

No. 1

**THEORY,**

**TASKS &**

**TACTICS:**

The Program of the  
Class Struggle League



**\$1.00**

Copyrighted 1973 by  
Class Struggle League  
Chicago, Ill. U.S.A.

## CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP

The fusion movement is a new form of class struggle which is based on the fusion of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie in order to bring about the fusion of the two classes into a single class.

This is the fusion of the two classes into a single class which will be the result of the fusion of the two classes into a single class. The fusion of the two classes into a single class is the result of the fusion of the two classes into a single class.

**This pamphlet is the Political Resolution adopted at the Fusion Convention of Vanguard Newsletter and the Class Struggle League, April 20-22, 1973.**

The fusion movement is a new form of class struggle which is based on the fusion of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie in order to bring about the fusion of the two classes into a single class.

This is the fusion of the two classes into a single class which will be the result of the fusion of the two classes into a single class. The fusion of the two classes into a single class is the result of the fusion of the two classes into a single class.

The fusion movement is a new form of class struggle which is based on the fusion of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie in order to bring about the fusion of the two classes into a single class.

This is the fusion of the two classes into a single class which will be the result of the fusion of the two classes into a single class. The fusion of the two classes into a single class is the result of the fusion of the two classes into a single class.

The fusion movement is a new form of class struggle which is based on the fusion of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie in order to bring about the fusion of the two classes into a single class.

## CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP

"The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat." (*Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, by Leon Trotsky)

It is on the basis of this understanding that the Class Struggle League and Vanguard Newsletter unite their organizations to form a new organization which will be the nucleus of the vanguard party of the working class both in the U.S. and the world. The new organization is the result of the inability of the world Trotskyist movement to rebuild a revolutionary world vanguard party following the second world war. Finding all of the various splinters, sects and coteries emerging from the Trotskyist movement incapable of transforming themselves into revolutionary organizations based in the working class, we can take no other course than to turn from the road that they are following and take on the task ourselves of rebuilding the world Trotskyist movement.

These various groups and sects have either misunderstood or turned their backs on the need to build a *democratic-centralist* party; a party *oriented towards and based in the working class*; a party that stands intransigent against the bourgeoisie and its ideologies in all of their manifestations; a party that stands intransigent against the counter-revolutionary forces of social-democracy, Stalinism and the reformist labor bureaucracies! In other words, a party loyal to scientific socialism and its methodology — dialectical materialism.

The Fourth International, built out of the forces of the International Communist League, assembled revolutionaries throughout the world in a founding convention in 1938. This convention founded a world revolutionary party based on the Transitional Program. *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*.

The failure of the leadership of this International to maintain a revolutionary program under adverse conditions provides important lessons for revolutionists. Without understanding the history of the Fourth International and the reasons for its disintegration, any attempt to build a new revolutionary party will undoubtedly flounder over the same problems that faced the Fourth International. Thus an analysis of the Fourth International is an indispensable part of our program.

The Transitional Program was based on the historical experience of the world proletariat, especially on the lessons of the October Revolution and on the struggles of the International Left Opposition (ILO). The ILO fought to defend the gains of the October Revolution against the bureaucratic caste which fastened itself to the workers' state and the Third International.

It was the ILO that alone defended the British general strike against the labor bureaucrats' treachery and the Stalinist bureaucracy's accommodation to them. It was the Left Opposition that alone defended the Chinese Revolution against accommodation to the nationalist bourgeoisie. It was the Left Opposition that alone defended the German working class against the treachery of the Stalinist Communist Party and the Social-Democratic Party by fighting for a program within the international communist movement that would unite the German working class and defeat Hitlerite fascism!

When, despite the warnings of the Left Opposition, Hitler came to power over a prostrate Communist Party, without a single word of protest from the entire Communist movement, the ILO decided to turn its back from reforming the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy and the bankrupt Third International, which could only function as a puppet serving the narrow, conservative interests of the Soviet bureaucracy. The demoralization and weakness of the Russian working class, the failure of the working class in Europe to overthrow capitalism and take power, and the tremendous industrial backwardness of the Soviet Union allowed a bureaucracy (based on party functionaries and other petty bourgeois strata that predominated in the Russian population) to usurp political power from the working class and distort the workers' state so that it would serve to protect their privileges. The Left Opposition, understanding that the new bureaucracy would utilize the powers of the state apparatus to defend its privileges, called upon the workers of the Soviet Union to lead a *political revolution* that would sweep the bureaucratic garbage out of the Soviet state and defend the gains of the October Revolution from further degeneration. Only such a revolution would allow the first workers state to play a revolutionary role in aiding the working class of the capitalist nations to lead successful socialist revolutions. At the same time, the Left Opposition continued to defend the remaining gains of the October Revolution from imperialist attack and counter-revolution.

The Left Opposition transformed itself into the International Communist League, which fought against further Stalinist/Social Democratic betrayals in the Spanish and French revolutionary struggles. The Stalinists, in these two struggles, developed the tactic of the "popular front" — an alliance between the organizations of the liberal bourgeoisie and Stalinist and Social-Democratic Parties. This alliance — based on a minimal, reformist program — had as its intended purpose the fight for "progressive" bourgeois democracy against fascism. Thus the Stalinist movement openly and unambiguously declared its intention to defend one wing of the bourgeoisie and postpone indefinitely the fight for the socialist revolution. *The Stalinist movement transformed itself, as the social-democratic movement had done, into a reformist movement that openly acted to defend the bourgeoisie against revolution.* The Stalinist movement continues to play this role today.

During this period, the Stalinists accelerated their violent, murderous attacks against those who opposed the Kremlin's counter-revolutionary policies. These attacks culminated in the physical elimination of the entire

cadre of the old Bolshevik Party (including large layers that had proclaimed their loyalty to Stalin's bureaucracy) and the murder of revolutionists and anti-Stalinists in Spain, France, and elsewhere.

Throughout this period the International Communist League (ICL) stood intransigent against the intimidation of the Stalinist gangsters (as well as that of the bourgeoisie itself) in defending the program of the proletarian revolution against those who would betray it. The problem for the Trotskyist movement, however, was that the working class movement was *receding* (under the misleadership of the Stalinist-Social Democratic betrayers) before the onslaught of bourgeois repression brought on by ever-sharpening crisis. The new revolutionary forces had to fight against the stream in order to make gains in the working class.

Such tactics as the united front and entryism were employed, often successfully, in order to link the small forces of the revolutionary vanguard with broader mass movements of the workers. The gains from this period, unfortunately, were only temporary. The Fourth International, when finally founded (at least two years later than Trotsky had wanted), faced a world on the brink of a second world imperialist war. The many unstable elements that attached themselves to the Fourth International began to succumb to the pressures of the impending crisis and left the International. As the crisis of capitalism reached its exploding point, the revolutionary vanguard found itself, for the most part, isolated from the working class.

During this period even the elements that remained loyal to the organizations of revolutionary Marxism showed signs of accommodating to various non-revolutionary trends. Sneevliet in Holland, an important leader in the Trotskyist movement, was unable to stand up to the heat generated by bourgeois liberalism and Social Democratic-Stalinist propaganda to "support the struggle in Spain." Sneevliet, while remaining loyal to the Fourth International organizationally, supported the POUM in Spain and flirted with the inveterate centrists of the London Bureau.

In France, the Molinier-Frank tendency balked at leaving the SFIO, preferring the climate inside to the rather harsher conditions of an independent organization.

In the U.S. a large section of the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) bowed before bourgeois public opinion during the period of the Stalin-Hitler pact and the Soviet invasions of Poland and Finland. A section led by Shachtman, Burnham and Abern, and based for the most part amongst the petty bourgeois sections within the SWP, wished to turn its back not only on the Soviet Union but on dialectical materialism, the method of Marxism! Such a tendency within the SWP was inevitable given the large numbers of untrained petty bourgeois radicals that found themselves within the SWP's ranks. Still, the fact that the division in the party was so deep (approximately 40 percent of the party supported the Shachtman-Abern-Burnham tendency) and that the division finally expressed itself in an organizational split — despite the urgings of Trotsky to prevent such a split at all costs — exposed certain weaknesses in the leadership of the SWP majority as well.

The most obvious incapacity was the inability of the SWP to theoretically train its cadres. When 40 percent of a Marxist organization can become antagonistic to or agnostic on the question of dialectical materialism, there has evidently been an underplaying (to say the least) of the importance of theory in determining the practices of Marxist-Leninists.

However, the organizational attitudes of the majority (based around the leadership of James Cannon) also played a great role in exacerbating internal tensions. If one were to read Trotsky's *In Defense of Marxism* and Cannon's *Struggle for a Proletarian Party* side by side, one could not help but be impressed by the glaring differences in approach towards the minority taken by Trotsky and Cannon. While Trotsky's writings emphasize the political direction that the minority was moving towards and ruthlessly subject it to Marxist criticism, Trotsky always, especially in his correspondence, leaves a way out for the minority organizationally, stresses their rights as a minority, and attempts to *defuse* any split attitudes. The correspondence of Cannon, on the other hand, emphasizes the organizational crimes of the minority, complains about the draining of energies in long discussions, generally shrugs off the organizational complaints of the minority (while at the same time admitting that many comrades were being "taken in" by these complaints) and, in general, in many subtle and not-so-subtle ways regenerates a split atmosphere. By the time one concludes the section of Cannon's correspondence it is clear that he wants Shachtman, Burnham, et al, out of the party — no ifs, ands, or buts!

A small example is the exchange of correspondence on the Cleveland Convention of the minority of the SWP. On Feb. 19, 1940, Trotsky writes:

A convention of the minority is only a caucus on a national scale . . . It is only a new step on the same road, a bad step on the road of split, but not necessarily the split itself. Possibly, even surely, there are two or three tendencies inside the opposition in respect to the split question . . .

But Cannon on Feb. 20 writes:

It is now the unanimous opinion of the leading comrades here that the split which the opposition leaders have been preparing is no longer to be avoided . . . This (the Cleveland Conference) is not a gathering of a few national leaders, but a full-fledged conference . . . and is manifestly designed to organize and prepare the split.

In the same letter Cannon goes on to relate how "Even the suggestion of permitting a limited continuation of the discussion after the convention — which was contained in a confidential letter of Cornell (Trotsky) and relayed to our most responsible people — brought a storm of opposition from the field." He tells of how the Minneapolis group — a pro-Cannon stronghold — refused to even hold an informal discussion with Shachtman on the party dispute!

On Feb. 27 Trotsky answers Cannon's letter:

You are convinced that the Minority as a whole is preparing for a split and that you cannot win over anyone else. I accept this premise. But the more was it necessary to accomplish before the Cleveland convention an energetic gesture of peace in order to radically change your line after their negative answer?

I understand the impatience of many Majority comrades (I suppose that this impatience is not infrequently connected with theoretical indifference) but they should be reminded that the happenings in the Socialist Workers Party have now a great importance and that you must act not only on the basis of your subjective appreciations, as corrects they may be, but on the basis of objective facts available to everyone.

Cannon's reply to this letter does a very poor job of answering Trotsky's main points. Cannon questions Trotsky: "I don't know whether you fully appreciate the character and tendencies of the present opposition . . ." and then goes on to name some of their organizational crimes, i.e., failure to come to the party office, no formal statement of their convention's demands, etc. Cannon goes on: "Perhaps a part of the impatience of the worker comrades is due to their inexperience . . . However, the feeling of impatience is practically universal in our ranks no less so on the part of the most theoretically qualified comrades."

But was that feeling of impatience correct — and did succumbing to it reflect the real needs of the movement as Trotsky had asked? On this score Cannon has nothing to say. He does make an interesting remark about the split, however, which from this point on, in all of his writings, he accepts as an accomplished fact. As far as the majority is concerned, the split will represent no serious rupture whatsoever. "The separation on the psychological plane is as profound as on theoretical, political, and organizational planes." A split of 40 percent of the party, on the eve of an imperialist war, will "represent no serious rupture." Why? Because of the profound separation on the "psychological plane." In other words, the hostility between factions is so great that it has overtaken all political considerations in the minds of all the antagonists! In a post script to a letter to Dobbs, dated March 4, Trotsky continues to insist "The rank and file of the minority do not wish a split." But the attitude of the Cannonites was set — the National Committee Majority in a circular to the membership in answer to the minority's "Resolution on Party Unity" rails:

Nobody shall make a playhouse of the party. The convention must make it obligatory for all party members to connect themselves in one way or another with workers' environment and recruit fresh elements from the proletariat in the course of class struggle activities.

. . . Those who try to block this course will be defeated. Those who try to disrupt our movement by a treacherous split on the eve of the war will be smashed, as enemies and traitors deserve to be smashed.

After six months of discussion . . . the party is approaching the convention and the decision. Let every comrade in the party, regardless of what his opinion has been, face seriously once more and finally the inescapable rules of democratic centralism: the unconditional right of the party majority to decide the disputed

questions and the unconditional duty of every party member to accept the decision.

The slogan on split is class betrayal . . . The Fourth International will survive it in spite of all the Burnhams and Aberns plus the Shactmans.

Small wonder that despite all the protestations of Cannon and Trotsky that there would be no organizational reprisals against the minority after the convention the minority remained unconvinced. The point about making it obligatory for all party members to connect themselves to a workers environment was an obvious threat to all minorityites. Trotsky advocated a serious connection between all party members and the class. What Trotsky had in mind, of course, was a thought-out policy of proletarianization, not an organizational club to punish those who wound up on the wrong side of a political question by unceremoniously dumping them in the factories and then demanding that they "produce." Then there is the point about the rights of the party majority. Of course in a democratic centralist organization the majority rules. So what. The question is, what does a serious majority, concerned to avoid a split by 40 percent of the party, do? Does it, for instance, continually refer to the minority as "splitters," or even "traitors" at a point when the minority still confusedly claim to be party loyalists?

What Cannon and Co. exhibited was the complete inability to see all sides of a question — in other words, to think dialectically. Trotsky explained how the essence of the minority's positions meant split — therefore the majority immediately branded them as splitters! Trotsky insisted that organizational questions were secondary (not non-existent) — the majority attacked any and all who raised organizational complaints! It was this tendency to think out all questions in a straight line, ignoring varying sides in any development, combined with a narrow organizational partisanship, that spelled disaster for the SWP during the war.

## THE SECOND WORLD WAR

As soon as the war crisis came down on the heads of the working class, the poor quality of the sections of the Fourth International finally expressed itself in a *qualitative break from Trotskyism!* The SWP, as Cannon later revealed in his "Open Letter" that split the Fourth International (Pabloite and "anti-Pabloite") ignored the theoretical and practical backsliding of the European sections. The SWP, because of its size and proletarian composition and relative safety from the ravishes of the imperialist war, was the only section capable of taking the leadership of the International. But the SWP turned its back on its responsibility as a section of a *world party*, thus insuring its own demise as well.

While the war and the inevitable repression of revolutionaries that followed was responsible for depriving the Fourth International of many talented leaders (including Trotsky), this alone does not account for the degeneration of the international party. *The fact that sections which were able to maintain their basic cadre could do no more to stem the growing revisionism of the International than those that lost essential cadre shows that the disease was inherent in the International itself.*

The fact was that in face of temporarily negative circumstances the theoretical roots of the Fourth International were overturned in favor of politics that sought to latch on to one or another temporary current in order to ride out the difficult period. The most common tendency was an accommodation in one form or another to the "democratic" imperialist-Stalinist bloc. In the document *Historical Roots of the Degeneration of the Fourth International and of the Centrism of the SWP*, the Communist Tendency (CT) of the SWP documented the various accommodations made by European sections and the inability of the International Secretariat, the leadership of the International, to deal seriously with these deviations.

Under the impact of the bourgeois-resistance movements — supported by the bulk of the French population but led by the Stalinists or pro-bourgeois De Gaullists — the French section gave up a principled defeatist position towards the French bourgeoisie in favor of one form or another of support to the "independence struggle of the French masses." For example, in the *Bulletin of the Committee for the Fourth International* (No. 2, Sept. 20, 1940) a report of the Central Committee of the Committee for the Fourth International states:

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.

In the German section of the International, the Committee Abroad of the International Communists of Germany, the leaders abandoned a Trotskyist position on permanent revolution in favor of a theory of stages. The "Three Theses" document, dated Oct. 19, 1941, stated that "... the transition from fascism to socialism remains a utopia without a stopping place, which is by its contents equivalent to a democratic revolution."

In Austria, the section of the Fourth International was divided into a capitulationist and "orthodox" wing. An article in *Intercontinental Press* of March 15, 1973 states:

Already in the summer of 1937 there had been differences in the Struggle League (a Trotskyist organization) about what attitudes to take towards the impending imperialist war. The Austrian Trotskyist leadership advocated the so-called "combined war tactic," according to which, in case of war, the proletariat should join the bourgeois army and go to the front to fight against Hitler's Germany, to help annihilate the main fascist enemy; at home, the fight against the bourgeoisie should be scaled down if this was in the interest of defending the Soviet Union. As against this the comrades around Comrade Modlik, as well as the Bolshevik-Leninists, held firmly to the Leninist line of revolutionary defeatism in imperialist countries.

If only the Bolshevik-Leninists had held firm! In 1945 the "orthodox" Trotskyists re-united with the capitulationists in an unprincipled bloc. The report in *Intercontinental Press* makes clear what sort of unification this was: "... the unification of 1945 only lasted for a short time; again the old arguments over the combined-war tactic' came up..." In France, the "orthodox" Trotskyists similarly re-united with the capitulationist wing under the cover of a formal criticism of their accommodationist betrayal without really examining the roots of these politics. The European conference of Trotskyist organizations, held in Feb. 1944, that presided over the unification made the following statement after going to some lengths to describe (but not analyze) the French section's errors: "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."

However, in August of 1945, some months after the conference issued its statement enthusing over the "thwarting" of social-patriotic tendencies in the French section, a pamphlet published by the French Trotskyists appeared containing an open letter to the president of the Press Federation reprinted from the Sept. 30, 1944, *LaVerite* demanding that *LaVerite* allowed to appear legally as it was the "first resistance organ."(!)

As for the other sections of the Fourth International, the picture was hardly brighter. The history of the Vietnamese Trotskyist movement, indicated that the Vietnamese Trotskyists were among the *founders* of the Viet-Minh, the popular front bloc dominated by Stalinists and bourgeois nationalists. The fact that the bulk of the Vietnamese Trotskyists misunderstood the role of Stalinism in the national-liberation struggle left them unprepared for the turn in 1946 when Ho Chi Minh directed the slaughter of thousands of Trotskyists (who had strong support amongst the workers in Saigon) after they resisted the Stalinists' bloc with the British and French to re-colonize Indo-China.

In the U.S. the Socialist Workers Party, while taking a formal defeatist position, confused and distorted such a position in much of its propaganda. Its position on defeatism as well as that on the role of the Soviet Union, again revealed their inability to see any more than one side of any particular phenomena. Trotsky, in his discussions with the SWP leaders on the question of the proletarian military policy, suggested that the SWP use the U.S. workers' instinctive desire to fight fascism as a base to propagandize for a class fight against fascism *independent* of the bourgeoisie. Cannon showed his "understanding" of the task of utilizing the workers' primitive anti-fascist instincts while stressing the need to remain independent of and opposed to their own bourgeoisie in the following way:

Many times in the past we were put at a certain disadvantage; the demagogy of the social democrats against us was effective to a certain extent. They said: "You have no answer to the question of how to fight against Hitler..." Well, we answered in a general way, the workers will first overthrow the bourgeoisie at home and then they will take care of the invaders. That was a good program, but the workers did not make the revolution in time. Now the two tasks must be telescoped and carried out simultaneously."

It was this line of thinking that led to the SWP's slogan of "Turn the imperialist war into a war against fascism" which began to appear in the *Militant* in March of 1941. When Shactman in *Labor Action* took the SWP to task for their social-patriotic bending, Cannon was unable to reply, except for a barrage of petty-bourgeois baiting in Shactman's direction.

On the question of the Soviet Union, the *Militant* repeatedly referred to the Soviet Army as "our" Red Army and in many ways enthused over the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe. This was, again, a one-sided, schematic interpretation of Trotsky's writings on the Soviet Union in the polemic against Shactman. All Cannon and Co. could remember of these polemics was the part where Trotsky emphasized the role of the Red Army as part of the state apparatus of a workers state, acting essentially to protect the socialized property of the Soviet Union. Cannon forgot that the Soviet Union was a *deformed* workers state and that the bureaucrats could only defend the gains of October in a distorted way and would also *crush* any independent revolutionary movements of the masses in order to protect their privileges.

Is it any wonder that that this conglomeration of tendencies succumbed in total to Pabloist-impressionism at the Third World Congress?

The abdication of Leninism by almost the entire Fourth International would have been the sign for any serious revolutionary tendency to begin to struggle for a break with the policies of these sections and for the rebuilding of a *real* Trotskyist Fourth International. Such a struggle would have probably culminated in a split at the Second World Congress of the Fourth International in 1948. For by the Second World Congress, the full logic of the International's inability to stand up to the pressures of immediate reality was beginning to express itself, not in departures from a Leninist program

here and there, but in the entire perspective of the International!

After the Second World War certain sections of the Fourth International (U.S., France, Britain) experienced some rapid organizational growth. This growth, however, was illusory. Rather than signifying a new revolutionary wave on top of an impending crisis of capitalism, it really represented the last surges of a *receding* wave of workers' struggle, the temporary restabilization of capitalism. The Trotskyists, however, confused by the seeming upsurge in struggle during the 1945-46 period, misread the signs entirely. The thesis of Cannon, "The Coming American Revolution," presented at the Twelfth National Convention of the SWP in 1948, symptomized this trend. Here Cannon described how "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 call "Onward to a party of 10,000" became the slogan of the convention. Unfortunately the SWP was about to go backward from a party of over 2,000 in 1946 to little more than 500 by 1956. Germain/Mandel and the International leadership as a whole continued to uphold this thesis in the Second World Congress in 1948, when it should have been clear that U.S. imperialism was on the offensive, clearly unhindered by any impending catastrophic crisis. Only the British section (a solid working class section of 500) opposed the impending-crisis prognosis of the Second World Congress.

The second major misinterpretation of the Second World Congress appeared in its narrow, "orthodox" stance towards the Soviet-occupied states in Eastern Europe and Asia. The documents of the Second World Congress argued that the overturn of capitalism could only take place "as a result of the revolutionary mobilization of the masses." The congress, evidently, was entirely ignorant of the overturn of capitalism that had clearly taken place in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania independent of a revolutionary mobilization by the masses. The intervention of new events in the world scene was to wreck havoc with the analysis of the Second World Congress.

The discussion around the buffer states raised the key question of the *state*. It was not for mere literary exercise that Lenin, in the months of September and October, 1917, wrote on the nature of the state. To stumble over the nature of the state is to stumble over the question of the revolution. The discussion around the buffer states revealed the absolute and utter abandonment of the Marxist method of analysis by the Fourth International. The result of the discussion was the complete and utter *revision* of the Marxist theory of the state.

On the one side of the dispute in the Fourth International were Stein, Wright, Germain, Cannon, and Weiss, who characterized the buffer states as "capitalist countries," although each of these people had a *different reason* for characterizing the buffer states as "capitalist countries." On the other side were Hansen, Pablo, Frank, and Cochran, who held that the buffer states were workers states. But neither side addressed itself to the question of *who holds state power*. In other words, both sides "determined" the nature of the state by impressionistic methods, not by addressing themselves to the question of who controlled "the armed bodies of men" that held state

power. The majority said that the buffer states were capitalist states because they had more characteristics of capitalism than of socialism! The minority said they were workers states because they had more characteristics of socialism than of capitalism!!!

Lenin, resuscitating the long-buried and deliberately distorted teachings of Marx and Engels on the state, taught that the state is bodies of armed men defending the interests of one class against the interests of another. (Naturally, the bodies of armed men, and their adjuncts, the courts, do not necessarily defend the interests of one class over another in the direct and immediate sense, but *always* in the long run. For example, it might not be in the best *immediate* interests of the capitalist class for it to shoot down unarmed strikers on day X, but we know that the capitalist class is acting to protect its *long-run* interests.) The question of state power, taught Lenin, is a question that will be decided by force, by violence. And what did the majority and minority of the Fourth International have to say on this question? The fact is that both majority and minority ignored the question of that decisive moment in history when state power is seized by one class from another class — both majority and minority, in a "model discussion" which generated neither heat nor light, reached the conclusion that the buffer states became workers states through "structural assimilation." Both majority and minority dissolved the question of proletarian revolution into a matter of *evolution by stages*. First we have a state with more capitalist attributes than socialist ones, then we have someday more socialist attributes than capitalist ones, and *VOILA* a workers state through evolution.

The only analysis of eastern Europe that makes sense is the analysis of Vern and Ryan of the SWP, also advanced by Haston of the Revolutionary Communist Party in Britain. This Vern-Ryan analysis says that the buffer states became workers states at the moment power was consolidated in the hands of the Red Army. With the bourgeois army and apparatus destroyed, state power was in the hands of the Red Army and thus, in a distorted form, in the hands of the working class.

The Vern-Ryan analysis is the *only* analysis which makes sense, which applies the Marxist theory of the state, and which closes the door to *revisionism* on the question of the state. The objection most often raised to this analysis is that when under the control of the Red Army the buffer states had bourgeois ministers, still had capitalism, etc. etc. etc. Such objections ignores the fact that there can be a conflict between the nature of the state (workers state in the buffer countries) and the nature of the economy (capitalist) or government (ex-ministers of the bourgeois governments). Trotsky himself pointed out when he answered Burnam and Carter in 1937 in "*Not a Workers and Not a Bourgeois State*"

But does not history really know cases of class conflict between the economy and the state? It does! After the "third estate" seized power, society for a period of several years still remained feudal. In the first months of Soviet rule the proletariat reigned on the basis of bourgeois economy. In the field of agriculture the dictatorship of the proletariat operated for a number of years on the basis of



petty-bourgeois economy (to a considerable degree it does so even now). Should a bourgeois counter-revolution succeed in the USSR, the new government for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon nationalized economy. But what does such a type of temporary conflict between the economy and the state mean? It means a *revolution* or a *counter-revolution*. The victory of one class over another signifies that it will reconstruct the economy in the interests of the victors. But such a dichotomous condition, which is a necessary moment in every social overturn, has nothing in common with the theory of a classless state which in the absence of a real boss is being exploited by a clerk, i.e. by the bureaucracy. (*Writings*, 1937-38.)

Certainly, Stalin wanted to create stable, capitalist regimes, but he was not a dialectical materialist and did not understand the laws of the class struggle. He did not understand first that the Red Army, in distorted form, represents the working class. As Trotsky said, in his polemics on Potand and Finland, if you accept the fact that the USSR is a workers state, that the bureaucracy rests on the working class and the gains of October, then you cannot separate the activities of the Red Army from that understanding. The Red Army represents "bodies of armed men" of a workers state.

A stable capitalist regime cannot be built on the basis of a state controlled by the Red Army. The two are in irreconcilable conflict. In fact, the Stalinists and the bourgeoisie ministers in the Eastern European states prior to nationalization were in constant conflict. When Stalin did decide to nationalize the Eastern European economies in response to the Marshall Plan and the rearming of Western Europe, he, in fact, had come empirically to the conclusion that he could not create friendly, stable capitalist regimes under his control.

Conversely, of course, if there had been a strong Eastern European bourgeoisie which had set about building an apparatus and developing a stable capitalist regime, it would have demanded the withdrawal of the Red Army. State power would have had to have been taken from the Red Army by the capitalist class.

When Stalin did nationalize the economy, he changed the character of the regimes and the economy, but *not* the state. The only reason the bourgeoisie could be expropriated without a fight was that the state was in the hands of the working class — a workers state.

The Fourth International made more mistakes in analysis. Western Europe, bolstered by the intensive aid supplied by the U.S. through the Marshall plan, was restablized. The Stalinist-led workers' movements in Italy, France, Belgium, Greece, were pushed back (with the cooperation of the Stalinists themselves). In a defensive reaction the Soviet Union precipitated the CP-hacked coup in Czechoslovakia, clearly marking off the occupied Eastern European states as a buffer zone to protect it and its bureaucracy from the ravages of U.S. led world imperialism. In the course of this process, an independent bureaucratic formation developed under the leadership of Tito in Yugoslavia. This formation put its own national-bureaucratic interests ahead of those of the Soviet masters, a previously unheard of phenomena in the Stalinist Camp.

In Asia, the various Stalinist parties, finding themselves unable to reach an accord with former imperialist allies and their domestic puppets, were forced as a defensive measure to do battle with the various nationalist bourgeoisies. World imperialism, still weakened from WW II, was temporarily caught off guard and the nationalist bourgeois regime in China fell before the armies of Mao-Tse-Tung and the Chinese Communist Party. Recognizing their defeat, U.S. imperialism quickly turned to the offensive in Asia (which was, after all, the primary area that they had hoped to secure during WW II) and the "cold war" between the imperialists and the deformed workers state bloc quickly developed into a hot war in Korea. The threat of a new, nuclear third world bourgeois reaction attempted to crush or stifle the various domestic Stalinist parties. The Stalinist bureaucracies, in turn, began a new series of purges in the countries that they ruled, cleaning out hundreds and thousands of ex-partisans, "Titoists," and any others capable of some independent thought.

A serious revolutionary world party, even one caught off guard by events, would certainly be able to revise its positions, assuming, of course, a competent leadership. The leadership elected after the Second World Congress, the International Secretariat (IS), was no such creature, however. As for the leadership of the SWP, it showed its concern for the building of an international revolutionary leadership by using the U.S. Vorhis Law as an excuse to refrain from becoming a disciplined section of the International. The International, now having nothing more than a literary relation with the SWP, was thus, in essence, transformed into a federation of parties.

Faced with the need to provide some analysis of the events taking place between the Second and Third World Congresses, the International leadership and the SWP simply slid down the road of complete abandonment of Trotskyism in dealing with the "new world reality."

The first step was the conciliation of the entire International to the Yugoslavian Communist Party. Without formally changing their position that Yugoslavia was and would remain a capitalist state until "a revolutionary mobilization of the masses," the IS published an open letter, "To the Congress, the Central Committee and the Members of the Yugoslav Communist Party," which offered the Yugoslavian bureaucracy support against the Kremlin and its policies. Cartoons in the SWP's *Militant* showed Tito defending Leninism against Stalin!

Marxists would, of course, defend the gains of the Yugoslavian workers, while refusing to sow any illusions in the revolutionary potential of the bureaucracy. The Stalinist bureaucracies are of the same social mold as the reformist trade-union bureaucracies. While splits and divisions are always possible (usually narrow jurisdictional disputes flowing from the needs of the bureaucrats) and while it is certainly permissible (often, in fact, necessary) for revolutionists to utilize one wing against the other in order to break the masses from the hold of the bureaucracy altogether, this is not the same as portraying one wing of the Stalinist camp as leading a Leninist revival. Thus Trotskyists would have opposed the Soviet attempts to drive Yugoslavia out of the Soviet bloc, would have opposed sabotaging the economy by enforcing a trade boycott, thus pushing Yugoslavia into the

arms of imperialism. At the same time Trotskyists would have continued to call for a political revolution by the workers against the parasitic Yugoslavian bureaucracy that blocked the workers from political power and undermined the gains of the deformed workers state.

The British section sharply criticized the International Secretariat's position toward the YCP — first and foremost for its blatant opportunist flip-flop on the question of the class nature of the Yugoslavian state. If the IS still maintained that Yugoslavia was a capitalist state, then how could it offer "critical support" against the Soviet Union, which it still held to be a degenerated workers' state? And if Yugoslavia was now indeed a workers' state, when did this happen? And how? The IS continued undaunted, as it planned worker brigades for Yugoslavia, and made repeated attempts at some sort of rapprochement with Yugoslav Stalinist leaders.

By 1949, the IS under Pablo's leadership dealt quite effectively with the British section, which was becoming quite consistent in its criticism of the IS's accommodations. Healy organized a small minority in the British section which favored entry into the Labor Party. Pablo arranged to have the British minority represented on the International Executive Committee along with the majority section! The minority, with the approval of the IS, then split from the majority, receiving recognition as the official section! Thus a section 500 strong was wiped out through the maneuvers of Pablo-Cannon-Healy!

Meanwhile, the final formation of Pabloist "theories" was proceeding at full speed. With the Chinese Revolution, the tensions between imperialism and the deformed workers' state bloc exploding into a war in Korea, Pablo wrote his conclusions in "Where Are We Going?" The document describes Stalinism's "contradictory character" which enables "the Communist Parties to retain the possibility, *in certain circumstances*, of roughly outlining a revolutionary orientation." Pablo maintained that since these parties were "being compelled in the course of events and under the pressure of the masses to partially change the line," the role of the Trotskyist movement in this instance would be "by and large that of a Left Opposition which gives them critical support."

This represents in capsule form the essence of Pabloism. It is a form of centrism which looks to depend on forces other than the working class under Bolshevik leadership to play a revolutionary role. It was the impressionistic reaction of almost the entire International to circumstances which could no longer be safely compartmentalized by narrow, orthodox reflexes. The leadership of the International was unable, during and after WW II to resolve the crisis of leadership so as to take advantage of the crisis of world capitalism and lead successful revolutions. Thus the wave of mass discontent after the war which produced revolutionary crises in France, Italy, Eastern Europe, Vietnam, China, and massive strikes by workers in the U.S. and elsewhere, was easily contained by world Stalinism. And U.S. imperialism, emerging from the war with a huge productive capacity, was able to finance the re-stabilization of world capitalism and lead an offensive against the Soviet Bloc.

The Trotskyists, caught completely unprepared for such an event, succumbed to the growing tendency within the Trotskyist movement (which surfaced during WWII) to abandon the Marxist theory for pragmatic analyses which simply described certain aspects of temporary conjuncture and then projected a straight line of development into the future. Thus the Stalinists who, simply to avoid being slaughtered, engaged in guerrilla warfare in Yugoslavia and China were "forced by objective conditions or pressure from the masses" to struggle. Anyone familiar with the Transitional Program knows by heart the passage which concedes that "under exceptional circumstances" one or another tendency could take power. World imperialism, temporarily stymied by a world war, was unable to prevent the Yugoslav Partisans and the Soviet Red Army from occupying Eastern Europe. U.S. Troops balked at the plans of the U.S. generals to remain in China, thus preventing the U.S. from directly intervening to save the crumbling Chang Kai-Shek regime. All along, the Stalinists continually thwarted any revolutionary development, denied any socialist perspective, and for a good while defended private property against the workers in all of these states.

World imperialism, attempting to preserve private property relations, moved aggressively to contain "Soviet expansion." At the same time the imperialists attempted, with the help of reformist and social democratic labor bureaucrats, to drive the domestic Stalinist parties underground in order to whip the masses into a war hysteria against the Soviet Union. Certainly if, under objective conditions, the various Communist Parties could change their basic positions this would have been the time for it. The very opposite happened, however. The Stalinists generally fought imperialist war drives through reformist peace conferences, appeals to "enlightened" liberals, through popular front attempts such as the U.S. Progressive Party. In response to domestic reaction, "slave labor" laws such as Taft-Hartley, the Stalinists remissed to the workers about the "good old days" under Roosevelt! When being driven out of the trade unions, the Stalinists *refused* to fight, often going along with anti-communist resolutions in order to appear "respectable." Everywhere world Stalinism was in a route. In places such as Korea, Vietnam, Greece, etc., where the Stalinists were forced into a fight, their strategy of refusing to mobilize the workers, relying on peasant based guerrilla warfare, killing Trotskyists who opposed these tactics, insured the defeat of each of these struggles (except in Vietnam where in a partial victory the Stalinists were able to wrest the North from under imperialist control).

The fact was that it was the Trotskyists of the Pablo-Cannon stripe, not the Stalinists, that were transforming their nature. The essence of Pabloism was the denying of the role of the vanguard party. The Stalinists were numerically strong, the imperialists were out to hang the Stalinists — the Stalinists in return dug up some of Lenin's old quotes about imperialism, therefore — therefore didn't it simply make more sense to try to push the very large Stalinist parties into fighting rather than trying to defend the Stalinist ranks from bourgeois tyranny, defend the gains in Eastern Europe and China, and at the *same time* break the masses from the hold of

Stalinism, overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracies and lead an offensive against world imperialism themselves? For those imprisoned by empirical logic the answer, of course, was yes. All that remained was to give the impressionistic backsliding a "theoretical" cover and, *voilà*, a "new world reality!"

Pabloism did not simply and solely express itself as an accommodation to Stalinism. Any working class tendency with a mass base was seen as being capable of "changing its nature" under the pressure of its mass base. Thus Pabloism was eventually to adapt to every petty bourgeois "anti-imperialist" current in the world.

Thus the Third Congress of the International (minus the British section) approved Pablo's masterwork. Germain-Mandel, the SWP, Healy and others slid happily along into liquidation. In *The Fourth International*, Pablo summed up the "theoretical" basis of the "new world reality."

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.

The logic of the "appreciation" of the irresistible (almost, of course) trend to revolution was the betrayal of the Bolivian revolution by the POR, the Bolivian section of the Fourth International. The CT document describes the role of the POR as follows:

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, seize power, and create a workers' and peasants' government. The POR extended critical support to the MNR.

The result was, needless to say, a military coup, and a dispersing of the COB. The "new world reality" produced a new centrist formation which, while patiently awaiting the irresistible trend towards revolution, *blocked* the development of a revolutionary leadership. But the IS in the January-February issue of *Fourth International* had nothing but glowing praise for the POR's policies. The SWP remained silent.

The theoretical premise of the Third Congress began to be applied to the practical work of the various national sections. The British section, deep in the Labor Party, adapted to the right-centrist Beven. In Belgium the section disappeared into the Belgian Social Democracy. Entry was not seen as tactical maneuver but as a *strategy* designed to link the "new left opposition" with the potentially "revolutionary" mass parties of the workers.

## SPLIT IN FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

George Clarke, the SWP's "delegate" to the Third World Congress (remember that the SWP did not formally belong to the International) returned home determined to plant the seed of the "new world reality" in U.S. soil. Clarke had the full backing of the International leadership. He found an able ally in Mike Bartell (SWP organizer for N.Y.C.) Cochran, head of the SWP's remaining major trade union fraction (auto), and backed by almost every remaining trade unionist in the SWP, also blocked with Clarke. The Pablo-Clarke-Bartell-Cochran bloc was indeed an imposing formation and one which Cannon, well acquainted with the fate of the British section, justifiably viewed with alarm.

The Cochran-Clarke tendency clearly expressed the logic of their views publicly in April 1954 in a document entitled "Our Orientation":

... 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 party of tomorrow will not be Trotskyist in the sense of accepting the tradition of our movement.

There you have it — the workers and the bureaucrats who lead them do not understand our tradition — therefore . . . therefore that's how it will always be so we might as well forget our traditions because the revolutionary party of the future "will not be Trotskyist in the sense of accepting the tradition of our movement." Cannon opposed this line — not so much because he was opposed to liquidation, but because the line threatened to upset his little fortress in the U.S. As the comrades of the Leninist Faction of the SWP pointed out in *Marxism vs. the SWP*, both Cannon and Clarke-Cochran were heading for liquidation — only the former was traveling by ox-cart and the latter by jet. Therefore, for a time the Pablo forces and Cannon found themselves in what seemed to be two different places. That Cannon was not at all interested in preserving "Trotskyist tradition" can be seen from the fact that throughout the struggle with Cochran-Clarke, Cannon insisted that it was *his* tendency that *really* supported the decisions of the Third World Congress. Cannon even offered his

continued support to Pablo if Pablo would back Cannon against the Cochran-Clarke group (this was reported by the Cochranites who claimed that Cannon, in a Political Bureau meeting threatened to send a letter to Pablo with the aforementioned content). To prove his loyalty Cannon supported the expulsion of the majority of the French section by the IS leadership.

The real root of the dispute between Cannon and Cochran-Clarke was that Clarke simply wanted to disappear into the labor movement and was supported by the party's trade unionists who had lost all hope of building a revolutionary party. Cannon wanted to maintain the SWP and simply sit it out for a few years until better days would come.

The major pivots of this dispute had appeared as early as 1947, when Cochran and the auto fraction pushed for a break with the Reuther caucus (which the SWP up until that time had supported) and for a bloc with the Thomas-Addes caucus which was Stalinist-backed and which was also being driven out by the red-baiting attack of Reuther. Swabeck and Dunne (backed by Cannon, according to Cochran) favored continued support to Reuther. When the auto fraction finally supported the Thomas-Addes caucus, the Stalinists were already on the outs and no significant contact with Stalinist workers was made.

This approach by Swabeck and others epitomized the approach of the SWP, which preferred to abstain from any serious struggle within the unions either against the witchhunters or against the Stalinists. The party's trade unionists, disgusted by the passiveness of the SWP majority, either opted for liquidation into the trade union movement (Cochran) or the Stalinist periphery (Clarke). The Marcyites adopted a Pabloist position on the Soviet Union but refused to go along with total liquidation, thus winning a section of trade unionists. The Marcyites made important accommodations to the Stalinist movement (they called for "critical support" to the Progressive Party in their opening shots at the Majority in 1948). The SWP at this time also branded McCarthyism as "a native fascist movement," thus laying the "theoretical basis" for a pull-back on all fronts when, in fact, the bourgeoisie was about to dump McCarthy!

Thus, having a set perspective, Cannon and Co. dumped the Cochranites from the party in autumn of 1953 on the basis that the faction had boycotted the 25th anniversary banquet of the SWP. Aside from the fact that in and of itself it was a crude bureaucratic stunt against a faction that comprised almost one-fourth of the party's already dwindling membership and almost all of the party's active trade unionists, it is clear that no real political struggle was waged against this tendency.

The International Communist Party (PCI) the French section of the FI, had also opposed, in its own opportunist fashion, Pabloism. The PCI was the only section to oppose the main document of the Third Congress. The PCI majority was punished for its opposition by being placed in receivership. A pro-Pablo minority was installed as the leadership. The PCI majority appealed to the SWP through a letter by Renard to Cannon. The PCI argued that it was *really* defending the decisions of the Third World

Congress, as opposed to Pablo, who "did not win out at the Third World Congress." The SWP, as stated before, backed Pablo against the PCI majority. The PCI was even more opportunist in its "fight" against Pablo than the SWP. At least the SWP had in fact supported the decisions of the Third World Congress up until the split. The PCI majority, which was opposed to the decisions of the Congress to begin with, actually appealed to the SWP in the name of the Third World Congress!

After the expulsion, Cannon wrote his "Open Letter," announcing his break with Pabloite revisionism and forming an international bloc with the expelled French minority, Healy and his grouping, Peng-Shu-Tse, and a few others here and there. The "Open Letter" was an open declaration of split, timed to fall during the internal discussion period for the upcoming Fourth Congress. Thus Cannon made it clear to all who could see that he was unconcerned with any serious struggle against Pabloism. The Cannon-Healy-Lambert group constituted itself as the "International Committee of the Fourth International" (IC), a federated body with no clear or stated perspective of ever building the democratic centralist world party of Lenin and Trotsky. The opportunist, flip-flop ability of the three major sections of this "international" guaranteed its inability to build a revolutionary world party without a serious re-evaluation and correction of its entire history.

The SWP continued its long, slippery slide into gross centrism, first by hailing the speech of Khrushchev at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. as a sign of the "democratization" of the workers' states under the "pressure" of the masses. The SWP then tried to re-group with various right-Stalinist, left-Shachtmanite, and left-Social Democratic splits and coteries through such vehicles as the Independent Socialist Party ticket of Corliss Lamont (a millionaire "socialist" who ran on a pacifist peace program), through a mish-mash youth group, the Young Socialist Alliance, which was a feeble and thoroughly unprincipled attempt to unite the left Shachtmanites with Cannonites into one organization. By 1957 the SWP was calling for U.S. troops to protect integrationists in Little Rock, Arkansas and in Mississippi.

Then, the petty bourgeois nationalist band of Castro and Guevara smashed the Batista regime and took power in Cuba. Departing from the norm of most petty bourgeois led revolutions, Castro's regime began to socialize all private property, transforming Cuba into a workers' state not qualitatively different from those in China or North Vietnam. For the SWP, it was the needed event to cement the Cannonite leadership to outright Pabloism once and for all. The Cannonites traded their ox-cart for the modern, efficient jet plane of Pablo and Mandel and Co. and rode off into the "new world reality" as revealed by the Cuban Revolution.

## INTERNATIONAL REUNIFICATION

By the time of the Cuban Revolution the SWP was only a hollow shell of its former self. The Marcyite minority had just walked out of the party, taking with it the entire branch in Buffalo and in Youngstown, the SWP's only organizing cadre in the South, and a number of remaining trade unionists here and there. The SWP's much vaunted regroupment process won it only a small number of the thousands who were leaving the U.S. Stalinist party.

The SWP was moving back to its old partners in the Pabloite IS, leaving its former IC bloc partners, the SLL in Britain (which had recently been expelled from the Labor Party) and Lambert's group in France. The SWP's politics at this time were, as said before, moving by jet to Pabolite conclusions while the rest of the IC was still content with narrow "orthodoxy." The opposition in the SWP soon split in confusion over what tactics to use in fighting the SWP leadership. While the minority had fundamental agreement on Pabloism, the need for a Trotskyist vanguard, and on the stated politics of the IC, bureaucratic bungling on the part of Healy and his supporters within the SWP (led by Wohlforth) combined with the rigidity and sectarian-purism of Robertson, produced a split in the Revolutionary Tendency (as the minority was called). This produced two distinct minorities.

The Reorganized Minority Tendency, led by Wohlforth and in fundamental agreement with Healy, emphasized the "revolutionary potential" of the SWP leadership, aiming most of its attacks on the small vulgar-Pabolite minority of Weiss and Swabeck. The RMT hoped in this way to win the majority of the party back to revolutionary Trotskyism through a long and serious fight. The Revolutionary Tendency of Robertson saw the SWP as no longer revolutionary but centrist. This, plus the isolated petty bourgeois character of the tendency itself, led it to ignore a serious struggle for the ranks of the SWP.

Both minorities, however, were incapable of winning any sizable section of the party. For one, the split between the two only underscored, in the minds of most SWPers, the confusion reigning in the ranks of the minority. Further, the minorities for the most part did not have roots in the party's past and they tended to date the degeneration of the SWP only from the point at which they entered the party (in the late 50s). Thus neither Robertson nor Wohlforth could produce a real analysis of the roots of the decay of the SWP. Further, the nature of the split and the differences between the two only emphasized the severe shortcomings that these two would show when leaders of their own organizations.

Wohlforth and Healy projected a serious struggle to win the party. They posed for the SWP a serious approach to the mass movement and the working class. Meanwhile, they made important accommodations to the SWP leadership and finally, in a document intended to explain the split in

the minority, attacked Robertson and his group in such a way that the SWP majority was able to use Wohlforth's document to bring charges of "disloyalty" against the Revolutionary Tendency and expel them from the party. Meanwhile, while Robertson held few illusions about the "revolutionary" quality of the SWP leadership, his approach for the SWP was generally unconcerned with any approach towards the mass movements themselves.

With the expulsion of Robertson and his group a new group, based around the newsletter *Spartacist*, was formed. Shortly thereafter Wohlforth got himself expelled from the SWP for attempting to raise a discussion on the recent betrayal of the Ceylonese section of the Pabloite International Secretariat. He formed a small group called the American Committee for the Fourth International.

The SWP, meanwhile, united with the Pabloites to form the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. As layers of petty bourgeois radicals began to become radicalized (previewing the movement of larger class layers to come), as world imperialism headed for another crisis, three distinct tendencies claiming to be Trotskyists were to prove just how capable they were of building the type of organization that would resolve the crisis of leadership in the working class: a Bolshevik party. Needless to say, we have already shown how such groups as the SWP, IC, and others, hamstrung by their inability to break from their methods of the past, are incapable of building a revolutionary party. The sharpening crisis of imperialism simply underscores this inability.

## CRISIS OF CAPITALISM

The monetary crisis of world capitalism lays bare the contradictions of a system in its dying phase. The law of capitalist production, "expand or die," has inexorably reasserted itself in the life or death struggles of the imperialist powers for the redivision of the dwindling world market. This vicious struggle marks the end of the period in which the superior productive capacity of U.S. capitalism acted as a pivot in stabilizing the world economy.

The U.S. emerged from WW II with its productive capacity untouched and, in fact, expanded. In 1944 in Bretton Woods the world capitalist powers established the dollar as the basis of a fixed rate of exchange for all currency. The price of gold was established at \$35 an ounce. This agreement reflected the stability of the dollar and U.S. economy in relation to world economy.

Since 1967, however, the international money system has been under consistent attack. The drain of military expenditure, especially the U.S. "police actions," exacerbated the already spiraling inflation of prices on U.S. goods. The trade surplus piled up by German and Japanese capitalism due to cheaper production costs and higher quality exposed to the world the increasingly weakening position of the dollar. In 1971 the U.S. suffered its first trade deficit. European banks, speculators, etc., began to trade in the billions of dollars that had piled up overseas for gold. Finally, in August of 1971, the flight of gold from the U.S. forced Nixon to slam the door by announcing that the dollar would no longer be exchanged for gold. A 10 percent import surcharge was placed on European and Japanese commodities (which weakened the ability of European and Japanese products to compete with U.S. products within the U.S.), plus a "Buy American" tax credit on capital equipment. European and Japanese investors rushed to rid themselves of the crumbling dollar in exchange for a stronger currency. The U.S. responded in December of 1971 with a dollar devaluation setting the price of gold at \$38 an ounce. A new Smithsonian Agreement resetting the rate of exchange of currency accordingly lasted all of 14 months when first the British floated the pound in June, thereby revaluing it downward to improve its position in the world market.

In order to try to hold the value of the dollar to that agreed upon, West Germany was forced to print thousands of German marks in order to meet the demand of speculators trying to unload the over-valued Eurodollars. This only further exacerbated the already acute inflation in West Germany. Japan was put in a similar position.

The continued breakdown of the monetary system, the threatened trade wars, the spiraling inflation throughout the capitalist world signal the onset of a new world crisis. The capitalists, desperate to improve their productive capacities at the expense of their competitors, must produce more for less. This can mean nothing more than an attack on the wages and working conditions of the workers, the growing together of the labor bureaucracy and the state, and a cutback in services for education, welfare, etc. Already in the U.S. and Britain and West Germany, the capitalists have unleashed wage controls and freezes, thus destroying all collective bargaining procedures. Trapped by the antiquated mode of ownership which acts as a fetter on production, the capitalists are doomed to a trade war, increasing militancy of the working class in response to the attacks by the ruling class, Bonapartism and, eventually, a new imperialist war.

In such a period, Marxists must organize the class to defend itself from the capitalist offensive while at the same time building the vanguard party of the working class that will overthrow capitalism, the only real solution to the crisis. The existing "Trotskyist" organizations are not doing this.

The impressionist adaptionist politics of Pablo-Cannon-Mandel finally went the full circle in the early 60s. The Castroite revolution convinced the Cannon-Mandelites (minus Pablo, who served as scapegoat for the FI betrayals and was bounced) that not only mass Stalinist or working class parties but also petty bourgeois led nationalist movements, radical protest movements of students, youth, women, etc., even bourgeois led liberal

"peace" movements — all could substitute for the working class in building a vanguard party. Mandel put the finishing touches to this "theory" by analyzing the "new stage" of capitalism, "neo-capitalism." This stage was to be characterized by the "buying off" of large sectors of the working class, thereby "de-politicizing them." Capitalists could also offset crisis through "military expenditures," "increased state intervention," etc. Along with this, however, came the "proletarianization" of large sectors of "white-collar" employees, technicians, etc. These sectors, increasingly "alienated" by the emptiness of life under capitalism, would provide new reservoirs of cadre for the Fourth International. What Mandel, the originator of this theory, did was to simply isolate certain immediate phenomena from their historical origins, designate these superficial and temporary phenomena as the principle features of a "new system," and then "theorize" based on the indefinite extension of said system.

In the eyes of petty bourgeois intellectuals, the ability to "recognize" new stages, to "analyze" them, and base one's theories on them rather than "restricting" oneself to old "dogmas" is simply the height of intellectual "creativity." Thus, the United Secretariat (US) and the SWP dove head-first into the petty bourgeois protest swamp. Unfortunately for both, the respective swamps in Europe and Latin America and the U.S. were of differing qualities of rubbish. The liberal-pacifist-Stalinist peace movement won the heart of the SWP, while the terrorist-adventurist Maoist-anarchist guerrilla movements attracted Mandel and Co. The policies of the pro-Mandel forces would not have sat well with the SWP's very sensitive allies in Congress and the reformist-feminist movements. Therefore the naive cadre of the United Secretariat has been treated to the embarrassing spectacle of reading in the paper of the SWP, which claims to be in political solidarity with the US, glowing reports about the electoral activities of a splittoff from the official section in Argentina? Meanwhile, the official section sweats it out in the hills of Argentina fighting the kind of guerrilla warfare that the SWP once advocated (especially when people like Guevara were warming the hearts of the romantically inclined radicals).

A far more potent poison is brewed by the chief international competitors of the SWP, the IC (1 and 2). The potential of this body as an international tendency, however, has been seriously damaged by the split between the forces supporting Healy and the Socialist Labor League of Britain and the forces grouped around the International Communist Organization (OCI) and its leader Lambert in France. Both these groups have picked up a few supporters here and there and, thus, both claim to represent the *real* International Committee.

The IC retains a shred of Trotskyist orthodoxy and continues to predict impending capitalist chaos. However, it shows its basic rejection of a revolutionary proletarian perspective in two fundamental ways. First, it adapts to the backward prejudices of the working class, rejecting the struggle for revolutionary politics in the class. Thus the IC bends to white supremacy and declares that Blacks are not doubly-exploited, and it *accepts* male chauvinism and rejects any notion that women are oppressed and any

form of struggle against the oppression of women. On the other hand, the IC adapts to every non-proletarian layer in motion. Its elevation of youth to a revolutionary class has reached a hysterical pitch. It courts the trade union bureaucracy and seeks to build a reformist labor party after the British model. It adapts to guerrillaism in Ceylon, the Middle East and Vietnam. Its adaptation flows from basic acceptance of the Pabloist thesis of "objectivism" — that objective events will necessarily push developments in a revolutionary direction.

The lessons of the Trotskyist movement since the end of WW II show that the centrist politics of Healy et al are no real alternative to Pabloism. In the coming crisis of capitalism, the SLL-OCI will prove unable to break from the pressures generated by the bourgeoisie through the labor bureaucrats, Stalinists, etc., in order to lead the working class to victory.

The Spartacist League since its inception has proved itself incapable of transforming itself into a serious Leninist party despite its ability to parrot generally "correct" politics on most occasions. The SL is in reality a bureaucratically run sect based around James Robertson and a coterie of loyal followers, which cannot live out in practice its pretensions to being a Trotskyist organization.

The SL distinguished itself in its early period by collecting a motley assortment of petty bourgeois intellectuals whom it involved in one hare-brained scheme after another. SL became infamous for its provocative attitude on demonstrations (members often openly carried lead pipes in the name of defense) for its ultra-left slogan mongering (a favorite *agitational* slogan of the SL in the early days of the antiwar movement was "Soviet Shield Must Cover Hanoi.") Because of the blatant petty bourgeois orientation of the SWP, the bureaucratic-opportunistic practices of the Workers League, and the absence of any viable alternative, the SL has been able to exude a slick "Trotskyism" for the "new left," thus winning a few would-be revolutionists. The SL exposed its real nature, however, in an intense faction fight in 1968, when the SL majority openly backed away from a proletarian perspective.

The following statement from a document of the SL majority pretty much sums up the approach of the SL toward the working class:

All majority comrades are united in the belief that the principle way in which the Spartacist League will grow into an effective fighting propaganda group on the road to a mass revolutionary party is to recruit radicals, including *radical workers*, by fighting for a program within the radical movement, in this period, rather than devoting our major forces to work within the trade unions. ("Super-exploitation and All That.")

Here the SL majority clearly delineated its perspective to build a propaganda group in the petty bourgeois radical movement (*of course* winning over any workers who might be found there — the fact that the very nature of this radical movement virtually excluded all but one or two individual workers was of little concern to the SL) and then, sometime later, build a party. Thus the process of involving the vanguard in *all* mass

struggles was thrown out for a strategy that looked for easy pickings in the radical movement and ignored the mass movement of workers, the trade unions. When a section of the minority in the SL prematurely split, Robertson and Co. used this as a pretext to force the remaining leader of the minority, Harry Turner, to resign. Robertson then bureaucratically suppressed the last two documents of comrade Turner, written while he was still a member of the organization (and a member of the political committee). Thus, the SL leadership clearly exposed its inability to deal seriously with any political minority, sealing its fate as a bankrupt sect.

Now, as the crisis of capitalism deepens, the SL has announced that it has indeed collected enough forces from the petty bourgeoisie to turn to the working class. And so the SL's students are dressed in work shirts and jeans and sent to work in factories. And what kind of work do they do? Well, first they organize *only* on the basis of the *entire* transitional program. All caucuses are built around this program and only workers who agree with the SL's program may enter. Further, the SL refuses to engage in work in other rank-and-file caucuses and abstains from every struggle by the ranks against the bureaucrats. This policy is in direct contradiction to the SL policy voted on at their second national conference, which states: "Through caucuses, union militants attracted by one aspect of the program of the SL can function in an organized way with our comrades in struggle without having to accept the full program of the SL." (*Spartacist*, Nov.-Dec. 1969).

They organize on the basis of the entire transitional program except . . . except for calling for socialism or a socialist revolution or identifying themselves as communists, revolutionary socialists or members of the Spartacist League! We of course are opposed to adventurism — to spouting off communist phraseology at every local union meeting. At the same time, as Lenin and the Communist International suggested, one must be prepared for bourgeois repression by organizing illegal as well as legal activities. Thus, if the SL cannot have its trade union cadre propagandize for a full program within the unions certainly the SL could use a few of the dozens of student members it has to help its trade union cadre from without as the Young Communist League used to do for the CP in the 20s and 30s. The fact is that the SL waves around its "full transitional program" not to win workers but for another purpose.

The real purpose of the SL's current work is to snatch up the small number of radicals, Maoists, workerists, etc., that have entered industry here and there. A struggle to defend the workers' immediate needs against the capitalist onslaught is of little interest to the SL, compared to the task of "out-radicalizing" its rivals, the International Socialists, the Workers League and others in its trade union work. Thus, from a strategy that looks to win workers in the petty bourgeois movement, the SL shifts to a strategy that looks to win petty bourgeois radicals in the workers' movement. The SL, without a serious change in program and practice, will also remain a block to the building of a revolutionary, Leninist party in the U.S. in the coming period.

Finally, the Workers World Party, which left the SWP in part because the SWP had abandoned a proletarian orientation, has now itself turned its back on a revolutionary working class perspective. Their shameful capitulation to Stalinism in supporting the terms of the Vietnam peace treaty underline their adaptation.

All these "Trotskyist" tendencies have adapted in one way or another to guerrillism, nationalism, feminism, pacifism, and the youth movement. These movements and ideologies are all in fundamental contradiction to Marxism in that they pose a road other than that of proletarian revolution as the solution to the crisis of capitalism. Where Marxism is based on the understanding that the industrial working class must lead the peasantry and all other oppressed sectors behind it, that the working class is the only consistently revolutionary class in modern society, these anti-Marxist bourgeois ideologies give equal or superior status with the working class to other sectors of society; they propose mutli-vanguardism; they reject the decisive leadership role of the proletariat. Thus they serve to justify the retreat from the difficult job of winning hegemony in the working class.

## GUERRILLAISM

Pablo, viewing the post-war developments empirically, concluded that the "epicenter" of the world revolution had shifted to the underdeveloped sectors of the globe. This schematic conception was more completely developed by Mao Tse Tung's heir-designate, Lin Piao, in the thesis that the backward countries would triumph over American capitalism in the same manner as had the Chinese countryside over the cities.

In both cases, the role of the working class is disparaged. To the "Third World" ideologists, the working class in the backward countries, as in the advanced, is a privileged and "conservatized" layer, sharing in imperialist oppression. Pablo came, quite logically, to agree openly with this viewpoint, and found it possible to become a functionary — for a short time — in the Algerian government of Ben Bella, who had replaced the trade union leaders elected by the workers with his satraps, as had Castro in Cuba. The peasantry, on the other hand, is invested by the "Marxist, Leninist and Trotskyist" revisionists with the revolutionary qualities which the Marxists have always attributed to the working class. Thus the JBP in Ceylon, the Mukti Bahini in Bangla Desh, the Debrayists, Castroists, and Gueverists in Latin America repudiate the working class and seek the historically bankrupt petty bourgeois strategy of guerrilla warfare.

Lenin, in an article on guerrilla warfare, stated the following:

It is not guerrilla actions which disorganize the movement, but the weakness of a party which is incapable of taking such actions *under its control* . . . the party of the proletariat can never regard guerrilla warfare as the only, or even as the chief method of struggle; it means that this method must be subordinate to other methods . . . (Vol. 11)

Marx, more specifically on *peasant* war, stated in a letter to Engels on April 16, 1856 that: "The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of backing the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War." For proletarian revolutionists, the central question is always the *leading* role of the proletariat.

It was Trotsky who first understood that the proletariat would take power in Russia, not by a revolution in stages, but "in permanence," in "uninterrupted" development, provided its small working class could lead the large mass of peasants. The proletariat could, however, only fulfill its leading role if it had at its head a party of the type that Lenin had fought for. In 1917, the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, who were united on program and party, was to achieve the first and only successful proletarian revolution.

So we do not forever reject the tactic of warfare in favor of reformist electoral schemes and "peaceful, legal" demonstrations a la the SWP. We utilize peasant guerrilla warfare as a tactic *only* in the context of the leadership, struggle and support of the urban working class. Otherwise guerrillism is a futile dead end. Thus in Vietnam the Stalinist NLF *refused* to organize the decisive urban proletariat in Saigon, Hue, and elsewhere as the leadership of the revolution. Only the leadership of the urban working class could have decisively paralyzed and defeated the puppet Thieu regime. The United Secretariat also turned its back on the working class to take up guerrilla warfare in Peru (Blanco), in Bolivia (Moscos's POR), and in Argentina (the PRT-ERP). Argentina most clearly shows the two faces of Pabolism in the United Secretariat. The SWP-backed PST ran an election campaign so reformist in content that it was allowed to ride the coattails of the Peronist movement and receive full legal rights in the midst of the fierce political repression enforced by the Lanusse regime. Meanwhile, the United Secretariat majority-supported PRT-ERP escalated its campaign of urban guerrilla terrorism and kidnappings. Such tactics, brought into vogue largely by the Uruguyan Tupamaros, who participated in the popular front in that country, reflecting the total isolation of the petty bourgeois radicals from the working class, and their rejection of the revolutionary nature of the proletariat.

That the Trotskyist strategy based on the leadership of the working class remains correct was most clearly demonstrated by the Bolivian events. The development of the Popular Assembly, the struggle against the Bonapartist Torres regime, and the coup led by Banzer Suarez presented all would-be revolutionists with the decisive test. The POR of Bolivia and all the Gueverist and Maoist sects did not even show up for the test, because they were out "calling the masses to arms" as they had been for the last several years, divorced from the decisive struggles of the workers.



The POR of Guillermo Lora, however, had significant roots in the working class, played a major role in the Popular Assembly, and could have been the decisive factor as a Leninist working class vanguard. They were in a decisive role precisely because they had rejected guerrillaism in favor of a working class orientation. However, their politics did not meet the situation; they failed the test by following a classical Menshevik course; and they sought refuge in an "anti-imperialist front" with the bourgeois General Torres. No Marxist will deny that the Popular Assembly represented a situation of "dual power," with the Torres regime balancing in Bonapartist fashion between elements of the bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the workers and peasants, on the other. Did the POR call for such transitional measures as the democratization of the army by the election of officers and the formation of soldiers' committees? No, they did not. And yet, one of the most fundamental tasks in a revolutionary situation is to win the rank-and-file soldiers to the workers' cause.

Was the need to arm the workers and replace the army with a workers' militia raised as a fundamentally necessary measure for a *proletarian* revolution? We know that the POR called for arms, but only against the threat of an attack from the right wing of the military, and even they suffered under the illusion that the *Torres regime* would provide the workers with arms. The cry to expropriate the property of the counter-revolutionaries was only raised, it seems, when the military overturn was taking place. The Popular Assembly was a Soviet structure in embryonic form, but with an important difference. The Russian Soviets of workers were *separate* from those of the peasants. Only in the regional and "All-Russian" congresses did the representatives of these different social classes sit together. The Popular Assembly was never differentiated in this manner. Instead of the more advanced workers winning hegemony first in the working class and then over the peasantry, the more backward peasantry was able to bloc with the more backward workers to retard the development of the movement as a whole. The POR was not only instrumental in *creating* the Popular Assembly, but also in *naming* it. But this classless designation by a Trotskyist party could only denote a certain disorientation.

The question which must be asked of the POR's leadership is, did the party struggle within the Assembly to build the consciousness that *it* must take the power, and that no confidence was to be placed in the Torres regime, the Bolivian Kerensky? Did the POR, in other words, make clear that only a proletarian dictatorship could speak and act in the interests of the workers and peasants? On the contrary, the POR, and the international tendency led by the OCI, continue to fully support and defend the POR's capitulation during the crisis. They use time-honored Menshevik formulas about "unique conditions" and take Trotsky's notion of support to colonial countries against imperialism (leaving out the other part of Trotsky's strategy which was *continued intransigent opposition to the national bourgeoisie and its regime and the struggle for the permanent, proletarian revolution in the colonial country*); and transform it into the Stalinist two-stage theory of revolution.

The crisis of world capitalism, which is now manifesting itself with special sharpness in Latin America, presents the revolutionary socialists there with an exceptional opportunity to open the road for the international socialist revolution. The neo-Menshevik Stalinists and Social-Democrats, the neo-Narodnik Castroists and Maoists, the neo-Pilsudskyists, all threaten to disarm the Latin American working class. The revolutionary socialists will be able to win the leadership of the Latin American masses only by conducting an irreconcilable struggle against these anti-working class reformist and revisionist tendencies.

## NATIONALISM

In the epoch of imperialism's death throes, the colonial revolution against imperialist exploitation plays an important role in the world proletarian revolution. Likewise, the struggle of oppressed racial and national minorities spearheads the struggle of the working class as a whole. We wholeheartedly support these struggles and intervene in them fully. Precisely because of their importance, we must have thorough theoretical clarity on the role of nationalism.

Nationalism is an ideology (it is not a struggle, it is an ideology) which unites a group of people on the *non-class* basis of their nationality — unites them in order to fight for statehood, quality of language rights, etc. In nationalism, all questions are judged from the point of view of how they affect the "nation" — i.e. from a *non-class point of view*. The traditional Marxist position on nationalism is that class struggle and *proletarian internationalism* are always counterposed to nationalism. Lenin expressed this attitude in the following way:

In Russia, particularly after 1905, when the more intelligent members of the bourgeoisie realized that brute force alone was ineffective, all sorts of "progressive" bourgeois parties and groups have been more and more resorting to the method of *dividing* the workers by advocating the different bourgeois ideas and doctrines designed to weaken the struggle of the working class.

One such idea is refined nationalism which advocates the division and the splitting up of the proletariat on the most plausible and specious pretexts: as for example, that of protecting the interests of "national culture," "national autonomy or independence," and so on and so forth.

The class conscious workers fight hard against *every kind* of nationalism, both the crude, violent, Black Hundred nationalism, and that most refined nationalism which preaches the equality of nations *together* with . . . the *splitting up* of the workers cause, the workers organizations, and the working class movement *according* to nationality. Unlike all varieties of the nationalist bourgeoisie, the class conscious workers carrying out the decisions of the recent conference of the Marxists, stand, not only for the *amalgamation* of the workers of the different nationalities in *united* proletarian organizations of every kind . . .

To the bourgeoisie . . . the demand for national equality very often amounts in practice to advocating national exclusiveness and chauvinism; they very often couple it with *advocacy* of the division and estrangement of nations. This is *absolutely* incompatible with proletarian *internationalism*, which advocates, not only *closer relations* between nations, but the *amalgamation* of the workers of all nationalities in a given state in *united* proletarian organization. (Vol. 20, original emphasis).

Lenin was also explicit in arguing that Marxists must oppose nationalist ideologies of all stripes:

Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the "most just," "purest", most refined and civilized brand. In place of all forms of nationalism Marxism advances internationalism, the amalgamation of all nations in the higher unity . . . (Vol. 20)

. . . we must strive to unite the workers of all nations as closely as possible, strive to unite them for a joint struggle against *all* national exclusiveness, against *all* nationalism.

Marxists must fight in every case to replace nationalist consciousness with proletarian internationalist consciousness. Nationalism and proletarian internationalism cannot coexist — they are opposite ideologies. But the SWP has invented "revolutionary nationalism." The "Transitional Program for Black Liberation" says: "To one degree or another, almost every Afro-American shares the stentiments if not the ideology of black nationalism. The spectrum of the Black Nationalist movement comprises a wide variety of political positions and trends, ranging from those on the extreme right, who want to build black business, through the purely cultural nationalists, to the revolutionary left wing." This, of course, completely distorts the meaning of nationalism and equates it with the national struggle in general, which *it is not*. As Lenin said:

To throw off the feudal yoke, all national oppression, and all privileges enjoyed by any particular nation or language, is the imperative duty of the proletariat as a democratic force, and is certainly in the interests of the proletarian class struggle, which is obscured and retarded by bickering on the national question. But to go *beyond* these strictly limited and definite historical limits in helping bourgeois nationalism means betraying the proletariat and siding with the bourgeoisie. There is a borderline here, which is often very slight and which the Bundists and Ukrainian nationalist-socialists completely lose sight of. (Vol. 20)

\* \* \*

The bourgeois nationalism of *any* oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed *against* oppression, and it is this content that we *unconditionally* support. (Vol. 20)

\* \* \*

The principle of nationalism is historically inevitable in bourgeois society and, taking this society into due account, Marxists fully recognize the historical legitimacy of national movements. But to prevent this recognition from becoming an apology of nationalism, it must be strictly *limited to what is progressive in such movements*, in order that this recognition may not lead to bourgeois ideology obscuring proletarian consciousness. (Vol. 20)

Marxists are the most consistent fighters for the full equality of all nations. Our support to the national liberation struggle is in the form of *support to the right of self-determination*. The right of nations to self-determination means *only* their right to secede and form a separate state: "The article of our programme (on the self-determination of nations) cannot be interpreted to mean anything but *political* self-determination, i.e., the right to secede and form a separate state." (Vol. 19)

Lenin over and over repeated that the right to self-determination means *only* the right to secede and form a separate state. This is what Marxists are obligated to defend — the right of any nation to secede and form a separate state. Marxists use their support to this democratic right to *unite* the proletariat of the oppressor nation and the proletariat of the oppressed nation. "Advocacy of the right to self-determination is very important in the *fight against the abscess of nationalism in all its forms*." (Vol. 19)

In fighting for the general democratic right of all nations to secede and set up a separate state, the proletariat of the oppressor nation shows the proletariat of the oppressed nation that it is fighting in its interests.

Lenin's "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination" was written not only against Rosa Luxemburg, but also against Great Russian Chauvinists who wanted self-determination to mean anything *but* the right of a nation to secede. It was also written against the petty bourgeois nationalist parties,

which wanted self-determination to mean cultural autonomy. Marxists are not in the least obligated to support all the demands of an oppressed nationality — to do so would reduce us to mere cheerleaders of the national struggles. It is our task to advance the demands that are in the interest of the world proletariat. In order to do this, we must fight nationalism, for nationalism says that the strivings of the nation are of paramount importance.

If we look at the SWP and its support to nationalism, we see that it has abandoned the Leninist position in the following ways: (1) the SWP is *for* nationalism; it does not stand *for or fight for proletarian internationalism*; (2) the SWP is for building an "independent Black political party" and La Raza Unida Party — this is impermissible from a Leninist point of view, for it divides the proletariat; (3) the SWP takes self-determination to mean anything and everything the oppressed nation or sections of it want — thus the SWP acts as a cheerleader for nationalism and not as a leader of the class struggle; (4) the SWP even supports privileges for the oppressed nation — this is a pure and simple *nationalist* position, not a Marxist one.

The fight *for* Marxism is a fight against nationalism of any kind whatsoever. Since the SWP does not combat nationalism, it does not put forth the independent class view of the proletariat, thus it abrogates its responsibilities in the struggle to lead the American working class — Black, white, Chicano, Puerto Rican — to power. The clearest example of this succumbing to nationalism instead of advancing proletarian internationalism is the SWP's position on the Oceanhill-Brownsville strike. In a strike which was fought for the right of teachers to their job, the SWP came out *against* the strike.

The SWP actually crossed the picket lines and encouraged others to do so, all in the name of "community control." What did the SWP have to say to the teachers whose jobs were being threatened? What did the SWP have to say to the union members who wanted their union to be able to protect their jobs? All the SWP had to say was that these teachers should not be teaching because the Black community had a higher right than the organized proletariat. Instead of advancing the slogan of jobs for all, the SWP ends up implying that white teachers, especially Jewish teachers, should give up their jobs to Black teachers. It is not at all surprising that the SWP is reduced to the position of strike breaker in such a situation — it follows logically from supporting nationalism.

In addition, of course, the community control position of the SWP is purely "cultural national autonomy" — setting up of a racially segregated school controlled by the specific minority, rather than by the state. Lenin's position was:

This most harmful scheme for the nationalisation of the Jewish schools shows, incidentally, how mistaken is the plan for so-called "cultural national autonomy", i.e. the idea of taking education out of the hands of the state and handing it over to each nation separately. It is not this we should strive for, but for the unity of workers of all nations in the struggle against *all* nationalism, in the struggle for a truly democratic *common* school and for political liberty generally. (Vol. 19)

And just because it happened today in the *teachers* union does not mean that it will not happen tomorrow in the auto union or the steel union. The capitalist class is perfectly capable of using Black nationalist sentiments to set the Black community against white workers, and the SWP will succumb to any such actions as long as it supports nationalism. To nationalism must be counterposed the international class struggle of the proletariat. To narrow nationalist demands must be posed class demands such as **Jobs For All, Sliding Scale of Wages and Hours** etc.

Within *all* proletarian organizations the struggle against special oppression will require the vigilant attention of all proletarians. Special committees involving men and women workers of both the oppressor nation and of the oppressed nation and national minorities dealing with the special oppression of the Black, Spanish-speaking peoples and of women will be necessary in this struggle in raising the consciousness of the workers to class, i.e., socialist consciousness.

It is *not* the business of Bolsheviks to raise the demand for independent Black political parties or La Raza Unida parties, as does the SWP. Naturally, we defend the *right* of Blacks and Chicanos to form such parties — there is no doubt on that score. But we do not advocate such parties, and to them we must counterpose the labor party, which fights for full equality for all nations, which unites the working class *as a class*, not as separate nations.

The workers will not allow themselves to be disunited by sugary speeches about national culture or national "cultural autonomy." The workers of all nations together, concertedly, uphold full freedom and complete equality of rights in organizations common to all — and that is the guarantee of genuine culture. (Vol. 19, p. 92).

... It is not the business of the Social-Democrats of Russia to unite into one nation the Germans in Lodz, Riga, St. Petersburg, and Saratov. Our business is to struggle for full democracy and the annulment of all national privileges and to unite the German workers in Russia with the workers of all other nations in upholding and developing the international culture of socialism.

The sum total of economic and political conditions in Russia therefore demand that Social-Democracy should *unite* unconditionally workers of all nationalities in *all* proletarian organizations without exception (political, trade union, cooperative, educational, etc. etc.). (Vol. 19)

The interests of the working class demand the amalgamation of all the workers of all the nationalities in a given state in united proletarian organizations — political, trade union, co-operative, educational, etc. This amalgamation of the workers of different nationalities in single organizations will alone enable the proletariat to wage a victorious struggle against international capital and reaction, and combat the propaganda and aspirations of the landowners... (Vol. 19)

The Great Russian and Ukrainian workers must work together, and as long as they live in a single state, act in the closest organizational unity and concert, towards a common or international culture of the proletarian movement, displaying absolute tolerance in the question of language in which propaganda is conducted, and in the purely local or purely national *details* of that propaganda. This is the imperative demand of Marxism. All advocacy of the segregation of the workers of one nation from those of another, all attacks upon Marxist "assimilation," or attempts, where the proletariat is concerned, to contrapose one national culture, and so fourth, is *bourgeois* nationalism, against which it is essential to wage a ruthless struggle. (Vol. 20)

The proletariat must demand freedom of political separation for the colonies and nations oppressed by their "own" nation. Otherwise, the internationalism of the proletariat would be nothing but empty words...

On the other hand, the socialists of the oppressed nations must, in particular, defend and implement the full and unconditional unity, including organizational unity, of the workers of the oppressed nation and those of the oppressor nation. Without this it is impossible to demand the independent policy of the proletariat and their class solidarity with the proletariat of other countries in face of all manner of intrigues, treachery, and trickery on the part of the bourgeoisie. (Vol. 22)

This last quote best sums up the strategy Bolsheviks advance toward the struggle of oppressed minorities. First, we demand of the workers of the oppressor nation *complete* opposition to all forms of discrimination. Among the workers of the oppressed minorities, we fight against nationalism and for proletarian internationalism — for working class unity.

In opposing the demands for Black 'cultural autonomy' we also stand with Lenin who supported "all reasonable and just wishes of the national minorities." As he pointed out in the case of the Jewish people of Russia, the Bolsheviks stood for "the provision of premises for the teaching of "Hebrew, Jewish history, and the like" and the "hiring at state expense" of teachers for these subjects. We support the provision of courses in the history of the Black and other specially oppressed minorities as also necessary in the education of white students in the struggle against racism and chauvinism.

The SWP's call for independent nationalist parties, and its help in building them is, in actual fact, helping to divide the proletariat of various races and nationalities. The Black party which the SWP calls for, it calls for on the grounds that Blacks are mainly workers.

This clearly implies that because the Blacks are workers, they are therefore incapable of adopting or accepting an alien class ideology. The history of the workers movement shows that the opposite is true—that *all* workers are constantly being misled by petty bourgeois and bourgeois ideologies, and that it takes the strictest and most relentless criticism by the vanguard party to lead workers away from these incorrect paths. Those who justify a Black party on the grounds that it would be predominately proletarian are in reality calling for a Black labor party. Put this way, the demand becomes *obviously* incorrect. In our opinion, a Black party would, by its very program, be nationalist and not working class. As a nationalist party, it would keep the workers divided, it would seek privileges for one group of workers, and it is most capable of being used by any Black petty bourgeois nationalist such as Baraka, or even by Black politicians like Stokes and Hatchers.

Because the SWP was never crystal clear on what is meant by self-determination, it justifies supporting any and every demand of Blacks and Chicanos on the grounds of "self-determination." That the SWP has no idea whatsoever, or better, that it cares not in the least what self-determination means and why we must support the right to self-determination, is evidenced by the fact that it applies the term to women's liberation. Clearly, to the SWP, self-determination means the right of an oppressed group in society to do what it wants to do, unhindered by anybody. Because it believes this, the SWP is reduced to saying in the "Transitional Program for Black Liberation" that "All the demands that bring them (Blacks) into action for their own aims are worth raising, fighting for, and incorporating into an overall revolutionary strategy and program."

And what does this uncritical thinking lead towards? It leads to the SWP not only supporting but actually *advocating* privileges for the oppressed nation, hence nationalism in its crudest form. It is sufficient to turn to the "Transitional Program for Black Liberation" to see some of the totally incorrect demands.

The SWP puts forth the demand **exempt Black youth from military service**. Keep in mind that this is the SWP offering a demand that it thinks a Black party should raise and that it, the SWP, would support. By specifically making demands for Blacks, the SWP is in this case proposing *privileges* for the oppressed minority. We oppose this. As Lenin said:

*Insofar* as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case, and more strongly than anyone else, in *favour*, for we are the staunchest and most consistent enemies of oppression. But *insofar* as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation stands for its *own* bourgeois nationalism, we stand against. We fight against the privileges and violence of the oppressor nation, and do not in any way condone strivings for privileges on the part of the oppressed nation. (Vol. 20)

A working class party, a party of proletarian internationalism, puts forth the demands, **abolish the standing army, free universal military training for men and women under the direction of the trade union rank and file**. Those are the demands a Bolshevik party puts forth. You cannot have it two ways — the Bolshevik party cannot keep those demands, which are the only demands in the interest of the working class, in its back pocket, and advance instead the demand that the most oppressed sections be "exempt" from "military service." The SWP has capitulated to nationalism and is now a cheerleader for it instead of a vanguard party of proletarian internationalism. One manifestation of this is its "Transitional Program for Black Liberation" — there *is* no such thing as a transitional program for black liberation separate and apart from working class liberation.

A further demand in the SWP's Black program is **free university education for all third-world students who desire it**. No! The vanguard party of the working class puts forth the demand **free education for everybody, students to be paid while attending school**.

In the case of the prisons, the SWP demands **review the cases of and release all Black prisoners because they have not received fair trials**. Besides the fact that this demand is totally confusing (should all Black prisoners be released? Should they have their cases reviewed first and then be released regardless of the outcome? Or what?) it is again an incorrect demand. The vanguard party may demand that all political prisoners be released immediately and that all other prisoners be tried by a workers tribunal, or the vanguard party may demand that all prisoners be released, whether or not they are political prisoners. But the vanguard party cannot demand, and still remain a party of proletarian internationalism, that all Black prisoners be released, or that all women prisoners be released. Here, as elsewhere, the party is separating the struggle of Blacks and Chicanos from the struggle of the working class. The SWP's so-called Trotskyist program is not Trotskyist but nationalist, pure and simple.

Another of the SWP's demands is **autonomous Black studies departments in universities**. Such a demand is incorrect. It clearly falls into the category Lenin inveighed against — the separating of nationalities according to school systems. We are for Black history, Black studies, Chicano studies, etc., being taught in all universities; we are for the hiring of Black and Chicano teachers, we are for free education for everybody. We are *not* for lifting Black studies departments out of the university as a whole, and having them run separately.

Finally, the SWP raises the slogan of **preferential hiring**. This, too, is incorrect. It is the task of the party to raise the slogans of **jobs for all, sliding scale of wages and hours, equal job opportunity, equal pay for equal work**.

We must fight for full equality for all super-exploited and super-oppressed groups. This can be done by fighting in the unions for jobs for all, 30 for 40, against shoving Blacks and Chicanos into menial tasks and against their exclusion from the better skilled or higher paid jobs, against racist practices by company or foremen. White workers must show Black and Chicano workers that they are willing to fight against racism. We must propagandize for the building of a labor party, and its program must include not only jobs for all, full equality, but also demands for crash housing program, adequate schools, etc.

We must fight against racism and nationalism of all kinds, against parties and programs which counterpose nationalism to proletarian internationalism, which say that the national struggle supersedes the class struggle, which imply that it is the division of this country into nations, and *not* its division into classes, that is the cause of society's ills.

It is necessary to say a word about nations. A nation is a group of people sharing the same language, culture, and land area. Hence, in Russia, there were over 100 different nations, including the Great Russian nation, the Ukrainian nation, the Poles, the Germans, etc. At different times Lenin spoke of the Jews both as an "extra-territorial" nation — a nation without territory, a dispersed nation and a national, i.e. *ethnic* minority. There is only one nation in the U.S. and that is the American nation. Indians are not a nation or a number of nations. Those Indians living on reservations live a *tribal*, not a national, existence. They are a national, ethnic minority. Those Indians not living on reservations have been basically assimilated into the American nation.

There are in addition to these, national minorities such as Puerto Ricans. We distinguish between nations, for whom we defend the right of self-determination, and national minorities — to us the latter are a group of people who have a distinct language and culture, but also have a homeland elsewhere, thus we do not support their right to secede from and form a state out of the territory of the U.S. Puerto Ricans are such a national minority. We fight for full rights for Puerto Ricans and Chicanos, but we do not support their right to form a state within the U.S. — we support the right of *Puerto Rico* to full independence. Under certain conditions, of course, racial or national minorities can become nations distinct from their homelands as did the Quebecois. Under these conditions we would naturally support the new nation's right to self-determination.

The Chicanos constitute a cross between these two categories. On the one hand they have a traditional territory and homeland within the borders of the U.S. In this sense, they are a nation with the right to self-determination in Aztlan. However the Chicano people have strong, constantly renewed cultural ties with their original homeland, Mexico. Nevertheless, we feel it is correct to support the right of self-determination for Aztlan.

In our opinion, Blacks are not a nation, nor are they a national minority. They are Americans who are a racial minority. Blacks have no distinct language, no distinct land area, and it is open to great debate whether they have a distinct culture or not.

If Blacks are not a nation (which the SWP held for years and which it reversed without the slightest scientific analysis), then how do we explain the rise of nationalism among Blacks? First, let us say that all that goes by the name of nationalism is not necessarily nationalism. For example, much of what goes under the heading of Black nationalism is racial pride, a desire for equality, a willingness to fight for freedom. On the other hand, there is much that goes by the name of Black nationalism that actually *is* contained in nationalism — the desire to separate (Republic of New Africa), the desire to form new separate parties and organizations for Blacks, the desire for privileges for Blacks because they have been oppressed for so long.

We explain this phenomena by saying that it is in the interests of the bourgeoisie to go along with such nationalist sentiments, for the advocates of nationalism are, in essence, dividing the working class and counterposing the national struggle to the class struggle. It does not matter that there are no Black bourgeoisie — Black politicians will arise who will serve the interests of the white bourgeoisie — Baraka, Stokes, Hatcher, and the future hold many more. They will serve their interests through nationalism. The actual basis of nationalist aspirations is the Black petty bourgeoisie — Baraka, Cleage, Henry, Karenga, etc. striving for their own power base. Traditionally, nationalism arises from the search by the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie for their own markets. Of course, such sentiments develop because there is no revolutionary proletarian leadership in the Black community.

Despite the fact that we believe Blacks are a racial minority and not a nation, we hold, as did Trotsky, that it is possible for a nation to be forged out of this racial minority. As Trotsky said, in the event of a rise of fascism, it is possible that the Blacks, like the Jews, could demand a separate state in their overwhelming majority, thus they would have the consciousness to be a nation. In such a case, we, as Trotsky, would support the right of Blacks to self-determination. Like Trotsky, we guarantee them this right in advance — that is, we say that if the Blacks wish to separate, we will defend their right to do so. At all times, of course, we express our own opinion on whether or not it is advisable for any group to secede.

Our opposition to nationalism does not mean that we would not support Black organizations when they arise, including trade union caucuses. It means, while we would not call for them, we would enter such organizations with our transitional demands. Not being afraid to offend the nationalists by offering our own program, we would intervene energetically in the Black community. At the same time, we would agitate among the white workers against all forms of racism and seek constantly to draw Black and white workers together in the struggles.

The most telling indictments of the reactionary nature of nationalism are the Munich events and the other terrorist acts of the Black September guerrilla group. We, of course, stand with the guerrillas in their struggle against Zionism and imperialism. We have nothing but scorn, contempt and class hatred for the crocodile tears shed over Munich by the bourgeoisie, whose existence is dependant upon the mass murder of insurgent workers and peasants the world over. But from the point of view of revolutionists

against imperialism and Zionism we *fully condemn and oppose* the guerrilla's tactics at Munich. We do not merely oppose terrorism as a bad tactic. That is the course of the revisionists, who adapt to the nationalist politics of the guerrillas, and many of whom reject revolutionary violence altogether. For the tactic is but an expression of the nationalist politics of the guerrilla movement, and that is what we oppose. The guerrillas consider the Jewish people as a whole their enemy. Following the lead of the Arab bourgeoisie, they seek to supplant the Israeli bourgeois state with an Arab bourgeois state. Such a course is based on the rejection of the class struggle and proletarian internationalism. The nationalism of the guerrillas would destroy any chance of winning the Israeli proletariat to the cause of the repatriation of the Palestinian refugees and to opposition to Zionist imperialism. Such an alliance between Israeli and Palestinian workers and peasants is *absolutely necessary* for successful proletarian revolution in the mideast, which is the *only* solution to the oppression of the Palestinians and the Arab people as a whole. Such an alliance can only be forged under the leadership of a Leninist working class vanguard party.

We oppose proletarian internationalism and Marxism . . . We seek to win the working class of the oppressed nation to the struggle against all forms of discrimination. We seek to prove to them, by word and actions, that the struggle of oppressed minorities is the struggle of the working class as a whole. At the same time, we must win the working class of the oppressed nation to the understanding that only the victory of the working class over capital can assure their liberation. We seek to prove that their allies are not the bourgeoisie of their own nation, and their enemies are not the workers of the oppressor nation, but vice-versa.

In the struggle to expose nationalism, we must be careful not to make any unconscious adaptations to white chauvinism. Such an adaptation is made by both the Workers League and the Spartacist League in their rejection of the Marxist analysis of the super-exploitation of black workers. In their only written position on "Black Nationalism and Marxist Theory," the WL says, "However it does not follow from this that the Negro as a whole represents a super exploited grouping or caste in American society. While a case would be made for this a century ago when Negroes were still tied to the cotton and tobacco plantation economies, it does not hold water today. In every category of low pay and poverty at least two-thirds of the workers in this category are white." The Spartacist League holds a similar position, based on "the general average of exploitation" being the same throughout capitalist economy. What these positions blindly refuse to acknowledge is that a *section* of the working class, easily distinguishable by its color, is forced into the lowest paid jobs, which contribute especially to keeping the general rate of exploitation up. The very fact that even according to the WL's figures Blacks occupy the lowest paid jobs in a percentage *three times* their percentage of the population as a whole, illustrates this point. An understanding of the role Blacks and oppressed minorities in general play in capitalist economy is *essential* to the organization of the working class as a whole against capital.

## FEMINISM

Like guerrillasim and nationalism, feminism is an ideology which rejects class struggle as the road to liberation. Like nationalism, it is a bourgeois ideology which seeks to unite individuals on a basis *other than a class basis*, in this case on the basis of sex. Feminism proclaims that the organization of women, as women, the "sisterhood" of the maid and the queen, can achieve women's liberation. In 1921 the Comintern warned the working class against feminism:

Putting before the Communist Parties of the East and the West the direct task of extending the activity of the Party among women proletariat, the Third Congress of the Comintern declares also to the women of the entire world that their emancipation from age-long slavery and inequality depends upon the victory of Communism.

What Communism offers to woman, the bourgeois women's movement will never afford her. So long as the power of capitalism and private property continue to exist, the emancipation of woman from subservience to her husband cannot proceed further than her right to dispose of her property and earnings as she sees fit; and also to decide on equal terms with her husband the destiny of their children.

The Third Congress of the Comintern confirms the basic proposition of revolutionary Marxism, i.e. that there is no "special woman question" and no "specific women's movement" and that every sort of alliance of working women with bourgeois feminism, as well as any support by women workers of the treacherous tactics of the social-compromisers and opportunists leads to the undermining of the forces of the proletariat, delaying thereby the triumph of the social revolution and the advent of Communism, and thus also postponing the great hour of women's ultimate liberation.

Communism will be achieved not by "united efforts of all women of different classes," but by the united struggle of all the exploited. (*Women and Revolution*, No. 2)

Just as the SWP pays no heed to the nature of pacifism and the nature of nationalism, so it pays no heed to the nature of feminism. The organization of women as women is not incorrect. What is incorrect is to couple this organization of women as women with the bourgeois lie that this will emancipate women. This is what feminism is, this is the lie it preaches, and this is the lie the SWP preaches. Precisely because it has the most contempt for the emancipation of women, the most contempt for the oppression of women, the SWP is the most blatant on the question of feminism, going along with the ludicrous lie that "When Women Say This War Will End, It Will End."

The Third Congress of the Comintern, in its position on the emancipation of women, pointed out to the working women of the world that "the women ought to remember that the Second International never created and never attempted to create any organ whose task would be to carry on an active struggle for the complete emancipation of women. The organization of an international alliance of women socialists was started outside the Second International by the initiative of the men workers themselves. The women socialists who devoted themselves to work among women had neither representation nor a decisive vote in the Second International."

In addition to the above, Lenin taught the necessity of the Communist Parties working among women:

The Party must have organs — working groups, commissions, committees, sections, or whatever else they may be called — with the specific purpose of rousing the broad masses of women, bringing them into contact with the Party and keeping them under its influence. This naturally requires that we carry on systematic work among the women. We must teach the awakened women, win them over for the proletarian class struggle under the leadership of the Communist Party and equip them for it. When I say this I have in mind not only proletarian women, whether they work in mills or cook the family meal, I also have in mind the peasant women and the women of the various sections of the lower middle class. (*Lenin on The Women Question*)

\* \* \*

It is therefore perfectly right for us to put forward demands for the benefit of women. This is not a minimum programme, nor a programme of reform in the Social-democratic sense, in the sense of the Second International. It does not go to show that we believe the bourgeoisie and that its state will last forever, or even for a long time. Nor is it an attempt to pacify the masses of women with reforms and to divert them from the path of revolutionary struggle. It is nothing of the sort, and not any sort of reformist humbug either. Our demands are no more than practical conclusions, drawn by us from the crying needs and disgraceful humiliations that weak and underprivileged women must bear under the bourgeois system. We demonstrate thereby that we are aware of these needs and of the oppression of women, that we are conscious of the privileged position of men, and that we hate — hate — and want to remove what oppresses and harasses the working woman, the wife of the worker, the peasant woman, the wife of the little man, and even in many respects the woman of the propertied classes. The rights and social measures we demand of bourgeois society for women are proof that we understand the position and interests of women and that we will take note of them under the proletarian dictatorship.

\* \* \*

Our national sections still lack the proper understanding of this question. They adopt a passive, wait-and-see attitude when it comes to creating a mass movement of working women under Communist leadership. They do not realize that developing and leading such a mass movement is an important part of all Party activity, as much as half of all the Party work. Their occasional recognition of the need and value of a purposeful, strong and numerous Communist women's movement is but platonic lip-service rather than a steady concern and task of the Party.

They regard agitation and propaganda among women and the task of rousing and revolutionizing them as of secondary importance, as the job of just the women Communists. None but the latter are rebuked because the matter does not move ahead more quickly and strongly. This is wrong, fundamentally wrong! It is outright separatism. It is equality reversed. What is at the bottom of the incorrect attitude of our national sections? . . . In the final analysis, it is an underestimation of women, and their accomplishments. That is what it is!

We can clearly see from the quotes that Lenin and the Comintern understood the importance of the Communist Parties working among women workers and fighting against the oppression of *all* women in bourgeois society. However, to look at the history of the SWP, one would never know that socialists actually set up a congress outside the Second International in order to discuss and do something about women's emancipation, one would never know that Lenin stressed the necessity of setting up organs, committees, etc. to do work among proletarian women. To look at the history of the SWP from 1938 to 1968, to attempt to see where it stood on the woman question, is to look in vain. The SWP never publically concerned itself with this question (with the exception of a tiny article or two on the Equal Rights Amendment of the 1940s). To our knowledge, the SWP never published a pamphlet that could be sold to working women, explaining the special oppression women suffer and how communism alone will end this oppression.

Then, just as it jumped uncritically into the nationalist movement, so it jumped uncritically into the women's liberation movement. (And just as "Black work" is something *only* for Black comrades to do, so women's work is something *only* for women comrades — the SWP *perpetuates* the divisions in class society rather than making an effort to overcome them, and in so doing, it shows its total lack of understanding of the importance of work among the Black proletariat and work among the women proletariat).

Because Blacks in this country are at a much higher level of consciousness (political) than most other sectors of the population, the SWP cannot go to the Black movement and pander off a "one-at-a-time" reformist strategy for struggle. If it did that, Blacks would simply lump it into the same category they lump all other "one-at-a-time", "take things slow" groups, i.e. as being against Black liberation. And they would be right. But the women's liberation movement is nowhere near the consciousness of Blacks, so the SWP rushed into that movement — still exhibiting every ounce of its contempt for women and panders off on that movement the "one-at-a-time" reformist strategy. It tells women that *first* they must fight for abortion repeal, *then* they can go to another demand. As the Communist Tendency so aptly characterized it, the SWP's strategy here is nothing less than a reformism-by-stages theory.

The building of a single issue women's movement can *only* divert the party from its task, can *only* end up in a reformist swamp. The vanguard party must raise *many* demands in the women's movement, and it must always show how only socialism can solve the problem of the oppression of women. The task of Bolsheviks in the women's movement is to show that only the victory of the proletariat in the class struggle will solve the oppression of various sectors of the working class, as well as the oppression of the petty-bourgeoisie.

Our most important work to be done in women's liberation is in the working class, where for over thirty years the SWP and other "Trotskyists" refused to address themselves to the woman question. It is time to begin. Proletarian women are ready to hear the truth about their double oppression as women and as workers.

As Leninists, we respond to the oppression of every sector of society and seek to inject the struggles of all the oppressed into the consciousness of the working class. Only in that way can the working class develop *revolutionary* consciousness. Thus we seek to win the working class to the understanding that the oppression of women is *essential* to the maintenance of class rule; and the liberation of women is *necessary* to the liberation of the proletariat. Male workers must understand and support the struggle of women for liberation. The party must actively carry the struggle of women to the working class as a whole, and must direct women to the class struggle road to liberation.

Our tasks in the women's struggle are to raise the question of women's oppression in the trade unions, to fight for **Equal Job Opportunity; Equal Pay for Equal Work; Equal Education and Training; Jobs for All; Free 24 Hour Child Care Centers; Sliding Scale of Wages and Hours; Free and Unrestricted Right to Divorce; Free Birth Control Information and Devices; Free Abortion on Demand; No Forced Sterilization; Universal Military Training.**

## PACIFISM

In its most general sense, pacifism is *the desire for peace*. It is in this sense that Trotsky referred to pacifism in the Transitional Program where he spoke of the "pacifism of the diplomat, professor, journalist, and the pacifism of the carpenter, agricultural workers, and charwoman." There he said further, "In the pacifism and even patriotism of the oppressed, there are elements which reflect on the one hand a hatred of destructive war, and on the other a clinging to what they believe to be their own good — elements which we must know how to seize upon in order to draw the requisite conclusions."

"Using these considerations as its point of departure, the Fourth International supports every, even if insufficient, demand, if it can draw the masses to a certain extent into active politics, awaken their criticism and strengthen their control over the machinations of the bourgeoisie." In the general sense (insofar as pacifism of the masses is a desire for peace) Bolsheviks stand with the masses, just as we stand with the anarchists in their desire for a stateless society. However, pacifism has a *more specific meaning*, and that is that it is a belief that peace can be achieved *by means other than the class struggle*. It is in this sense that pacifism is *relentlessly criticized and fought against by Bolsheviks*, just as we fight against the anarchist's refusal to build a vanguard party to smash the capitalist state and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Addressing itself to the question of war, the Fourth International said the following in 1940:

Our struggle against United States intervention into the war has nothing in common with isolationism and pacifism. We tell the workers openly that the imperialist government cannot fail to drag this country into war. The dispute within the ruling class involves only the question of when to enter the war and against whom to level the fire first. To count upon holding the United States to neutrality by means of newspaper articles and pacifist resolutions is like trying to hold back the tide with a broom. The real struggle against war means the communist struggle against imperialism and a merciless exposure of petty-bourgeois pacifism. Only revolution could prevent the American bourgeoisie from intervening in the second imperialist war or beginning the third imperialist war. All other methods are either charlatanism or stupidity, or a combination of both. (*Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and Proletarian Revolution*).

Even Burnham at one time understood the question of pacifism and wrote:

The most common mistake made in the attempted struggle against war comes from the belief that this struggle is somehow "independent" of class struggle in general, that a broad union of all sorts of persons, from every social class and group can be formed around the issue of fighting war, since — so the reasoning goes — these persons may be all equally opposed to war whatever their differences on other points. In this way, war is lifted from its social base, considered apart from its causes and conditions, as if it were a mystic abstraction instead of a concrete historical institution. Acting on this belief, attempts are made to build up all kinds of permanent Peace Societies, Antiwar Organizations, League Against the War, etc.

War is not the cause of the troubles of society. The opposite is true. War is a symptom and a result of the irreconcilable troubles and conflicts of the present form of society, that is to say, of capitalism. The only way to fight against war is to fight against the causes of war . . . the only way to fight against war is to fight against capitalism. (*War and the Workers*)

\* \* \*

Pacifism subordinates the working class — the only class which can lead the fight against war — to the middle class ideas and middle class individuals (preachers, fake liberals, professional "antiwar agitators") and thus weakens the class strength of the workers.

Trotsky also spoke on the question of war and how to fight it. In his "Open Letter for the Fourth International," he said the following:

The struggle against the war and imperialism can not be the job of any sort of special "committees." The struggle against war is the preparation for revolution, that is to say, the job of working class parties and of the International. The Marxists pose this great task before the proletarian vanguard, without any frills. To the enervating slogan of "disarmament" they counterpose the slogan of **Winning the Army and Arming the Workers**. Precisely in this is one of the most important dividing lines between Marxism and centrism drawn. He will never find the courage to solve the revolutionary tasks who does not utter them aloud. (*Writings, 1935-36*)



In the Transitional Program, Trotsky said that the Bolshevik-Leninist policy regarding the struggle against war was formulated in the 1934 document, *War and the Fourth International*. Here is what this thesis has to say:

The struggle against war, unthinkable without the revolutionary mobilization of the wide working masses of the city and village, demands at the same time direct influence on the *army and navy*, on the one hand, and on *transport* on the other. But it is impossible to influence soldiers without influencing the worker and peasant youth. Influence in the sphere of transport presupposes a strong foothold in the trade unions. Whereas meanwhile, with the aid of the Profintern, the Third International has lost all positions in the trade union movement and has cut itself off from all access to the working youth. Under these conditions to talk of a struggle against war is like blowing soap bubbles.

As an independent current petty bourgeois "left" *pacifism* starts from the premise that it is possible to insure peace by some particular, special means, outside of the class struggle of the proletariat, outside of the socialist revolution. By articles and speeches the pacifists inculcate "aversion to war," support the conscientious objectors, preach boycott and the general strike (rather than the myth of the general strike) against war. The more "revolutionary" pacifists are not adverse even to talking at times of insurrection against war. But all and severally they have no conception of the indissoluble bond connecting the insurrection with the class struggle and the policy of a revolutionary party. For them insurrection is just a literary threat directed at the ruling class and not a matter of long and persistent effort.

The Amsterdam Congress against the war, as well as the Paris Congress against fascism, organized by the Third International are classic examples of the replacement of revolutionary class struggle by the petty bourgeois policy of ostentatious demonstrations, showy parades, Potemkin villages.

In all its mouthings about "new kind of pacifists," etc.; the SWP has never distinguished between pacifism as a desire for peace and pacifism as a belief that peace can be achieved by means other than the class struggle. Just as Kautsky for twenty years slurred over the Marxist definition and understanding of the state, so the SWP, like all revisionists, slurs over the basic Marxist definition and understanding of pacifism. Let us say that we do not approach the question of definitions like pedants. To us, definitions, like theories, are *tools* — they are *guides to action*. Marxists give special meaning to terms such as pacifism, nationalism, feminism, social-patriotism, etc. in order to draw a clear line between correct methods of struggle and incorrect methods of struggle. He who ignores these basic Marxist definitions — without saying he is doing so — is the most dangerous of revisionists. The less exact and precise concepts are, the happier is the revisionist, for he can go on revising unattacked. Ambiguously phrased formulations (such as "neo-capitalism") can be filled with alien class concepts.

As Trotsky said, it is the task of the vanguard party to support *every*, even if insufficient, demand against war if it can draw the masses to a certain extent into active politics. The revolutionary Marxists do not permit themselves to be used as a left cover for "Potemkin villages" by participating in and as supporters of demonstrations and marches for "peace" organized by

the Stalinists, reformists, centrists and the petty and liberal bourgeoisie. They "participate" only as opponents of the petty bourgeois pacifist ideology by exposing its fraudulent nature and to point to the socialist revolution as the only road to peace. We expose, in the case of the U.S. imperialist intervention in the Indochinese war, the representatives and the "labor lieutenants" of the "soft" wing of imperialism who participate and encourage participation in the marches for "peace" in Indochina. We make clear that this "soft" wing is motivated not only by the "costs" to the U.S. economy, in the growing militancy of labor, in the radicalization of the youth and the Black and Spanish-speaking minorities, but also by the "deal" which world Stalinism has offered for the maintenance of capitalism in Indochina and throughout the world. It is on the basis of the counter-revolutionary "peaceful coexistence" line spawned by the Stalinist advocates of "socialism in one country" or even half-a-country that the Stalinists, centrists, reformists and liberals of all varieties have united to organize "broad" peace demonstrations and marches of a "popular front" character in behalf of the DRV-NLF program for the maintenance of capitalism in South Vietnam.

The SWP demonstrated its bankruptcy in building the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC). What is NPAC? — It is a special "antiwar" organization whose line is that the mass demonstrations can end the war and bring peace. And who gave NPAC this line? — The SWP!! It is *not* the task of Bolsheviks to build such organizations, for in building them we would be sowing *illusions*. Just look at the *Militant*, which implants the idea that the war can be ended by mass demonstrations, that ending the war will end the economic problems of the working class, will practically end the oppression of Chicanos, Blacks, and women. The task of Bolsheviks is to build the vanguard party; it is to tell the masses the truth regarding (1) the causes of war — as long as there is capitalism there will be war, (2) the only way to fight war — the organizing of the working class into a vanguard party that will overthrow capitalism and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. The SWP does neither of these things.

It is in the interests of the working class to demonstrate against the war, and it is necessary for the vanguard party to tell this to the workers and to draw the workers into demonstrations against the war. It has *always* been a policy of Bolshevism to hold demonstrations against war (sometimes these take the form of demonstrations against the war, sometimes they take the form of strikes against the war, sometimes the form of boycott of war goods, sometimes the form of strikes of solidarity with the other side, etc.). But *inextricable* from this building of demonstrations against the war is the teaching of truth about the causes of war and the only means of stopping war. The SWP has, in building NPAC, *built a pacifist organization that sows illusions as to the nature of the fight against war*. The vanguard party must seek to form united fronts, not pacifist organizations.

From the beginning NPAC and its predecessors were pacifist organizations. But NPAC is something more than that now — it is now, in minuscule form, a popular front. The SWP, losing completely and utterly its faith in the ability of the working class to make *any* fundamental change in

society, *sought out and invited into NPAC* bourgeois politicians. The task of the vanguard party is not to invite bourgeois politicians into anything, but to fight the illusions that a bloc with the progressive bourgeoisie can accomplish anything worthwhile for the working class. The task of the party is to tell the working class that a bourgeois politician will *say anything — anything* — but he is not to be trusted. But we do have a situation where NPAC is an organization that teaches the true cause of war and how to fight war. We have a situation where NPAC teaches pacifist lies to the masses, then turns around and seeks out and invites bourgeois politicians to join it. We can only call this the essence of a popular front — i.e.: a coalition with one section of the bourgeoisie, with the program subordinate to the interests of the bourgeoisie.

It is incorrect to confine the popular front to electoral coalitions. The Bolivian Front Against the Dictatorship is a non-electoral popular front. NPAC is clearly a coalition with liberal bourgeois elements (Vance "Out Now" Hartke on the steering committee), with a pacifist, non-class program in which revolutionary politics are subordinated to drawing in these bourgeois elements. Of course, pacifism can only wind up in a bloc with the bourgeoisie, since it is hostile to the class struggle. If in this case, where the bloc is actually formed, we deny that a popular front exists, then we are denying the meaning of the popular front.

In addition to the above errors, which are most serious, the SWP refused to call for the *military* victory of the DRVN and NFL forces and at the same time attack their Stalinist sellout program. The imperialist aggression in Vietnam is fundamentally an attack on the Vietnamese workers' state. In 1954, with the crushing of the French army at Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam was in the hands of the Viet Minh and was thus a deformed workers state. At the Geneva conference the Soviet and Peking bureaucracies pressured the Vietnamese Stalinists into handing over the southern sector of Vietnam to the imperialists. The fundamental aim of imperialism in Vietnam is to not only crush the struggle for the overthrow of the U.S. puppets in the South but to ultimately destroy the collectivised property relations in the DRVN and return it to the sphere of imperialist exploitations. Just as in the second imperialist world war the Trotskyists stood for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack, so must Trotskyists today stand for the unconditional defense of the DRVN and for the extension of the social revolution *back* to the South, while at the same time holding no punches in our criticism of the Stalinist betrayers in Hanoi and calling for and aiding in the building of a revolutionary Trotskyist party in Vietnam. We cannot hide behind the bourgeois-democratic slogan of "Self-determination for Vietnam." We must make it clear that our defense of the Vietnamese Revolution is the defense of the Vietnamese workers' state and that we are for the extension of the social revolution back to the South and throughout Indochina in a United Soviet States of Indochina. Does the SWP *in any way* teach the masses why they must be for the victory of the Vietnamese? Do they ever *mention* the fact that the DRVN is a workers' state which must be defended against imperialist aggression? Absolutely not. Any reference to the nature of the Vietnamese struggle is to say that the struggle is a colonial

struggle for national liberation. This, however, as we have shown, is not the case. The SWP says that by advancing the social-patriotic slogan of "Bring The Troops Home Now," it *implies* that it is for the victory of the Vietnamese. What a shallow reply. The SWP does not at all explain to the American working masses that the Vietnamese are their class brothers, that the American imperialists are making the American working class fight against its own interests, against the interests of the world proletariat. Thus, they do nothing to break the American workers from the racism and national chauvinism which keeps the class divided and tied to its "own" bourgeois masters.

Inextricably bound to the question of war and peace is the question of the military. The attitude of the Bolsheviks has always been that we are for the universal military training of the working class. The working class *must* know the military skills in order to defend itself against the capitalist class. In the epoch of the death agony of capitalism, *all* questions will be decided by military means (not in the crass sense of only military means — obviously the vanguard party must have prepared the working class for the correct tasks through a correct program).

This brings up the question of the proletarian military policy, which, as we see it, flows from our understanding of the nature of the state (an instrument of suppression of one class by another class), and has two parts: (1) the necessity of military training for the working class, (2) the question of what form that training will take — who controls the training.

The SWP until the early 1950s, we believe, stood for the military training for part of the working class. (We say "part" because to our knowledge the SWP never called for *universal military training for men and women*.) Thus, even in its old approach to the question, the SWP was half-hearted and did not fully understand its tasks. Today we can see further the lack of understanding on *both* the military question and the women question in the fact that the SWP views as a horror the possibility of the capitalist class drafting women. The SWP says that *neither* women *nor* antiwar people in general will tolerate such a thing. And what about the class interests of the proletariat? Oh, them! What are they in the face of the interests of women in general and antiwar people in general?

On the question of both one and two — i.e., the need for military training plus who is to control it, we must call for **Abolition Of The Standing Army, its replacement by Universal Military Training For Men and Women, Paid For By The State and Under Rank-and-File, Trade Union Control.**

Here is what Lenin had to say on the question:

The soldiers stationed in St. Petersburg want better rations, better clothing, better quarters, higher pay, a reduction in the term of service and shorter daily drill. But more prominent among these demands are those which could be presented only by the civic-minded soldier. They include the right to attend in uniform all meetings, "on an equal footing with all other citizens," the right to read *all* newspapers and keep them in the barracks, freedom of conscience, equal rights for all nationalities, complete abolition of officers' batmen, the abolition of court martial, jurisdiction for the civil courts over all military offences, the right to

defend oneself against any attempt on the part of a superior to strike a subordinate, the right to present complaints collectively. Such are the principal demands of the soldiers in St. Petersburg.

\* \* \*

But in order to secure the really complete and lasting satisfaction of these demands, it is necessary to take another little step forward. All the separate wishes of the soldiers, worn out by the accursed convict life of the barracks, should be brought together into a single whole. And put together, these demands will read: abolishment of the standing army and introduction of the arming of the whole people in its stead.

... Let us tear the evil up by the roots. Let us do away with the standing army altogether. Let the army merge with the armed people, let the soldiers bring to the people their military knowledge, let the barracks disappear to be replaced by free military schools. (Vol. 10)

Further, Lenin said:

On the question of a militia, we should say: "We are not in favour of a bourgeois militia; we are in favour only of a proletarian militia." Therefore, "not a penny, not a man," not only for a standing army, but even for a bourgeois militia, even in countries like the United States or Switzerland or Norway, etc. (Vol. 23)

\* \* \*

There is only one way to *prevent* the restoration of the police, and that is the creation of a people's militia and to fuse it with the army (the standing army to be replaced by the arming of the entire people). Service in this militia should extend to all citizens of both sexes between the ages of sixteen and sixty-five without exception, if these tentatively suggested age limits may be taken as indicating the participation of adolescents and old people. Capitalists must pay workers, servants, etc. for days devoted to the public service in the militia. Unless women are brought to take an independent part not only in political life generally, but also in daily universal public service, it is no use talking about full and stable democracy, let alone socialism. (Vol. 24)

On the question of the necessity of universal military training for the proletariat, all the so-called Trotskyists — the SWP, SL, WL, — say *not a word*. On the question of the draft, they are for abolition of the capitalist draft *with no alternative*. That is, they do not call instead for universal military training. They even fail to address the question of the *dangers* of a "volunteer army." There are three alternatives: (1) "volunteer army" of highly paid troops to be used against the proletariat, (2) army of the capitalist draft — to be used against the proletariat, (3) abolition of the standing army, abolition of the draft, and the arming of the people. The revisionists are for getting rid of the draft, but they do not point the way forward to the third alternative. In short, they offer nothing to replace the capitalist army with and thereby give in without a fight to the volunteer army.

During World War II the SWP answered the question of who controls the army by answering that there would be "trade union control." The SWP was wrong to advance the slogan in this way. First of all, it should have called

for the *abolition* of the standing army, for universal military training under trade union control. It would then have made clear that "trade union control" meant control not of the *bourgeois* army, but of the workers' army.

We consider the following program, developed by Vanguard Newsletter against U.S. imperialist intervention in the Indochinese war, to combine the essential revolutionary Marxist understanding of the manner in which the U.S. and international working class must conduct the struggle against an imperialist power waging war on an under-developed country. This program calls upon the international working class to launch a world-wide campaign to: (1) boycott U.S. products and blacklist all cargo which can be used by the U.S. imperialists against the Indochinese masses; (2) demand that the Soviet Union and China give the Indochinese sufficient military assistance for defensive *and* offensive actions against the U.S. forces there; (3) call upon the masses in Indochina for a *revolutionary* struggle, which alone can end their quarter century of bloodshed and suffering. A coordinated military offensive in all Indochina, not the limited defensive actions which wait upon a Soviet and-or Chinese counter-revolutionary deal! Not guarantees to the "national" capitalists and concessions to the landlords in governments of national "concord," but the program of the permanent revolution — the overthrow of capitalism, socialization of the means of production and the land by the working class at the head of the peasantry. Workers power! The dictatorship of the proletariat!

In the United States, the fight for this program must be coupled with posing the need for a network of rank and file caucuses in the trade unions. These caucuses, based on the transitional program, must unite the racially divided working class in the struggle against special oppression and must link their daily struggles not only to the struggle against the U.S. imperialist war in Indochina, but also to the socialist revolution.

In its fight against imperialism, the party must penetrate the working class, there to fight for the workers to recognize the imperialist wars as attacks on the world proletariat. It must build united front demonstrations, boycotts and strikes, against the imperialist war; it must explain the cause of war and how to end war. The Bolshevik party will not build or take responsibility for NPAC or other similar pacifist and popular front organizations. In the fight against imperialist war we advance slogans of: **immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops and material from southeast Asia; military victory to the DRVN and NLF — defeat U.S. imperialism; workers' control of war industries; confiscation of military profit — expropriation of war profiteers; abolish the standing army, free universal military training under the control of the trade union rank and file for men and women between the ages of 16 and 65; for a united front of workers' states against U.S. imperialism — no Stalinist sellouts; for socialism in Vietnam — no coalition government.**

We should make clear our position on the Paris peace accord, as expressed both in *Vanguard Newsletter* and *Class Struggle*. We in no way adapt to Stalinism by excusing the NLF-DRVN leaders for the treacherous terms of the treaty. The program of the NLF-DRVN was the Stalinist program of defeat from the beginning. The terms of the settlement provide

for the maintenance of capitalism in South Vietnam. Thus, as did the Geneva Accords, they not only do not guarantee peace, on the contrary, they *guarantee* the resumption of war. Only the program of permanent revolution, only victorious socialist revolution, can solve the problems of the Indochinese workers and peasants by eliminating imperialism from Indochina. Only worldwide socialist revolution can guarantee peace in Indochina by destroying imperialism altogether.

## THE WORKING CLASS

In their flight from the struggle within the working class, all of the so-called Trotskyist groups have, in one fashion or another, seen the sector of society known as "youth" as a substitute for the working class. The SWP has of course glorified the "youth rebellion" and the "student movement," calling upon the sections of the Fourth International to "sink roots" into the student movement and into the youth. As any botanist knows, this is like trying to "sink roots" into water. Youth, like water, is in constant change. It has no shape or politics of its own. Young people reflect the class backgrounds they come from. It is young (and not-so-young) *workers* that the revolutionary party must sink its roots into.

In the midst of all the revisionism of the SWP, WL, WWP, the SL appears as orthodox. But this appearance belies reality. Unlike all three, the Spartacist League has not engaged in the "youth cult" mania, either. But in place of these blatant departures from Marxism, SL has erected its own tower of Babel, calling it the "ORO orientation." ORO is typical SL shorthand for an SL-coined term, "ostensibly revolutionary organizations." In place of the proletarian orientation the Trotskyist party must have if it is to sink roots into the class, the SL has an ORO orientation. *But*, says the SL, this *is* a working class orientation. How so? Because, says SL, to orient toward a working class tendency is to orient toward the working class. Evidence? The SWP's orientation toward the CP in the 1930s! As we have said before, and as we will have to say again, the Spartacist League does not understand dialectics. The CP of the 1930s was a huge party of the working class. The SWP, PL, Labor Committee, and so on, are *not* parties of the working class — they are filled with petty bourgeois whose program and prejudices prevent them from getting into the working class.

To such groups, especially to Progressive Labor, the SL orients. The youth group of the SL, the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), addresses PLers as "Dear Comrades" in letters. The RCL addresses members of the Class Struggle League as "Dear Sirs" in correspondence. A small matter, but indicative. The SL shies away from winning serious revolutionaries to its program. In fact, it has such little confidence in the "power of the idea," as Trotsky called it, that it substitutes *spies* for ideas.

The SL advances the "theory" of the "declassed revolutionary" in its talks with other organizations. Once you become an SL member, goes the theory, you are "declassed" — no need to worry about petty bourgeois influences in the party, for there are none! At the SL Central Committee table sit declassed revolutionaries, free from any pressures exerted by class society (thus, you see, they are always able to make the correct decision). Through definition, SL wipes out the lessons of *In Defense of Marxism*. The SL is filled with members who have no Marxist understanding of class influences, who have no desire to enter the working class. And for the members who *do* desire to enter the class, what does SL offer?

It offers a pseudo-militant program, a program guaranteed to isolate the vanguard from the working class. As Trotsky stated in "Against Sectarianism," a section of the transitional program: "A correct policy regarding trade unions is a basic condition for adherence to the Fourth International. He who does not seek and does not find the road to the masses is not a fighter but a dead weight to the party."

Formally speaking, the Spartacist League "goes to the masses" in that it has here and there a trade union caucus. But it functions in such a way that it prevents itself from winning workers. For example, without specifically denying it, SL rejects the tactic of critical support in trade union elections. It rejects the Leninist tactic of gaining a hearing in the workers-in-motion, rejects it for the pure caucus of transitional demands. But even here it is unclear what SL would do. For example, it implies that intervention of the state, as in the United Mine Workers Arnold Miller campaign, makes non-support a principled question. But as the state intervenes more and more in trade union elections, what will SL do — refuse to run even its own candidate in a government-supervised election? Trotsky said that we must learn how to operate in the unions "even under fascism," but SL appears to have the same answer for all periods — its "revolutionary caucuses."

Trotsky outlined the basic characteristics of the sectarian in *Against the Stream*:

Though he swear by Marxism in every sentence, the sectarian is a direct negation of dialectical materialism, which takes experience as its point of departure and always returns to it. A sectarian does not understand the dialectical interaction between a finished program and a living (that is to say, imperfect and unfinished) mass struggle. The sectarian's method of thinking is that of a rationalist, a formalist and an enlightener. During a certain stage of development rationalism is progressive, being directed critically against blind beliefs and superstitions (the eighteenth century!) The progressive stage of rationalism is repeated in every great emancipatory movement. But rationalism (abstract propaganda) becomes a reactionary factor the moment it is directed against the dialectic. Sectarianism is hostile to dialectics (not in words but in action) in the sense that it turns its back upon the actual development of the working class.

The sectarian sees an enemy in everyone who attempts to explain to him that an active participation in the workers movement demands a constant study of objective conditions, and not haughty bulldozing from the sectarian rostrum. For analysis of reality the sectarian substitutes intrigue, gossip and hysteria.

It is the above characteristics which the SL exhibits. But because of its seeming "orthodoxy," it is the competitor of the Class Struggle League for cadres in this immediate period. Witness the members who left CSL for the "perfect" and "pure" home of the SL (prodded on by the work of several agents, of course). Just as the SL exposed its real nature to the Leninist Faction (its spies, its ORO orientation, its declassed revolutionaries, its refusal to allow people with the LF position on democratic centralism to fuse with the SL), although fooling it temporarily, so too will it expose itself to all serious revolutionaries. The greatest aid to exposing the SL is the fusion of VNL and CSL, and the building of the new Class Struggle League. And SL knows this, too, which is why it hates the fusion so much. As we sink our roots into the working class and, through our correct interventions, begin to win the class to revolutionary socialism, we will soon outgrow the Spartacist League.

## CURRENT STATE OF THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS

The program and tactics of Marxism flow from the analysis of class society and the working class as the only revolutionary class in capitalist society. The tactics are designed to win recruits to the party, to propagandize and agitate and to move the class struggle forward. The various tactics that Marxists use in relationship to the class are based on the level of consciousness of the class, on whether the struggle is advancing or retreating, on the strength of the class and the strength of the enemy. This means that while Bolsheviks are *granite hard in program*, they must be *absolutely flexible in tactics*. Lenin called for the boycott of *duma* elections in one year, but for participation the next. Trotsky called for critical support to Browder in 1940, but was ready to withdraw it when Browder would openly pledge support to the imperialist war. The Bolsheviks urged against the July demonstrations in 1917 because the entire class was not yet ready to seize power, but in October it was another story.

The current level of consciousness of the American working class is one of great discontent, but discontent based on a very low political consciousness and an uneven trade union consciousness. The discontent stems from the worsening living conditions of the class, heralded by Phase I in August of 1971. The low political consciousness stems from the fact that the American workers, who have enjoyed a relatively high living standard under world imperialism, have never had a mass political party of their own. In addition, radicals have, except for the CP and the early but tiny SWP, been by and large outside the class. The uneven trade union consciousness is due to the bureaucracy, the parasitic growth on the trade union movement. Many workers, especially younger ones, equate unions with an inevitable bureaucracy. This kind of attitude prevents them from struggling to oust the union bureaucracy because they feel it will simply be replaced by another.

The level of consciousness of the working class is best gauged by looking at the trade unions, the only existent mass organizations of the workers. Trotsky predicted that "The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing of revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat." Bolsheviks must intervene in the present of the movement, the trade unions today, in order to bring forth the future of the movement. At the same time, we keep in mind what Trotsky stated in the Transitional Program:

The Bolshevik-Leninist stands in the front-line trenches of all kinds of struggles, even when they involve only the most modest material interests or democratic rights of the working class. He takes active part in mass trade unions for the purpose of strengthening them and raising their spirit of militancy. He fights uncompromisingly against any attempt to subordinate the unions to the bourgeois state and bind the proletariat to "compulsory arbitration" and every other form of police guardianship — not only fascist but also "democratic!" Only on the basis of such work within the trade unions is successful struggle possible against the reformists, including those of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Sectarian attempts to build or preserve small "revolutionary" unions, as a second edition of the party, signify in actuality the renouncing of the struggle for leadership of the working class. It is necessary to establish this firm rule: self-isolation of the capitulationist variety from mass trade unions, which is tantamount to a betrayal of the revolution, is incompatible with membership in the Fourth International.

At the same time, the Fourth International resolutely rejects and condemns trade union fetishism, equally characteristic of trade unionists and syndicalists.

\* \* \*

Therefore, the sections of the Fourth International should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists, but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society.

We struggle for the "most modest material interests or democratic rights" of the working class, but *at the same time* we struggle "to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society." At this time these organizations are the trade union caucuses. In the process of struggling to build the caucus, and in the caucus itself, we fight for immediate interests (such as a better contract, against a layoff, against a firing) and for the central demands of the period (such as for a labor party, jobs for all, sliding scale of wages and hours, against discrimination, independence of the trade unions from the state) and we seek to win trade union militants to the transitional program as a whole. Our strategy is to propagandize around the need for a national network of rank and file caucuses, thus uniting the separate industry caucuses and thus expanding the strength and consciousness of the working class.

Unlike the SL, we know that what is involved here is a *process*. While we would prefer a situation where we could build mass caucuses on the full transitional program, such is not the situation we find today. While we propagandize around the full transitional program, we must be ready to accept caucuses built on less. It is the only way we will be able to win the class through action, through its own experiences.

The most likely paths for the development of trade union caucuses and our intervention are: (1) our joining existing caucuses that develop in places where we do not have comrades at first, but where we later send comrades in. Examples are RAFT in steel and TURF in auto, plus the many Black caucuses in auto and elsewhere, (2) our initiating caucuses with other workers. The first alternative is the more likely precisely because the movement of the class is faster than the ability of a small revolutionary group to initiate actions within the factories at this time.

Isolated from the masses of workers, we root ourselves in the class and work with the class as it is. Out of our intervention in the caucuses that start now will come the mass revolutionary vanguard party. Our most important task, our most stringent guideline, is to be able to combine the struggle for "modest gain" or immediate interests with the advancement of the transitional program as a whole to help the class fight on a particular focus, but to show the whole picture. We must not fall into the trap of "single-issue focus" as practiced by the SWP ("agitation" which excludes socialist propaganda); nor must we fall into the "total program" trap of the SL, which insists that nobody but purists can belong to the caucus they build, and which will not build or participate in caucuses that have less than the full transitional program.

In the process of fighting to win the working class, we must avoid the trap the WL falls into, the trap of seeing the pronouncements of various trade union bureaucrats as "progressive." Both the WL and SWP fail to wage relentless and ruthless struggle against the trade union bureaucrats. Both see seemingly leftward behavior of these bureaucrats as an excuse to praise that which does not exist — the independent leftward movement of the masses. The bureaucrats are agents of the bourgeoisie within the workers movement. In waging struggle against these agents, we *must never imply that they are capable of revolutionary or even disinterested action*. What they do, they do in their own interests, which are the interests of capital; they wish to protect their lucrative positions under capitalism.

The CSL does not seek to lead the working class from outside the class, as does the SWP and, in essence, the SL. The CSL understands the necessity of being rooted in the working class. Thus we seek to colonize our members in basic industry (auto, steel, transportation) and in the important new sectors of communications, public transportation and postal workers. Because of our small size we cannot spread ourselves thin. The decision as to which two or three areas to concentrate on will be made by the newly elected leadership; the *major* area of concentration (and thus of colonization) will at this time be the auto industry, both because it is the second largest union and because it has many caucuses developing within it, thus allowing us to combine entering a basic industry with finding immediate openings for our political work.

## NATURE OF THE PARTY

The party we seek to build is the Leninist party. This means a party with the revolutionary program, rooted in the working class, practicing democratic centralism. Unlike the other tendencies that call themselves Trotskyist, we are the only tendency that does not seek to circumvent the necessity of rooting the party in the class. All the others, without exception, seek "greener pastures" — the students, youth, or OROs. In the short run, it is harder and longer to attempt to build the party in the Leninist manner, but in the long run it is shorter and easier because it is the only way to become a working class party in composition as well as in program.

The struggle of VNL when Comrade Turner was in the Spartacist League indicates that VNL has fought for a proletarian orientation against a petty bourgeois one. The struggles of the CSL when it was in the SWP Proletarian Orientation Tendency and in the SWP Leninist Faction indicate likewise that it has fought for a proletarian orientation. Only the new Class Struggle League seeks to penetrate the working class, taking into the class the struggle for Trotskyism. All others shrink from this task, or are incapable of it.

Likewise, only VNL and CSL understand and practice the Leninist concept of democratic centralism, full freedom of discussion, unity in action. The other organizations pervert this concept, twisting it to their own personal desires. The SWP has no "full freedom of discussion." The SL likewise limits discussion to when the central leadership can put out bulletins. The WL is the worst caricature of all: there is so little democracy in the WL (where differences are "smoked out") that there has never been an organized political opposition that has developed in the organization in all its years of existence.

Those who fear full freedom of discussion fear the power of the idea, fear their own inadequacies, their ability to convince others. They set up limits on discussion ostensibly to "protect the organization," but in reality to protect themselves, protect *their* ideas and *their* positions. All seem to view the public discussion of any differences as "unLeninist." They twist and turn and ignore the decisions of the Third International under Lenin which allowed national sections to decide *whether or not and to what extent* public discussion of differences would be allowed. To these "dialecticians," it is never, never, never.

On the other hand are those who see the party as an endless discussion circle. Such were the anti-Trotskyist "state capitalists" who left the CSL. They were not concerned with getting out a newspaper or intervening, as soon as one convention was over they started their documents for the next, insisting that they be answered first and foremost, before the convention tasks were carried out. Such people do not understand what a party is all about. The party is a weapon of the working class, not an endless discussion

group. These people wanted to discuss externally their fundamental differences with *Marxism*. This the CSL would not let them do. The Bolshevik vanguard party is not a centrist organization where all differences are welcome. We are a combat party of the working class where differences within the principles of Marxism are inevitable and, in fact, necessary for the growth of the party and the winning of the working class.

## THE BUILDING OF THE INTERNATIONAL

The Leninist vanguard party is not a national one but an international one with national sections. We seek to build at one and the same time a national section and the international party. The capitalists are organized on an international scale. The workers need an international party not only for organizational reasons, but also because only through international discussion, experience, and application of theory can the correct leadership for the class be developed.

Our international task, then, is to build the world Trotskyist party. The two biggest obstacles to this task are the United Secretariat and the International Committee, each of which attracts radicals because of their tradition and size. In fighting against the politics of these two fake Trotskyists, we will come in contact with — and must aggressively seek out — other national sections fighting the same rotten politics. With these sections we must collaborate in the building of an international Trotskyist tendency, to become the world Trotskyist party.

The central leadership should put a person or subcommittee in charge of our international work. This would include, as a beginning and among other things, the training of comrades in foreign languages. It would also include subscribing to and familiarizing ourselves with the press of the Trotskyist tendencies in other countries. Translations of important articles should be made for publication in the press or internal bulletin. Our newspaper should carry articles on the international struggle. Our press must actively intervene in these struggles, must project a line, make predictions, foresee, rather than supply comment from the base of hindsight. We must seek to attend the conventions and conferences of international comrades, to present our analysis and listen to that of others — these things are the beginnings of the *international* struggle of ideas. With our present size we cannot of course accomplish these things at once, but we can begin them, thus laying the foundations for the building of the world Trotskyist party, the new Trotskyist International. ■

... program of the Class Struggle League, ex-  
posed in this pamphlet, is spelled in the  
new paper *Class Struggle*. For a revolutionary  
and correct understanding of capitalist society, for  
the success of the workers' struggles, and for a  
plan to unite the working class in the over-  
throw of capitalism, **SUBSCRIBE NOW TO CLASS  
STRUGGLE \$1 for 12 issues.**



### Class Struggle

Included in the bi-monthly issues of CLASS  
STRUGGLE \$1.00 for subscriptions outside the  
U.S. or Canada.

I would like to sell a quantity of  
copies of CLASS STRUGGLE. Cost is 75  
cents per copy. The headline says that 100  
copies per copy for all bundles of 10 or more.

Enclosed is a contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE \_\_\_\_\_

C.S.L.  
P.O. BOX 1  
100 WEST 111 STREET

group. These groups, which in essence are revolutionary  
parties, will overthrow the U.S. system and then the  
entire world. They are a political party, not a social  
club. We are a political party of the working class  
within the principles of Marxism-Leninism and in the  
interests of the party and the interests of the working class.

## THE BUILDING OF THE INTERNATIONAL

The Communist Party is not a revolutionary party  
with internationalism. We seek to fight in our own  
country and the international arena. The party is  
an internationalist. The workers need an international  
organization, not a party, because only through  
discussion, experience, and application of theory can the  
class be developed.

Our internationalism is not a slogan, it is a  
policy. We are not a party of the U.S. or Canada,  
we are a party of the world. We are a party of the  
international working class, not of any one  
country. We are a party of the working class,  
not of any one country. We are a party of the  
international working class, not of any one  
country. We are a party of the working class,  
not of any one country.

The central committee of the party is the  
highest authority. This committee is elected by the  
party. The committee is elected by the party. The  
committee is elected by the party. The committee  
is elected by the party. The committee is elected  
by the party. The committee is elected by the  
party. The committee is elected by the party.  
The committee is elected by the party. The  
committee is elected by the party. The committee  
is elected by the party. The committee is elected  
by the party. The committee is elected by the  
party. The committee is elected by the party.

The program of the Class Struggle League, explained in this pamphlet, is applied in the newspaper *Class Struggle*. For a revolutionary socialist understanding of capitalist society, for analysis of the workers' struggles, and for a program to unite the working class in the overthrow of capitalism, **SUBSCRIBE NOW TO CLASS STRUGGLE \$1 for 12 issues.**



**Class Struggle**

Enclosed is \$1 for twelve issues of CLASS STRUGGLE (\$3 for subscriptions outside the U.S. or Canada).

I would like to sell a monthly bundle of \_\_\_ copies of CLASS STRUGGLE. (Cost is 10 cents per copy for bundles less than 10; 5 cents per copy for all bundles of 10 or more).

Enclosed is a contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**C. S. L.**  
P. O. BOX F  
PARK FOREST, ILL. 60466