of course, this phenomenon has a real basis in the relations of production. Due to the ever increasing ratio of constant capital over variable, the "organic composition of capital," living labor is constantly replaced by more and more complex machinery, which, by increasing productivity, constantly throws people out of work. Not only is there no room for the proletarianization of the petty bourgeoisie, due to unemployment, but the actual numbers of the industrial proletariat decrease. However, this increases the social weight and power of the working class in the factories, which, together with the other sections of the class, become more cohesive and organized.

The "new middle class" is a non-proletarian layer, alien to the working class. It essentially replaces the "old" petty-bourgeoisie and adopts all its reactionary and hysterical ideology, the only difference being that the petty bourgeoisie had a certain confidence, a certain stability. The "new middle class" is totally at the mercy of the ruling class, and knows it. However, just as the lower rungs of the petty bourgeoisie will follow a revolutionary proletariat, so will the lower rungs of the "new middle class," especially those layers which are, in Trotsky's phrase, "in close organic contact" with the proletariat.

Mandel, of course, is far too clever to say that these layers are *exploited*. What makes them potentially revolutionary, besides their shining intellect, is, of course, "alienation." Not the old alienation of the producer from his tools and his product—that would drag in unsuitable references like exploitation and expropriation, which would never do—this alienation is more freefloating and existential, an intellectual malaise, *angst, ennui*. The members of the "new middle class," you see, are "unhappy at their work," as they well should be. This "revolutionary consciousness" resolves itself into a petty-bourgeois dissatisfaction with life, hardly anything new.

Mandel's pre-occupation with these layers and their agonies sheds some light on a certain transitional demand (or as he prefers to call it, "anti-capitalist structural reform") which he favors above all others. This, of course, is the demand for "workers' control"—an essential part of the transitional program, and even now a real question in the factories. But Mandel talks about this demand to the exclusion of all others, even referring to it as "the crowning summit" of the transitional program, when in fact the slogan of soviets holds this place, and he completely ignores other slogans such as the sliding scale of wages and hours. It is no coincidence that this *single* demand is so popular with Gorz and other "radical" intellectuals in Europe and America, who also, by the way, are among the most ardent admirers of Mandel's economic theories. The reason they support, along with Mandel, the demand for workers' control is not because they are articulating a great need of the working class, but rather because it is a demand of the "new middle class" employees who feel their "individuality" and "creativity" being crushed by big Capital. Posed in this way the demand is a reactionary, petty-bourgeois, elitist slogan, not Trotskyist but technocratic. Even when Mandel sounds like a leader of the proletariat, he remains only a petty-bourgeois radical.

One feature which supposedly marks off "neo-capitalism" as a separate stage of capitalism is the "increasing intervention of the state into the economy." It is hard to see how anyone can detect a qualitative change in this process which has been noted since the rise of monopoly capitalism in particular, and of capitalism in general. One of the fundamental axioms of Marxism has always been that the state is the organ of repression by the ruling class. In that sense it can be said to have always been the "guarantor of profits." Or perhaps Engels was the first Mandelite when he wrote about the increasing role of the state in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific?* Lenin and Trotsky also learned a great deal from Mandel when they wrote *Imperialism and The Revolution Betrayed* ("state-ism") respectively. Or perhaps Comrade Mandel just took the Keynesians at their word, when every day their word is increasingly shown to be worthless. This kind of impressionism has its roots in Mandel's blind scholasticism, in first positing a theory and then looking around to find proofs for it—a form of socialist tunnel vision.

Another distinct characteristic of "neo-capitalism" is supposedly the transfer of imperialist investments from the backward countries to the advanced ones. Here too, it is hard to see a qualitative break in a process already underway in the clearly defined imperialist epoch. Russia, not a colonial country, was heavily invested in by Belgium and France. Alsace-Lorraine was penetrated by both French and German capital, likewise with Czechoslovakia. And the U. S. invested heavily in Canada. The Second World War and its resultant crisis demanded a tremendous investment if capitalism were to survive. The total destruction naturally opened up possibilities for surplus profits far greater than those available in the colonial world.

An interesting corollary to this thesis presents Mandel's posturing in a more reactionary light. As a result of the minor role imperialism plays in the backward countries an unexpected occurrence is taking place. The colonial countries are not being plundered, they are being—de-

veloped! Hugo Blanco (ISR, May 1970) states that because the imperialists are forcing the backward countries to industrialize by making them "buyers of machinery," they are consequently developing the countries under the leadership of the "industrial bourgeoisie." He sees the Bonapartist regimes of crisis as representing a "developmental" sector of the ruling class—in essence a "progressive national bourgeoisie." In this situation the "logic" of the Permanent Revolution turns into its opposite: the bourgeoisie of the backward countries *can* perform the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Gadea, Bejar, etc., at least are consistent with their false consciousness and support the Bonapartists. Blanco, and his tutors, merely look ridiculous. At bottom, however, this is nothing new. Pablo took a post in Ben Bella's government, Maitan saw Egypt as a potential workers' state, all on the basis of the miraculous "workers' and farmers' government" which transforms the capitalist state into a workers' state under the leadership of the petty-bourgeois stand-ins for the national bourgeoisie.

The basis for this economic wonder, as quoted above, is the shipment of machinery to the backward countries and their use by the Bonapartists to develop the country. Easy, just like that! What makes all these wonderful things possible is the "Third Industrial Revolution," another unique part of the "Neo-Capitalist" stage. "Industrial Revolution" is not a term to be taken lightly, and yet Mandel does just that referring to it as the "second or third" on several occasions. Hardly a definitive notion! This unique transformation of the means of production, and consequently of the class struggle, like *the* Industrial Revolution which laid the basis for modern industrial capitalism, is, according to Mandel, based on electronics, atomic energy and the tremendous growth in automation. (Maybe he became confused about the American reformists and their "Triple Revolution"). What is interesting is that nobody even noticed this qualitative change in society until they read Comrade Mandel's books. A real work of scientific socialism, *The Communist Manifesto*, says this: Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all others." This is the reality of technological development, not Mandel's schema which he had to think up in order to justify his already finished theory. In the epoch of imperialist decay, when each new invention poses only the destruction of humanity, isn't it foolish to talk about "Industrial Revolutions," second or third?

Here is, perhaps, the best place to deal with two more of Mandel's "special" features of "Neo-Capitalism." The first is the so-called independence of the giant corporations from the banks, financing institutions, etc., thus marking a distinct change from the epoch of monopoly finance capital—Imperialism. In the years of prosperity, this bore a certain superficial resemblance to reality. But now that the boom has turned into its opposite, the truth is out. The iron hand of big finance is revealed in bankruptcies everywhere from Penn Central all the way to Hollywood, now completely dependent on Wall St.

An equally superficial creation is the "Permanent War Economy." Lenin taught that this was the epoch of Imperialism, an epoch in which the dying bourgeoisie militarizes the whole world in pursuit of profit. The Du Ponts and the other "merchants of death," here and abroad, laid

the basis for their enormous fortunes before and during the First World War, and it is interesting to note that these corporations still dominate the area of war production. Naturally, after WWII, when the "red menace" was omnipresent, "defense" spending increased tremendously. This spending has provided a safety-valve for the ruling class which can artificially stimulate the economy by inflationary military spending. But Mandel inverts the priorities of the imperialists. Only WWII pulled the U. S. out of the depression, although Roosevelt did not engage the country in the war for that reason but rather because of the general imperative needs of Imperialism. To say anything else would be to lapse into vulgar economic determinism. There is some evidence, for example, that if the U.S. had not become involved in Vietnam, the boom would have come to an end much sooner, perhaps even in 1965. But nobody has ever stated that the reason Johnson went to war was to keep prosperity high. Even those effects of the war, which caused a certain feverish economic growth, have now ground miserably to a halt, and despite a still high military budget, we see every day a further worsening of the economic situation.

One of the most noxious ideas of Mandel, and currently the one most popular, after so many others have miserably failed, is the thesis of a challenge to the world domination of the United States by Europe and Japan. To the philistine looking at bald statistics or reading the *New York Times*, this seems an extremely logical, and even dialectical, situation. The Americans, in pumping inflated dollars into the ruined economies of Germany, Japan, etc., have created a Frankenstein which is now about to turn on its creator. The dominance of America has turned into its opposite, or so it seems. Mandel first presented this thesis in an article entitled, "Where Is America Going?" originally published in *New Left Review* (appropriately enough). He based his conclusions on the high wages and falling productivity of American workers vs. the exactly opposite situation for Europe and Japan. These "facts" put the American capitalists at a tremendous disadvantage *vis-a-vis* their foreign competitors. In order to maintain their position the Americans would have to turn on their workers, driving down their standard of living, thus radicalizing them. All this is true as far as it goes, but it does not go very far. Take for example the recent dollar crisis which resulted in the *de facto* devaluation of the dollar. To say that this means that Germany is going to supercede the U. S. is a gross oversimplification. The devaluation of the dollar, however regrettable from the point of view of the capitalist, nevertheless gives the U. S. great benefits as far as the problem of balance of payments goes. (It is well to remember, also, that the balance of trade deficit of the U. S. is an indication of its imperialist hegemony.) Furthermore, the "floating" of the mark generates fierce inflationary pressures on the German economy. When the German workers move to retain and improve their standard of living the competitive advantages of the German bourgeoisie will be seriously cut into. What Mandel is saying is that a *rise* in the world of a new economic power is possible in the period of the "Death Agony of Capitalism." His position is based on the false idea of the Common Market becoming a unified power able to become independent of America. His position can only be described as "social-Gaullist," supporting from the left the dreams of the European bourgeoisie. When Britain enters the Com-

mon Market it will enter as an American satellite. If it does not enter, then the Common Market will become increasingly hard-up. Either way, the time has come for the sober re-awakening of the European capitalists, but not apparently for Mandel.

Those who prophesy the end of American world domination should follow their ideas to their logical conclusions. Who will succeed America as the major imperialist power? A capitalist United States of Europe, *à la* the late lamented General De Gaulle? How about Germany, which grumbles constantly about the costs of NATO and of maintaining its small army, and which in two wars as a united country could not accomplish what it now must do as a half-country? Or maybe Japan can somehow transfer its favorable auto sales into a monopoly on world trade? Japan—whose heavy investment in East Asia consists mostly of light industry dependent on U.S. capital goods sustenance, whose leaders could regain Okinawa only on the most despicable terms after being forced by massive demonstrations to ask politely for its return, whose radical labor leadership and student movement puts that of the U. S. to shame—is not going to overtake America. Japan is not a competitor of the U. S.; it is a junior partner. It scarcely has armed forces worth mentioning and is totally dependent on the U. S. for protection.

Then what is the reality behind the monetary crises, trade wars, rising tariff walls, if it is not Mandel's view? The reality is that, as a *whole*, on the world scale, capitalism is on the decline. American capitalism, too, is on the decline, but it intends to ride into extinction on the backs of these other countries. Naturally these countries do not take kindly to this, but it is always so when thieves fall out. The big crook is not going under without a fight. After all, American investments abroad constitute the world's third-largest capitalist economy, hardly anything to laugh at.

In conclusion we can say only that Mandel is a petty-bourgeois theoretician whose method is that of the petty bourgeoisie—empiricism, pragmatism, and impressionism. Like all such "revolutionaries" he misleads the proletariat, disarms it theoretically and politically, and thus objectively serves the interests of the class enemy. Mandel, not just the individual, but the politics for which he stands and those politics which he justifies, must be exposed and *defeated* if the Party and the International are ever to solve the problem of the "crisis of leadership."

### *Nationalism*

Nationalism has always posed serious questions for the Marxist movement, questions around which have revolved some of the most urgent problems facing revolutionaries. From the revolutions of 1848 through Marx's writings on Ireland to Lenin's polemics against Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution, runs the thread of the national question. Nor is the situation any different now. The inadequate way in which the party has understood the writings of Lenin and Trotsky has found expression, as have so many other failures, in a tail-ending of, and an adaptation to, petty-bourgeois currents, in this case of the bourgeois Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican "Nationalists."

The fundamental expression of the Marxist policy on nationalism has been that of supporting "the right of self-determination." This has been interpreted by the party

leadership to mean that the nationalism of the oppressed is progressive and even "revolutionary" and thus merits support. This is exactly backwards. "Nationalism," so defined is reactionary and can serve only the interests of the bourgeoisies of both nations. The actual purpose of this slogan was to prove to the workers of the oppressed nation (Georgians, Irish, etc.) that the working class of the oppressor nation was fully on their side in their struggle for liberation, even to the point of supporting their right to secede from the oppressor nation and found their own state. This slogan was clearly intended to unite the workers of different nationalities against their common enemy by showing the oppressed nation that the proletariat of the oppressor was its real ally and that the proletariat would fight for every gain of the oppressed nation, no matter how costly it might be to "their own" state. The position was not that the nationalism of the oppressed was progressive, however understandable it might be, but that the nationalism of the oppressor was reactionary. This was by no means then a concession to nationalism, but on the contrary, a struggle against it, designed to make class-conscious internationalists out of workers of both nationalities.

The SWP, having turned its back on the working class and having lost the class line, is compelled to find substitutes for the proletariat. This process results in a policy of polyvanguardism, of "independent mass movements"—of "2,3, many gravediggers." One of the first of these excursions from Trotskyism was the adaptation to "nationalism." This policy has worldwide applications, but has primarily been confined to the U. S. and Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican nationalism.

Puerto Rican nationalism finds its major thrust in the slogan on the Young Lords buttons—"Tengo Puerto Rico en mi corazon"—"I have Puerto Rico in my heart." Its remaining features are in common with the two major currents—Black and Chicano nationalism. These two areas are very much interlocked: the one fore-shadowing and the other filling in our petty-bourgeois adaptationism, the theory of the Black movement outlining the practice of the Chicano movement.

The adaptation took place first in the case of the Blacks. The position of the party, and of Trotsky, was that the Blacks were not a national minority, but a racial minority with a possibility of national development, the arrival of which would be heralded by the demand for separation. This was the party's position as late as 1963 in the "Freedom Now!" resolution. But that was quickly abandoned, and by 1969 the Blacks were to discover that they had "always" constituted a nation, per order George Breitman (self-determination!). When Trotsky posed the possibility of a national reality for the Black people, he did so in the context of the late nineteen-thirties, when the "Black Belt" still existed, before the great migration north during the war and post-war years. This Diaspora, urbanizing and proletarianizing the former sharecroppers and tenant farmers, the closest thing the U. S. ever had to peasants, effectively eliminated the possibility of a national development. The Blacks, who were destined to be "the very vanguard" of the American Revolution in the words of the 1940 resolution, now occupied the position of the critical factor in the American proletariat, making up a disproportionate share of the most exploited and oppressed sectors of the class, including the industrial proletariat. The

Black workers constitute a super-exploited layer and thus have the greatest potential for revolutionary action. But it was no accident that the party only verbally acknowledged the proletarianization of the Blacks and went wild over their non-existent nationality. The party did not even feel obliged to discuss the problems of territory, language, and culture. It did not want to consider such things, because it was in the process of tail-ending the Black petty bourgeoisie who sought a separate development for the Blacks in order that they might become a leading group in the Black "community" without the competition of the white capitalists. The party leadership ignored the lesson of the *Communist Manifesto* that the proletariat is the "only really revolutionary class," and that the other classes that fought to maintain themselves in the face of capitalist concentration were ". . . therefore not revolutionary but conservative. Nay, more, they are reactionary. . . ." Instead of the petty bourgeoisie leading the proletariat, the party should have struggled to win the Black workers and to lead them at the head of the Black and white masses to the revolution. Instead the party merely tail-ended, flattered, praised, and generally toadied to these representatives of a reactionary and outmoded social layer. The names are too many to mention, but the line has been the same—"the lack of leadership in the Black community," which expressed only an idle wish for the nationalists to do something they could not do—an abstentionist and spontaneist policy for the party. The party has covered itself by quoting Trotsky, without any understanding, and by actually counterposing Trotsky to Lenin, who said all those harsh things about nationalism, in a manner identical to that in which the Workers' League counterposes Lenin to the "incorrect" Trotsky. We feel no need to oppose them to each other; we feel that their contributions complement each other, just as they did in 1917.

The party's adaptationism has now carried it so far that it combines the struggle of the Black petty bourgeoisie with that of other "vanguards," like Black *students*, or Black *women*, or Black *gays*. Sad to say, for the pragmatists this adaptationism has not paid off. There are no figures on Black party membership, but the figures at the last YSA convention tell the sad story. Out of approximately 1330 members the YSA had "approximately" 45 Blacks, and the figures for the party are probably no better. The percentage of Blacks in this country is about 12%, while in the revolutionary youth organization Blacks constitute about 3 1/2%! Although these figures seem surprising at first, they are really extremely logical. Why should some Black youth who agrees with the YSA's program join it when he can get that program in any Black nationalist organization? Sometimes the party's feverish attempts to see Black nationalism everywhere make an almost humorous picture. For instance, in the postal strike the party claimed to see "Black nationalism" in the fact that the Black workers played a vanguard role, ignoring the point that they are naturally the "very vanguard" of the class. One wonders what made the white workers follow the Blacks' lead—semi-Black nationalism? Or maybe they were tail ending Black nationalism? This view of the party only proves the old adage that, "there are none so blind as those who will not see."

The two major departures of a programmatic nature that the party has made have been "Community Control"

and the "Independent Black Party." What was intangible and abstract about these ideas became concrete in the case of the Chicano variants. There is nothing new about community control. It is simply the old "national-cultural autonomy" which Lenin fought against so fiercely in Russia. The party, however, "since the city is the Black man's land," abandons the Leninist position of the "right of self-determination" for the nationalist position of its *desirability* of separation, community control is *transitional* to statehood. What it represents in the U. S. is simply the utopia of the Black and Chicano petty-bourgeoisie seeking to maintain capitalist property relations "on their own," without the interference of white monopoly capital. And like all such utopias it is simply reactionary insofar as it can be realized. Crystal City, Texas, is the living proof of this. A small group of petty-bourgeois Chicanos now control the town on behalf of the residents who are left out of the decision-making process entirely. This grouping, with the blessing of the SWP, has embarked on a "red trade-union" policy, breaking old bureaucratic unions and replacing them with ostensibly independent Chicano unions. Contrast this behavior with the party's abstentionist policy in the case of the Farm Workers. What few reforms are possible are emblazoned all over the *Militant* and recounted in glowing terms at great length. Sewer socialism, Texas-style, has made Crystal City into a "brown Milwaukee."

The problem of nationalism was confronted by Malcolm X, by far the best of the Black nationalists and an actual voice of the Black masses, shortly before his death. In the *Young Socialist* interview he said, "I used to define Black nationalism as the idea that the Black man should control the economy of his community, the politics of his community, and so forth." In essence, community control was Black nationalism's content. Malcolm then went on to describe his experience with the Algerian ambassador to Ghana, who had posed difficult questions to him about the limits of his revolutionary policy. Malcolm then said, "So, I had to do a lot of thinking and reappraising of my definition of Black nationalism. Can we sum up the solution to the problems confronting our people as Black nationalism? And if you notice, I haven't been using the expression for several months. But I still would be hard-pressed to give a specific definition of the overall philosophy which I think is necessary for the liberation of the Black people in this country." Comrade Breitman has tried to explain away these remarks many times, but it cannot be done, especially in the context of this interview, which shows Malcolm's increasing turn toward socialism and internationalism. Is it not strange that Malcolm the non-Marxist, should have known in 1965 what the Trotskyist SWP does not know yet: that community control, Black nationalism, is not the way out for the Black workers and the Black masses?

The independent party slogan, on the other hand, is a unique contribution to Marxism. It is unfortunate Lenin never thought of an independent Ukrainian or Georgian party; he could probably have accomplished a lot more. In the case of the Blacks, despite our best efforts, the idea has simply not caught on. A serious leadership would question the correctness of such a policy, just as the labor party slogan would have to be re-examined if the workers as a whole were as radical as the Blacks and the labor party had gone over like the proverbial lead balloon.



The Chicano experience illuminates the reality of such a proposal. Such a party would simply be a bourgeois party, a pressure group for the nationalist petty bourgeoisie to extract concessions from the ruling class, primarily through the Democratic Party. La Raza Unida Party is merely the American equivalent of the Parti Quebecois.

What then should be the policy to win the national and racial minorities? A class-struggle policy is the only answer. The party must be torn from such reformist concepts as "people" and "community," which are easily used to divert the oppressed minorities into supporting bourgeois politics be they black, brown, yellow, or white. The road to the "community," the ghettos and barrios, begins at the point of production. We must present to the super-exploited workers of the minorities a class program. These workers are potentially the "very vanguard" of their class and every effort must be expended to win them. Left-wing caucuses must be built which will support, to the very end, the right of self-determination and wage a determined fight against the special oppression of these workers. White workers, in their class interest, will be attracted to these caucuses. By fighting for a sliding scale of wages and hours and a doubling of the minimum wage, union democracy, organization of the unorganized, and a labor party, these caucuses will be the base of a mass revolutionary movement.

#### *Women's Liberation*

In the women's liberation movement, as in other areas of our work, the party has adapted to petty-bourgeois political currents. We base our line on empirical observations, many times correct by themselves, yet fail to understand the deeper molecular processes occurring among the working masses. This is in spite of the fact that we still retain, in words, the essential points of the traditional Marxist analysis of the nature of women's oppression. In action, however, the party is attempting to lead women in a struggle for their emancipation under the banner of Feminism. Herein lies a fundamental contradiction. The liberation of women and Feminism are *not* the same thing. In fact, Feminist ideology is bourgeois and is thus *antagonistic* to the liberation of women, despite the party's interchangeable use of the terms.

Feminism is the idea, in essence, that women, because they are women, must and can effect a basic change in society. It denies the fundamental Marxist proposition that social power derives from the relationship to the means of production. If it is not our policy that women, as women, can change society, then why is the feminist movement a "revolutionary struggle in its own right?" (*YS Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 14, No. 1)

We understand that the thrust of women's liberation is against bourgeois society in general, and the "nuclear family" in particular, but that is not the point. No movement outside the working class is truly revolutionary *in its own right*. (Even the struggle of oppressed national minorities cannot be "revolutionary" i.e. come to fruition in a successful revolution, unless it is under the leadership of the working class.) This is because the proletariat is the only social force capable of actually solving the problems of women. No other class, caste, oppressed sex, etc., is equal to this task. If the party does not mean "revolutionary" in this sense then it is only playing with words.

This does not mean that the party should oppose organizing women as women, or that there is no progressive role for non-proletarian women. "We must have our own groups to work among them, special methods of agitation, and special forms of organization. This is not bourgeois 'feminism;' it is a practical revolutionary expediency." (Clara Zetkin, *My Recollections of Lenin*) It is also true that communists hate, "yes hate everything, and will abolish everything which tortures and oppresses the woman worker, the housewife, the peasant woman, the wife of the petty trader, yes, and in many cases the woman of the possessing classes." (Clara Zetkin, *Lenin on the Woman Question*) In carrying out the party line, however, these familiar postulates have been turned into their opposites.

The historic attitude of Marxists towards Feminism is far different from the present policies of the SWP. This new Feminism which the SWP supports is commonly called "the second wave," yet there is no record of the revolutionaries of an earlier generation supporting the first wave. In the party's edition of Rosa Luxemburg's writings there is not one article that praises Feminism, or that even mentions it. This reflects the common attitude of the revolutionary wing of the Social-Democracy—total opposition to Feminism. It was the opportunist wing that was always attending suffragist congresses, multi-class, equal-rights conferences, and ladies' pink teas. The revolutionaries sought to win the most oppressed sectors of society, in this case women, on a class-struggle basis by means of special organizations with a socialist program. The emancipation of women could not be achieved by subordinating the class questions to the interests of the petty bourgeois and bourgeois Feminists who sought, as always, to use the workers to accomplish their own narrow and essentially reactionary goals. The Theses of the Comintern dealt firmly with any wanderings from the class line, and flatly stated that it was "impermissible" for Communist women to form any alliances with "bourgeois Feminists." (3rd Congress of the Comintern, 1921; Theses on Work among Women). This is also the orientation of the Transitional Program and continued to be our position until it became opportune to jump on the band-wagon. Once again the SWP has dropped the class line and followed the path of alien class ideology. The "second wave," like the first, is just all wet.

The "revolutionary expedience" of special forms of organization for women has been turned into a *strategy* for women's liberation. The fact that we recognize that all women suffer a special oppression in class society, has been used to justify building multi-class coalitions. The logic of these coalitions, in turn, has inevitably meant that we have watered down our program for women's liberation.

A prime example of this process can be seen in our new "struggle" for the repeal of abortion laws. Here, having discovered that the representatives of the bourgeoisie in the coalitions dislike the slogan "free abortion on demand," we have capitulated and are now undertaking a national campaign for repeal of abortion laws, thus tying ourselves into the reforming of the system. *First* we will repeal the old laws and *then*, later, we will get free abortion on demand. This is not a revolutionary policy. It is simply the Menshevik program of revolution by stages in a pure form—reform by stages.

The benefits of this kind of reform are unevenly distrib-

uted, to say the least. The women workers, a super-exploited section of the working class, together with the women of the minorities and the poor, receive least from it. How many ghetto residents can afford the \$350-400 it costs for a legal abortion in New York? The party's super-concern with making abortions legal, reveals a covert desire to accommodate itself to those prosperous women who, while able to obtain an illegal abortion, feel uncomfortable about it. This campaign, by making abortions *moral*, merely serves to console those women who least need it. Proletarian women need no "moral" victories. They need the simple democratic right of free abortion on demand.

Moreover, the whole question of abortion has been posed incorrectly. It is not the task of a revolutionary party to involve itself *whole-hog* over something which is, however desirable, only a concession. We can work on it, we can support it. But our tasks lie in organizing women workers around our transitional slogans, i.e., in the ranks of the women workers, not in a milieu of liberals, Malthusians, and utter reformists, where the present party leadership feels most at home.

Recently the party has discovered yet another "vanguard" in "gay liberation." Under the pressure of the petty-bourgeois women's and student movement we have become ardent admirers and supporters of this "revolutionary" struggle. We are told, in defense of this tail-ending, that a whole mass of workers are gay. So what? This is of no significance unless the leadership sees the demands of homosexuals as being transitional—that is, as leading to the overturn of capitalism. And this is merely ridiculous. The radical change in sexual mores in this century proves that there is no sexual preference that cannot be legitimized and accepted under capitalism. For communists, nothing more is required than that we should defend the democratic rights of homosexuals and support them against victimization. In the party we need only assure that no comrades are discriminated against because of their sexual preferences. It is well to note that it was the present party leadership, in many cases with the utmost hypocrisy, that changed the party's traditional Leninist policy on the membership of homosexuals to one of exclusion.

In our support of the Equal Rights Amendment we can see another adaptation by the party leadership to the petty-bourgeois milieu in which we work. In the words of *The Militant* of Jan. 23, 1943, the purpose of the ERA is "to try and smash the protective legislation for working women—under the hypocritical guise of emancipating them." The purpose of the present attempt is no different, yet the party holds a diametrically opposite position. One would think that an honest party leadership, in simple decency, would inform its members of the fact of a complete turn-about in policy, and yet this seems not to have happened. Despite this deceit, there have been some explanations for the present policy. The major one is that since "sisterhood is powerful," the white-male capitalists would never dare take away past gains. This naive view has already come into conflict with the facts. Title VII of the 1965 Civil Rights Act has already been used to take away rights of labor. Raytheon Corp., with the help of the bourgeois courts, and the everhelpful IBEW, has succeeded in invalidating the Massachusetts protective laws, which remain only temporarily in effect. In one local restaurant the waitresses placed a sign saying, "Thanks to women's lib-

eration we only have a half-hour for lunch." We cannot let women workers confuse the liberation of women with bourgeois feminism. And yet, *The Militant* remains silent.

This silence lends consent. It is the silence of the accomplice. For over fifty years trade unions and women workers have fought a bitter battle over how much surplus-value was to be extracted from women. The victories in this constant battle have taken shape in the form of protective laws. It is no accident that the ERA is supported by the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce. In adapting to the petty-bourgeois feminists who desire all the "opportunities" to make good that they they can get, the party has, with a truly legalistic fetish, abandoned the women workers to the tender mercies of the capitalists. That this is the party's position can be easily seen. One recent example is the re-printing, without comment, of Bella Abzug's statement about the ERA and the Women's Equality Act (*Militant*; 6/18/71, p. 11), which informs us that the latter proposal will, ". . . ban discrimination . . . in the payment of wages for *professional, executive, and administrative jobs*," (our emphasis). How nice! Women workers get nothing, but their educated "sisters" get a good deal from Bella the Feminist.

The purpose of the ERA is to *increase the exploitation* of women workers. This will be done by forcing them to lift heavy weights, thus increasing the labor done in a given period; and by cutting rest periods, thus increasing production, as well as in other ways too numerous to mention. Perhaps the most vicious aspect is the false "opportunity" for overtime. Overtime increases unemployment and strengthens the bargaining power of the capitalists. Further, by enabling the capitalist to amortize his investment more rapidly, it counteracts the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. Besides this, overtime really lowers the wages for the average working day, in order to temporarily raise them for the excess period, thereby compelling the worker to overwork in order to earn a living wage. The party, instead of putting forward the sliding scale of hours—30 for 40—endorses this reactionary "right" as a step to the equality of women. It is not a matter of proving to men that women can work as hard as they; it is a question of denying the ruling class more profit extracted from the bodies and lives, sinews, tissues, and nerves of the workers. One really reactionary aspect of this "progressive" act lies in the fact that women, especially minority women, are largely unorganized. They will be unable to regain their lost protection by union action when the law no longer is in effect.

The party claims it is against the abolition of "really" protective laws, and that it favors their extension to men. A concrete test of the party's sincerity would be not to support the ERA, unless it *specifically* extended all benefits to men. But we hardly expect this. This claim of the party is merely a cover for its covert cheering of the abolition of "restrictive" laws. These laws mean nothing to our petty-bourgeois feminists disguised as Trotskyists, whose "sisterhood" is just a new name for class collaboration.

It should be clear by now that the feminist movement cannot, and does not want to, protect the gains of working women. The party has turned away from the obligations incumbent upon it, in order to gain the fleeting favor of the petty bourgeoisie. It must be turned away from its course of reformism and onto the path of Lenin and Trotsky.

The Trotskyist program for women's liberation must be directed *primarily* to, and for, women workers. It should include both transitional demands and democratic slogans. The successful implementation of such a program requires that we be with the class, at their place of work. We must also advance the demands of housewives, who, because of the unpaid labor they perform, and because of their husbands' jobs, can be considered part of the working class, and must be expected to play a significant role in political action. For these women we support all demands that would help eliminate the ceaseless drudgery of housework. We direct them, whenever possible, to enter the factories, to help organize the great mass of woman workers, now mostly non-unionized. In other cases we propagandize for them to form special organizations of struggle—committees on prices, strike-support committees, organizations for the unemployed. Women, as a super-exploited and oppressed section of the proletariat, must take their place at the head of their class.

The following demands are by no means intended to be a complete program for the emancipation of women, but only basic class demands which we must advance and struggle for among working women: 1) Jobs for all; 2) Equal work with equal pay; 3) Sliding scale of wages and hours, 30 for 40, double the minimum wage; 4) 24-hour child-care centers under workers' control, cost to be assumed by employer or state; 5) Free medical care—free abortion on demand, no forced sterilization, paid maternity leave, free access to birth control information; 6) Conscription and military training for women under trade union control. These demands call for a class struggle perspective, which only a proletarian party with a proletarian program can carry through.

### *The Struggle Against Imperialist War*

The struggle against imperialist war has always been the great test of a revolutionary party, and some of the most important writings of the great Marxists have outlined the correct strategy for this task. The SWP, despite its smug feeling of self-congratulation, has failed the test.

From the beginning the party's position was inadequate. Despite this, due to the totally wrong character of all other alternatives, the leadership has been able to convince its members and the best of the radical youth that the party has been wholly right. The party has been advancing the idea of immediate withdrawal—correct in itself, but not enough—as the basis for the "objectively anti-imperialist" character of its "single-issue united-front-type coalition." These propositions deserve a little investigation.

The "single-issue" character of the coalition has been the backbone of the leadership's argument that the movement was not an evasion of revolutionary duty. If the program of the bloc was limited to the demand of immediate withdrawal, then everything was perfectly legitimate—no reformist demands were being smuggled in. What the "single-issue" business really was, only became gradually clear as the other "mass movements" began to develop. It was an artificial barrier which a centrist party erected to keep it from falling into the swamp of open reformism. Due to its total inability to project and carry out a revolutionary program, the SWP needed a *cordon sanitaire* to exclude alien class influence. With the pressures of bourgeois society mounting daily, and with the influx of petty-bourgeois elements into the party, the gimmick was

bound to fail. Soon the antiwar movement took positions on everything from the draft to the Black movement and union struggles. But instead of taking these positions on a class basis, the party merely went along with a totally reformist outlook, and *objectively*, by abandoning the program of Marxism, subordinated this movement to that "soft" wing of the exploiters, which wanted out of the Vietnam misadventure.

Several other points are connected with this evaluation of the nature of our participation in this movement. The movement obviously is not a "type" of united front, by definition, since this involves only the participation of working-class organizations; but neither is it formally a "Popular Front" as it is often called. This phrase poses the question too narrowly and too specifically. The most exact description of the essence of this formation is best given in Trotsky's words. "The matter at issue in all cases concerns the political subordination of the proletariat to the left wing of the exploiters, regardless of whether this practice bears the name of *coalition* or left bloc (as in France) or "People's Front" in the language of the Comintern." (our emphasis—"China and the Russian Revolution")

Closely connected with this is the question of non-exclusion. Originally this policy was used, correctly, to fight against red-baiting against us and as a justification for blocking with anyone who would agree on a common action. It has gone far beyond this now and is used as a principle to *demand* the inclusion of liberal bourgeois speakers and representatives, at all times, as spokesmen for peace. This only legitimizes the deceit of the ruling class and furthers the illusions they perpetrate. Non-exclusion has become the means by which the leadership has cemented an alliance with the liberal imperialists. As a consequence the party is unable to correctly handle the union bureaucrats who have followed their capitalist masters into the antiwar movement. Instead of utilizing the opportunity to reach workers and destroy the fakers, as in a real united front, the tactic has been to build them up and actually strengthen their hand.

Just as all the so-called "radical" programs to end the war are in reality based on students, etc., and thus are just so much hogwash, so must a real program for revolutionaries look to the proletariat. The Transitional Program shows the way. The party, rooting itself in the proletariat, in the factories and the armed forces, must struggle to win the proletariat to a "subjectively" anti-imperialist consciousness. Only revolution can end war for good, and if this war is ended on the terms desired by the liberals, then the next war is already near. A program for struggle would include, in addition to immediate withdrawal: workers' control of war industries, confiscation of war profits and the expropriation of war profiteers, public works to employ war-workers, open diplomacy and other appropriate slogans. Factory antiwar committees would be the organizing base for such a program, as well as for the political mobilization of the class in opposition to the capitalist class and its war. Such must be our perspective, and not the futile pacifist actions we are now engaging in—like the April 24th "Youth Festival—cum—Rites of Spring."

### *Proletarian Military Policy*

Along with the abandonment of the rest of our program on the struggle against the war has gone the Proletarian

Military Policy, which was a concrete expression, under American conditions, of the Leninist policy on military training and conscription. This policy was counterposed to the pacifist program of ending the war by ending the draft, and to the control of conscription by the imperialist government by demanding that the government finance training in the military arts in camps which would be under the control of the trade unions. The idea was to try to make a bridge between the level of the masses who saw the need for learning how to wage war in an epic of violent upheaval, and the future possibility of turning the army against the imperialist government. It was designed, as well, to ensure that no repetition of the disastrous policy of draft resistance, which isolated the radicals of WW I, would occur, and had the additional benefit of increasing the prestige and strength of the trade unions as organizations of the working class.

The present party leadership, which would very much like to forget that there ever was such a policy, has concocted several stories to justify their rejection of proletarian methods for pacifist ones. These stories can be summarized as follows: 1) WW II was basically an "inter-imperialist war," and consequently the tactics of Marxists in the period of counter-revolutionary colonial wars must be different; 2) the party made an adaptation to the backwardness of the workers; 3) there was no movement against conscription, so we simply adjusted our tactics—today things are different. There is a certain division of labor on points 2 and 3. The slicker advocates of the present line combine them in a sort of "times-have-changed" routine, while the more vulgar peacenik elements simply claim that the stupid workers led us astray. All these arguments and all their variants are false to the core. The first is imply the grossest kind of petty-bourgeois moralistic breast-beating. Even when we exclude the question of Russia in WW II, we are faced with the interesting case of it being all right for American workers to fight German and Japanese workers and peasants, and not all right to fight Vietnamese workers and peasants. Maybe we fought WW II to "defend Democracy?" The reality of the situation, of course, is that the party's abstentionist policy of having comrades at Columbia rather than at Khe Sanh, has left the spontaneous GI revolts largely leaderless, and has hindered the defeat of U. S. imperialism.

What was the reality of the situation on conscription in 1940? The Party did not in its propaganda oppose the introduction of conscription before its adoption, despite significant opposition to a peacetime draft from the "America-Firsters," the radical movement in general, John L. Lewis and his section of the bureaucracy, and many plain citizens. The draft law of 1940 *passed by one vote*. The OHIO (over the hill in October) movement, which encouraged mass desertions, spread rapidly at first. The party, however, stood firm against all those who wanted to go along with the crowd, despite the ravings of the Shachtmanites who called our policy "social-patriotic." The party based its stand on the clear and irreconcilable position of Trotsky, who was largely responsible for the inspiration of our position. Trotsky said, "We can't oppose compulsory military training by the bourgeois state just as we can't oppose compulsory education by the bourgeois state." This is not an isolated quotation but is a good example of his thoughts on the question during his last year. (cf. *Writings of Leon Trotsky:1939-40*). The party

leadership of course, not being formalists, are not at all troubled by their departures from Trotsky.

The Proletarian Military Policy, nonetheless, was not just dreamed up by Trotsky in 1940. It was the continuation of the line laid down by Lenin in his polemics against the centrists and reformists of the Zimmerwald movement. Prior to WW I the Social-Democracy had proposed the establishment of a people's militia as a means whereby militarism and war could be prevented. This fantasy of peaceful substitutionism was destroyed by the shock of the war. During the discussions among the Zimmerwaldists, an alternative was proposed to this now discredited theory. This alternative was—"disarmament!" Lenin reacted violently to this form of pacifist hogwash and in two articles—"On the 'Disarmament' Slogan" and "The Military Program of the Proletarian Revolution"—demolished these idealistic conceptions of the nature of war and society. He pointed out that imperialism, not weapons, was the cause of war, and that the only way to end war was to end the system that produced it. Consequently proletarian militarism had to be opposed to bourgeois militarism. As concrete steps to this end he proposed the drafting of women, the election of officers, and especially the setting up of military training under the control of workers' organizations, as well as full civil and economic rights for soldiers. He fiercely fought against draft-dodging, whether individual or "mass." This is the root of the 1940 adoption of the PMP.

There is no great gap between 1915 and 1940. This outlook was continued in the theses on "War and the International" in 1934. It was clearly stated as a transitional demand in the *Transitional Program* of 1938, which says nothing about "abolishing the draft," "capitalist" or otherwise. What the *Transitional Program* does say is crystal clear; ". . . we must tear from the hands of the greedy and merciless imperialist clique . . . the disposition of the people's fate. In accordance with this we demand: . . . military training and arming of workers and farmers under the direct control of workers' and farmers' committees." In 1940, in the "Manifesto on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution," this position was further enunciated. Nor was the PMP abandoned after the war, to which it was supposedly a subjective reaction. In a 1946 polemic against the Workers Party (*International Information Bulletin*, Vol VIII, No. 10, Aug., 1946) it was described as a major difference between the SWP and the Shachtmanites. Even in 1948 when conscription was reintroduced we advocated the PMP, although in a rather abstract way. It was not until 1953 that we abandoned this policy, but we would not vote on this question until 1969. (It seems that this puts an interesting light on the question of "adaptationism." When was the working class more social-patriotic—in 1940 when we adopted the PMP, or in 1953 when we abandoned it? When was the party more susceptible to petty-bourgeois pressure—on the eve of WW II, or in the period of "McCarthyite-Fascism"?)

The question of a correct policy on conscription is no longer a question of merely "theoretical" correctness. It is a question of great urgency for our movement. The bourgeoisie literally hungers and thirsts for a volunteer army. They must demobilize the present army which every day threatens them more and more. The Gates Commission has shown the ruling class that it can be done. When they say they want "no more Vietnams," they are not lying.

They do not; they want more Santo Domingos! And with a relatively small, cheap, elite, cadre-type army they can have them. This is the significance of the experimental TRICAP (triple capability) divisions which combine armor, airmobile infantry, and helicopters into juggernauts which are not designed for use against students. The ruling class says "volunteer army." We say "abolish the draft." The juxtaposition makes it clear that our present policy objectively supports the bourgeoisie in its desires. The situation now, as well as all our traditional analysis, demands the adoption and implementation of the Proletarian Military Policy.

All the party's documents state that members will enter the armed forces if drafted. What actually happens is something else. A comrade about to be drafted sends a letter

to his draft board informing it of his political beliefs and affiliations, supposedly to provide future legal cover. If this does not have the desired effect, then it is followed by a press conference, and then by a demonstration. After all this, if a comrade is inducted, he enters the army as a marked man. Everything is done, short of any illegality, for SWP'ers and YSA'ers to avoid their revolutionary duty. Trotsky once said, "If the leaders seek to preserve themselves, that is what they become—dried preserves." This practice of the SWP shows its total unwillingness to leave behind a comfortable milieu and to penetrate into an arena where the proletariat is to be found. The hard and difficult work is avoided, just as with the unions. It is another manifestation, more hypocritical and despicable, of the party's wish to turn its back on the working class.

## ADDENDA ON FOR A PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION TENDENCY

The formal declaration of the "Proletarian Orientation" tendency, which states that the documents around which the tendency will be formed "clearly support the positions of the SWP on the developing mass movements," reveals what we had feared since we first read their original document: that the tendency as a whole, and especially its self-created leadership, share the underlying assumptions which govern the policies of the party leadership. It has become clear from the subsequent documents, and the pre-convention discussion, as well as from their high-handed and elitist attitude towards political discussion, that the leaders and members of the tendency were only in a relative sense "left" of the party leaders. Just as the party's positions can be characterized as right-centrist, slipping and sliding rapidly towards reformism, all the while quoting Trotsky, so can the politics of the "Proletarian Orientation" tendency, which either cannot or will not make a qualitative break with the revisionism dominant in our movement, be justly named left-centrist. Trotsky taught us "to call things by their right names," and that is just what we have tried to do, both in regard to the party and to the comrades of the other opposition tendency. We have no reason to be ashamed of harshness. Lenin polemicized most strongly against Trotsky precisely because he was at the same time the most potentially valuable and most potentially dangerous of all those who stood outside the Bolsheviks. This is the tactic and the tradition we choose to follow.

The weaknesses of the documents clearly reflect the political weaknesses of the tendency. A narrow parochialism is extremely evident. The only reality is the internal problems of the SWP. The rest of the world, the economic situation, the situation in the U. S. are all completely excluded. In true centrist fashion the authors shrink from breaking with the accepted. They advance as an answer to all programmatic questions the "Yes, but . . ." solution— "Yes, the party is completely right, *but* we should orient to the workers." This road leads back to the bosom of the leadership. These comrades cannot even analyze the discontent which propelled them into opposition. You see, if they support all the mass movements as the party does, then their major principled difference, the proletarian orientation, turns into a tactical question before their very eyes. If they refuse to ask themselves what effect the prolonged isolation of the party has had on the program already, then how can they challenge the party on the "danger" of a degeneration? What difference can a few more months make? These comrades refuse to recognize that the proletarian orientation is the heart of the program, and that

the heart of the program of the SWP was ripped out long ago. For one reason or another— social pressure, theoretical inadequacy, intellectual dishonesty, or emotional ties — they cannot see that the party is not a healthy organism, a revolutionary party, but that it is instead a zombie, staggering from one thing to another on the road to utter decomposition, unless everything is completely turned around in an all-out fight for the life of the party. Nor is their understanding of a real proletarian orientation any better. What this would signify, above all else, is the theoretical re-arming of the party and the cadres. We do not believe for one instant the old nostrum, "What the party needs is 500 workers, then it would be all right." This is the real meaning of what Gregorich, etc. state when they say that, "being determines consciousness." This alone is not enough. The SWP's program, plus any number of workers, equals a right-centrist party, period. Ignoring the examples of the mass CPs of Italy and France, the IWW, the Cochranites, the POR in Bolivia, and the trade unions themselves, the leaders press blindly on with their mechanical panacea.

In the text of the document itself, we have clearly differentiated ourselves theoretically and programmatically from both the party leadership and from the "Proletarian Orientation" tendency. Any specific points of interest will be found clearly outlined there, in a manner designed to lead a principled and consistent fight for a return to Trotskyism.

We mentioned above that the proletarian orientation is, with these comrades, only a tactical difference, and that due to their inability to make a complete analysis of the party crisis, they were on the road to reconciliation. This is no abstract possibility. Inevitably, the party will round out its poly-vanguardism with a vanguard for the workers, just as the European Pabloites have already done. It will be done in a totally spontaneist way, and the politics of our entry will be rotten centrist politics, but it will be done. And even now, in every issue of *The Militant* and *ISR* more and more stories are beginning to appear about the workers, from places where one would least expect to hear. What will the comrades of the "Proletarian Orientation" tendency do when this turn is made. Either they will finally evaluate the party for what it really is, or they will wind up in a tearful reunion with the old guard and, consoled by important posts; go the way so many have gone before them.

July 18, 1971