

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING, NO. 2, March 8, 1974

Present: Breitman, Britton, Camejo, A. Hansen, J. Hansen,  
Horowitz, Jenness, Jones, Lovell, Seigle, Shaw,  
Stone

Consultative: Dobbs, Kerry, Novack

Visitors: Miah, Scott

Chair: Britton

AGENDA: 1. World Movement Report

1. WORLD MOVEMENT REPORT

J. Hansen reported.

Discussion

Meeting adjourned.

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014  
March 9, 1974

TO ORGANIZERS AND EDUCATION DIRECTORS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is a study guide for a four-class series on the "History of the Fourth International: From Left Opposition to the 1963 Reunification." In addition to questions and readings for each of the four classes, this study guide includes an outline of the points that teachers may want to cover in presenting the history of the international from the initiation of the Left Opposition in the Soviet CP through the Founding Congress of the Fourth International in 1938.

Note should also be taken that additional materials of value to this class series will appear in forthcoming Education for Socialists bulletins. These include extensive documentation on the dispute between the International Committee and International Secretariat factions that broke out in 1953, and Pierre Frank's "The Fourth International."

[Note: Pathfinder Press is now preparing a book, The First Three Internationals: Their History and Lessons. It will be ready within a few months and can be utilized for classes held on this subject at a later date.]

Comradely,

*Fred Feldman*  
Fred Feldman  
National Education  
Department

HISTORY OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL: FROM LEFT OPPOSITION  
TO THE 1963 REUNIFICATION (a four-class series)

Class 1. FROM THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL THROUGH THE FOUNDING OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL LEFT OPPOSITION IN 1933.

Reading: 1. from Documents of the Fourth International, 1933-40:  
"The Evolution of the Comintern," pp. 113-131; "The  
International Left Opposition, Its Tasks and Methods,"  
pp. 19-43.

2. from Towards a History of the Fourth International,  
Part II (Education for Socialists bulletin, November  
1973): "How the Fourth International Was Conceived,"  
pp. 3-5; "Trotsky's Struggle for the Fourth Interna-  
tional," pp. 6-9.

Supplementary: "Ten Years: The History and Principles of the  
Left Opposition," by Max Shachtman, with introduction  
by Joseph Hansen, in Intercontinental Press, in Jan.  
22, Jan. 29, Feb. 2, Feb. 9, 1973. Also available  
from Pathfinder Press in a Red Books edition with an  
introduction by Tariq Ali. "The Fourth International,"  
by Pierre Frank, in Intercontinental Press, March 13,  
1972, pp. 257-261 and March 20, 1972, pp. 298-301.

Questions: 1. Why did the defeat of the revolutionary upsurge  
in Germany in 1923 mark a turning point for the Com-  
munist International?

2. Why did Trotsky feel that the positions on the  
Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity Committee, the  
Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, and the economic  
policies of the CPSU were the keys for defining the  
Left Opposition? In what way did the Right Opposi-  
tion differ on these questions?

3. Why did the Left Opposition continue to act as a  
faction of the Communist International, even after  
it had been expelled?

4. Why did Trotskyists describe the policies of the  
Stalinist bureaucracy in the 1920s as bureaucratic  
centrist? Why don't we use this term to describe  
Stalinism as it exists today?

Class 2. FROM THE 1933 BREAK WITH THE COMINTERN TO THE 1940  
EMERGENCY CONFERENCE.

Readings: 1. From Documents of the FI, 1933-1940: "On the Need  
for a New German Party," pp. 51-55; "Declaration of  
the Four," pp. 55-59; "The Present Situation in the  
Labor Movement," pp. 60-65; "Minutes of the Founding  
Conference," pp. 284-302

2. From Towards a History..., Part II: "The Fourth  
International," by Michel Pablo, pp. 10-26.

Supplementary: "The Fourth International," by Pierre Frank, in IP, March 27, 1972, pp. 336-339.; Transitional Program (In Documents of FI, pp. 180-220).

Questions: 1. Why did the Left Opposition change its orientation toward the Communist International?

2. In what way did the "Declaration of the Four" and the "French Turn" reflect similar responses to different situations?

3. Why was the decision made to form the FI in the face of adverse conditions? How did Trotskyists refute the argument that revolutionary Marxists were too isolated from the masses and a new international was therefore "premature"?

### Class 3. FROM 1940 TO 1951

Readings: 1. From Towards a History...Part II: "The Fourth International," by Michel Pablo, pp. 27-39.

2. From Towards a History...Part I: "From World War II to the Cold War," by Cliff Conner, pp. 3-9.

Supplementary: "The Fourth International," by Pierre Frank, IP, April 3, 1972, pp. 370-374, April 10, 1972, pp. 394-397. "Criticism of the Theses of the February 1944 Conference," in the second volume of Documents of the Fourth International.

Questions: 1. What were the key differences between the revolutionary Marxist approach during World War II to occupied semi-colonial countries like China and occupied imperialist countries like France?

2. Did a world revolutionary upsurge occur after World War II as Trotsky had expected? Were the international's predictions about the results of the war borne out?

3. What criteria were finally used to determine that the Soviet-occupied states of Eastern Europe (except Austria) had become workers states?

### Class 4. FROM 1951 TO 1963

Reading: From Towards a History...Part I: "The Fourth International from Split to Reunification," by Les Evans, pp. 9-19; "Problems of Methodology in the 1953-1954 Split in the Fourth International," by Tom Kerry, pp. 19-24.

Supplementary: "The Fourth International," by Pierre Frank, in IP, April 24, 1972, pp. 466-469, May 1, 1972, pp. 502-504, May 8, 1972, pp. 532-536.

Questions: 1. What were the central political issues in the

dispute with Pablo?

2. What were the key organizational questions in the dispute? How were Pablo's organizational methods related to his political views?

3. What is meant by "entryism sui generis"? How does it differ from other forms of entryism?

4. What factors in the development of the International Secretariat and the International Committee led to reunification?

OUTLINE FOR CLASSES ON THE HISTORY OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL  
BEFORE THE FOUNDING CONGRESS

1. Brief description of origins of Internationalism--Communist Manifesto, First International, Second International, Zimmerwald and Kienthal, healthy period of Third International. Why Marxists have always been internationalists.

II. 1923-1933--Rise of Left Opposition as faction of CPSU and Communist International [CI].

--Divided into two periods: 1923-29; 1929-33

1. 1923-29--Based and centered in Soviet CP. Struggle waged around internal and international questions.

a. Internal questions--bureaucratization, socialism in one country, industrialization, kulaks, etc.

b. International questions--socialism in one country; 1923 German revolution; 1925 Anglo-Russian Committee; 1925-27 Chinese revolution.

--Whole period one of defeats for international proletariat and strengthening of Soviet bureaucracy. Connection between two.

--Small opposition groups develop in CPs around world on one or another question. No contact or coordination with Opposition in CPSU.

--Initiation of 1928-34 "Third Period" ultraleftism of Stalin faction internally and internationally. Struggle against Bukharin and Right Opposition.

2. 1929-33--Expulsion of Trotsky to Turkey made first international collaboration possible. Beginning of process of clarification, sifting, consolidation, homogenization of opposition groups and politics.

--March 1929 Trotsky begins circulating documents to clarify positions internationally. Need to differentiate three factions of Comintern internationally (Left Opposition, Trotsky and followers; Centrist tendency, Stalin and followers; Right Opposition, Bukharin, Lovestone, Brandler, etc.). Emphasizes that it isn't enough to oppose Stalin regime. Must oppose Stalinist political line from left. Three key questions differentiate Left and Right Oppositions: (1) Anglo-Russian Committee; (2) defeat of Chinese revolution; (3) economic policies of Soviet bureaucracy.

--Other major questions debated from 1929 in Turkey: class character of Soviet Union (workers state or state capitalist?); function as faction of CI or as independent organizations building new international?

Left Opposition consolidate around:

a. program of first four congresses of CI

b. common assessment of Stalinism, including class character of USSR and need to work within Comintern.

April 6, 1930, International Left Opposition officially formed in Paris conference. Elected "Provisional International Secretariat," began issuing International Bulletin to share experiences and prepare for holding formal conference as soon as possible.

February 1933 "Preconference" held in Paris. One week after Hitler came to power but before German working-class organizations crushed.

a. Contrast positions of Trotskyists and Stalinists on Germany and fascism (including "united front from below," "social fascism," "red trade unions," "after Hitler us," etc.).

b. German defeat led to conclusion, in three steps, that Comintern could no longer be reformed and that ILO had to break with it; March 1933 decision that German CP hopeless, build new German party; July 1933 (after Executive Committee of Communist International upheld record of German CP), CI dead; October 1933, SPSU dead, build Soviet section. As symbol of change, ILO's name changed to International Communist League (ICL).

III. Laying basis for Fourth International, 1933-38. Period of probes, entries, fusions to build nucleus of new international.

1. Turn toward left-moving centrist groups that drew some of lessons of German events (1933 "Declaration of the Four," fusion with Musteites in U.S., suggestion of British entry into ILP). Orientation to centrists played out by 1934 Stalinist "Popular Front" turn which brought most centrist groups back toward Stalinists.

2. "French turn." First formulated in 1934. Increasing radicalization in Europe in 1934 (Spanish revolution and French crisis) led to development of big, young left wings in many SPs. Proposal that Trotskyists enter SPs to win over radicalizing left wings. Problems with sectarianism in French (major problem) and American sections regarding entry.

3. July 1936, ICL sponsored "International Conference for the Fourth International."

a. Events directly before and after conference showed crisis of both European capitalism and Stalinism (June, sitdown strikes in France; July, beginning of Spanish Civil War; August, first Moscow Trial).

b. Trotsky, now in Norway, wanted conference to form Fourth International. Conference only went as far as changing name to "Movement for the Fourth International."

4. 1936-38 saw:

a. Intense struggle against any adaptation in ranks to centrism. Example of POUM in Spain. Need for crystal-clarity against "Popular Fronts," class collaboration. Defection of elements like Sneevliet over Spain.

b. Major step-up in Stalinist attacks against Fourth Internationalists (agents and agents-provocateurs had always been problem--Etienne, Senin-Soblevicus brothers, etc.--but now escalated with murders of Erwin Wolf, Ignace Reiss, Leon Sedov, Rudolf Klement, etc.).