

VANGUARD NEWSLETTER

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LESSONS OF A STALINIST-RUN "RANK AND FILE" CONFERENCE

It was clear from its inception, that the Communist Party would make every effort to tightly control the "National Rank and File Action Conference", called in Chicago for June 27th and 28th by the magazine, "Labor Today" and promoted by the "Daily World".

The CP has fully appreciated that the workers are being propelled into struggle against the employers and their "labor-lieutenants" by the growing crisis of world capitalism, as unemployment grows and as inflation makes inroads on their living standards; that workers are also beginning to understand that the war in Southeast Asia is directed not only against the Indochinese, but as well, against their own most fundamental interests.

Having managed to retain some of its roots in the trade unions--the CP has an advantage in this respect over others on the left--it is now engaged in trying to direct this working class pressure into reformist channels. Restyling its old "popular front" garments with "anti-monopoly coalition" trimmings, it continues its efforts to tie the workers to the "liberal" wing of the Democratic Party and to "progressive" or "liberal" labor leaders.

The CP has long been transformed into a party of reform, in service to the policies of the counter-

revolutionary Soviet leadership's quest for security, "socialism in one country", through "deals" with imperialism to maintain the social status-quo.

While no longer the major obstacle to the radicalization of the working class which it became in the '30's and '40's--when the banners of the October Revolution still served it as a pseudo-revolutionary cover, and when the danger of fascism gave its class-collaborationist program a certain "plausibility"--the Chicago conference showed that the long discredited CP can once again become an impediment to such radicalization; can become an initial stopping-off place for the workers in their left-ward movement.

Surpassing the initial expectations of its CP organizers, the Chicago conference managed to attract 874 trade-unionists from 26 states, over a third of whom were Black and Spanish-speaking.

Despite a sizeable turn-out of older and third generation CP members and supporters, its restraining

hand at the conference was by no means secure. Fearing that the worker-delegates might go beyond the programmatic limits which it had set, the CP tried to prevent the conference as a whole from hearing and discussing the issues: only arranging for one short period of "panel discussions"; ensuring that the conference would run out of time, and that controversial issues would be relegated to a "continuations committee", by a raft of scheduled and non-scheduled speakers, e.g., Mayor Gibson of Newark, Louis Weinstock of the painters, etc.

The responsibility of revolutionists under the circumstances was also clear: to attempt to intervene to fight for a class program to "defend trade unions... against attack... to end the war...", thereby perhaps winning some of the worker-delegates away from CP influence and for revolutionary politics.

Thus VANGUARD NEWSLETTER prepared a leaflet for distribution to the conference delegates, which called for a "break with the political parties of big-business", for a labor party based on the unions", for a fight against "labor-bureaucrats, and the creation of a fighting leadership of the working class" (see July 1970 attachment), appending to it its "Perspectives and Program for the American Revolution" statement of August 1969.

At the same time, in accordance with our perspective of "discussion, debate and unity in action", we offered to bloc with other "left" groups where we had or could achieve common agreement on the essential question--independent class politics.

A key problem facing the revolutionists was to find approaches by which to circumvent the obstructive and delaying tactics of the CP, so that class politics in general and the question of the labor party in particular could be brought before the conference. While the CP's control of the conference made any success in this connection far from assured, a united effort utilizing correct tactics, might have achieved a break-through. However, this unity was not to be forged.

The manner in which the other ostensibly revolutionary organizations functioned at, and in preparation for, the Chicago conference served to further reveal the essence beneath their formal pretensions.

The Workers League's Tim Wohlforth, who had been approached by us for a bloc, informed us that the WL would not meet with us, that he, Wohlforth, did not believe that the WL had "common agreement" with us "on anything", and that we could take the matter up with "the people in Chicago"!

Dennis O'Casey (July 6th "Bulletin" states that "only" the WL fought the CP's policies, that the "centrists... the International Socialists, the Spartacists and the Turner group" attempted to "conciliate to Stalinism", that they "formed a completely unprincipled bloc..."

But even the bowdlerized "common statement" appearing in the "Bulletin" reveals that they had called for a "'working class political party, based on the growing rank and file struggle to control the trade unions'" and for "'immediate independent political action including electoral action, to agitate for a massed-based labor political party'". According to O'Casey, this constitutes a refusal "to raise the question of a labor party"!!

O'Casey further complains about being "chased after throughout the conference by these elements" to sign this statement. The WL was not merely asked to "sign"; it was also invited to improve, to substitute other "terminology"; in other words, to participate in presenting a principled resolution to the conference. This it refused to do.

Because the WL does not understand the "united front" as both a unity with and a struggle against other working class organizations, and arbitrarily limits the tactic to large organizations, its conduct has been truly self-defeating, while also aiding the CP retain control of the conference. It cannot understand that by taking part in and helping to forge a principled unity in action, it might have won some of the independent "elements" to

its politics. As a result of its unprincipled and destructive behavior at the conference, the WL only succeeded in repelling independent and unaffiliated radicals.

The panel which had debated the "Declaration For Peace and Against Repression" the afternoon before, had succeeded in carrying recommendations to the conference that pacifist wording be removed, that the troop removal be effected, not "by Christmas" but immediately, and that Meany be attacked by name. Despite the manipulations of panel chairman Evanoff of District 65, the vote to designate the war in Indochina as imperialist was tied at 21 to 21, with Evanoff, in violation of parliamentary rules, voting to tie!

It was also at this panel that recommendations for the labor party, by the WL and VANGUARD NEWSLETTER, and for a one-day general strike, brought to the floor by VANGUARD NEWSLETTER, were narrowly defeated.

As it became obvious that substitute motions would have little if any chance of reaching the floor, the VANGUARD NEWSLETTER delegate suggested the tactic of amending the document. However, the CP succeeded in referring the deliberations of this panel as well to its "continuations committee".

The "Workers Action"-Spartacist League delegate found VANGUARD NEWSLETTER's tactical recommendation in the form of the following amendments, to be "opportunist":

- 1) "...breaking with the politics of the bosses, and immediately organizing an independent labor party and running independent labor candidates."
- 2) "...oust the labor bureaucrats, including the "liberal" stooges of the Democratic and Republican parties of the ruling class, which has launched an imperialist war in Indochina; a war to preserve the power and profits of American capitalism, to prevent a social revolution of the oppressed colonial and semi-colonial masses; a war which is also part of its class war against the workers of the US."

Aside from the blatant organizational hostility demonstrated, this rigidity reflects an organization in which only its one leader can originate tactics. This reaction might have deserved the title of "infantile left" if the organization was serious about its politics. But the measure of its seriousness is its publication, "Workers Action", ostensibly committed to building rank and file caucuses in the unions which, like a seed or clothing catalogue, is published seasonally. At that it outdoes its mentor, "Spartacist".

The WL capped its maladroitness "tactics" by denouncing the conference as Stalinist for not taking up the issue of the labor party, at a point when the CP was railroading through its "Declaration of Labor Political Independence", which really codifies its dependence on "progressive" Democrats and labor "leaders".

While little could then be accomplished, sharp criticism of the reformist nature of the resolution might yet have succeeded in winning support from some worker-delegates. Instead, judging by the loud boing, the delegates understood the denunciation as an unwarranted and inexplicable attack on the conference.

This criticism of ours was interpreted as "an attempt to conciliate Stalinism". And yet, our leaflet alone explained the politics of the conference leaders as "the 'popular front' politics of the reformist Communist Party". Neither the leaflet of the WL, nor that of any other participant, attempted to make clear to the delegates the real nature of the conference organizers!

The role of the SWP, as a left-cover for the "popular front" politics of the CP, was also clearly revealed at the conference. It is not true, that the SWP's role "was one of complete abstention", as O'Casey has it. Their members did participate--at least in the panel discussion on "Peace and Labor Political Action"--speaking animatedly and inspirationally on the need to organize more of the "single issue" anti-war demonstrations, so acceptable to liberals.

(continued on p. 74)

DE LEONISM AND TROTSKYISM - A Dialogue

[/We publish below the essential content of an exchange of letters between Comrade Edward L. Spira, the Executive Secretary Pro Tem. of the SOCIALIST LEAGUE FOR INDUSTRIAL GOVERNMENT, San Francisco Bay Area Section (SLIG/SFBA), and VANGUARD NEWSLETTER editor Harry Turner.

[/As we have often stated, a revolutionary vanguard party can only be built in this country and elsewhere on the basis of a clear and principled program. A program of this nature can only be constructed through a process of struggle--of ideas, and of the individuals and

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I certainly wish to commend the comradely and positive spirit with which your comments to the Northeast conference, and by implication, the current non-SLP-Marxist-De Leonist movement were couched.

We too would certainly not wish to do anything which would undermine any realistic possibilities for coordinated and/or unified action among various revolutionary scientific socialist tendencies. There is always a strong tendency in such exchanges to be either hyper-critical or overly-fraternal. The former is usually unproductive and unnecessary; the latter essentially dishonest.

* * *

In your first VN, you stated that, "...Our philosophical method is the materialist dialectic, the method of Marxism." And in several other points similar expressions of "Marxist method" and "dialectical method" were employed. From a rigorous scientific socialist perspective, I do not think there is any "dialectical method"; and to be rather precise, not even a "Marxist method". Marx and Engels were emphatically wedded to the scientific method, and a rejection of formal philosophy. Such philosophy that remains does so as an over-viewing concept--for direction, for balance, for a sense of precision. Marx, in his Capital, employed what he termed the "method of abstraction"; what in more modern

organizations which espouse them. We have attempted to summarize this process in the phrase, "discussion, debate and unity in action".

[/We believe the narrow sectarian "shopkeeper" concern to shelter the "flock" from the ideas of its competitors to be self-defeating.

[/We hope others will emulate Cde. Spira's concern for an open and exhaustive examination of theory and practice, past and present, in forming a revolutionary scientific socialist program. We intend to print other such exchanges within the limits imposed by space.]

* * *

12 April 1970

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parlance would be termed the method of idealization--one of many scientific theoretical mechanisms employed quite successfully in a wide range of subject areas. One can argue, along the lines indicated by Engels in "Anti-Dühring", that all or most relatively useful and successful scientific theories in all subject areas are dialectical in principle. This, in fact, is the lesson, one of many, which the history to date of scientific theory construction and testing and use indicates. On the other hand, a scientific theory--a scientific postulate can be quite dialectical and still prove out to be wrong or otherwise not the most effective working concept concerning certain phenomena. Dialectics is a template concept, with common assumed attributes in all scientific theories. The most effective working concepts concerning the dynamics of the processes of objective material reality are dialectical in the scientific socialist perspective. Such concepts invariably postulate idealized schema or models which describe all natural processes as varyingly directed and paced and cyclically or spiral-like dynamic progressions

--developing, evolving, or changing through a play or reaction between theoretically postulated relatively opposite or opposing factors or forces. Such schema or models indicate that qualitative changes occur periodically as the accretion of certain critical quantitative factors. These indicate further that for every action there is a reaction to it which tends to be opposite in direction or effect and commensurate in strength or force with the initial action; this interplay between action and reaction resulting in new equilibrium conditions, themselves dynamic rather than static. Unceasing change and periodic fundamental transformations are therefore the universal rule--in Nature and in the theories and 'laws' about Nature. The only real and major subject area where this question is of contention any more is the social behavior of the human species. Much of your discussion of dialectics in the VN amounted, in my opinion, to theoretical overkill; it made little meaningful sense to the disputes to which you were addressing yourself. In fact, it became progressively more apparent to me that you and the people you were criticizing were all indeed using a "philosophical method" rather than scientifically spirited methods. Only at one point did you make a point which I thought made some meaningful sense, and then in a rather abstract way (July 1969, p. 9 "... that form and content were not fixed metaphysical entities, but dynamic and interacting relationships.") How this specifically related to Wohlforth's purported views, however, escaped me.

* * *

In the March 1970 VN (pages 18-19), certain errors of fact, of perhaps minor importance, do occur. First, as you can see from our letterhead, there is no "Socialist League for Industrial Democracy". Secondly, the resignation of Eric Hass was not the factor which precipitated the latest splits from the SLP, even superficially speaking. The recent series of "splits", if they can

really be called that, crystallized in 1967 when 7 members of the SLP's Palo Alto, California Section were expelled. This action was precipitated by the adamant stand that a majority of the PA SLPers took in defense of their then mildly pro-activist stance. Background to this were other issues--insufficient effective internal democracy, no active internal theoretical life, no active or effective participation in actual social or economic struggles, no comradely relations with other socialist groups, and other inter-related issues made important by the then rising tide of radical militancy in the country. This expulsion was the trigger which superficially precipitated the ensuing developments--the formation of SLIG/SFBA--an increasing wave of resignations and expulsions--the subsequent formation of other non-SLP MDList groups. The DDL was formed in 1968; the SCC/NY in early 1969 before Hass' resignation. Hass' troubles did loom large in the resignation of the Los Angeles SLPers who formed the Los Angeles Socialist Forum in April 1969--which became SLIG/Southern California after the unity conference in July 1969 with SLIG/SFBA which organized a West Coast SLIG. This is perhaps a minor point, but your "explanation" tends to stress inaccurately the precipitating factors and the importance of certain individuals--a point I am sure Eric Hass would be the first to second. It does reveal, however, a strong tendency toward "leadership fetishism"--evidenced also by your usual criticism of this or that organization because of the "leadership"; the failure of the recent French student-workers crisis to result in revolution being a result of a failure of certain "leadership". In all biological systems--and human social systems are a type of biological system--the role of the enzymatic agent is conditioned not only by the quantity and quality of the catalyst present but by the nature and condition of the substrate out of which the catalyst or enzymes are differentiated. At the

population ecological level, the processes are of course somewhat different than at the physiological level--but the basic relationship remains. We, as self-acknowledged and presumed catalytic agents in the body social--catalytic agents with an assumed mission--have to consider our own natures, the nature of our competitive catalytic agents, the conditions favoring a differential rate of "production" of one type of catalyst versus others, and the nature and condition of the people --the social substrate--whom we wish to influence, and also the processes by which effective influence can be brought to bear. The "right slogan" at the "right time" will produce nothing if the "right" homework has not been done--often long before the crisis of the "right time", and this limited by a constraining set of objective factors. One of our principle tasks is to determine just what "homework" activity is needed in anticipation of various possible forthcoming future crises.

On two occasions (VN, July '69, Oct. '69, pps. 6 & 1 respectively), I thought your abbreviated criticism of the SLP to be rather forced. On the first occasion you opine, "... Its peculiar combination of reformism, sectarianism, and anti-Sovietism in the tradition of right-wing social-democracy...", while on the other you similarly repeat, "...The SLP combines the most rigid sectarianism with opportunist illusions in American "democracy", with anti-Sovietism of the most rabid social-democratic variety." I think here, and perhaps with others, you show a strong tendency to bring in all the "bad" labels. The charge of "sectarianism" is probably the only one deserved, but I'm not sure we would agree for the same reasons. The charge of sectarianism is also somewhat loosely tossed around. But how the SLP's line or behavior denotes reformism of any type fakes me out completely. How their anti-Sovietism automatically becomes of the most rabid social-democratic type--and right wing at that--also is rather straining a point. Are there other kinds of "anti-Sovietism" of a less

rabid, perhaps left-wing social-democratic variety, perhaps other sub-types on some kind of continuum? Whatever else may be said of the SLP, its historic criticisms of the Soviet Union have always taken second place to their principle concern with the "home enemy", American capitalism. The very few departures from this that I know of never had official party sanction--unfortunately neither censure. As to opportunist illusions in American "democracy"; this is also straining a point. The classical MDL position re the theoretical peaceful solution often got thinned out re the "theoretical", but the line was generally consistent and clear about the need for the economic force to back up any electoral successes. The lack of emphasis on the improbabilities of the issue ever getting that far may have been underplayed--but that is on a par with some classical Trotskyist demands agitation re labor parties, etc. The fact remains--despite its present rigid, academic, and unimaginative purism--the SLP remains as an expression of historic MDLism, in large measure, which in turn was one of the earliest and most distinctive Marxist tendencies to definitely break with European social-democracy--in theory and in practice. I am including a draft statement based on several endorsed SLIG/SFBA information reply letters explaining this together with what we consider a more properly balanced definition of what our tendency is. I might add, at this point, an equally short "definition" of what you consider is uniquely Leninist and Trotskyist would be appreciated. The SLP of the 1920's did not pose MDLism as opposed to MLism--but rather considered each special adaptations to the two different circumstances which gave them birth. Many in our non-SLP MDL "confederacy" still hold this position, this including myself. The only clear-cut quarrel between the SLP and Lenin was over two items in the "21" points of admission to the Third International--and time has given fresh insight into these relatively secondary issues. The issues of the "role of the party" and per-

haps others is, in my opinion, less clear-cut. But in any event, they are not crucial to what defines MDLism in its essentials; the two points listed in the appended "draft" statement in our opinion does...

* * *

You spent a lot of space discussing nationalism and its relation both to Israel, Zionism, and the current American Black liberation movement--and perhaps advisedly so. This is one issue I'll let pass this time with little comment. A few off-hand reflections however. You seem to interpret on some occasions the purposed ML concept of the "right of self-determination" as almost a principled question--i.e., basic policy--on a par with historic liberal democratic statements of "rights". On other occasions you seem to qualify it, but only in passed historic situations. If a sense of national identity represents the highest form of community identification usually associated with the largest scale of political or social community organization below that of the species as a whole--then we currently have a rather interesting problem before us. As revolutionary scientific socialists, we must invariably be protagonists of the solidarity of the world's proletarian working class--as a prototype for the solidarity of the entire species based on the abolition of all socioeconomic classes. Such national-type identity as remains--and this will be considerable--must therefore be viewed essentially as a sub-cultural phenomenon, i.e., advocated--urged as such, however much self-determined. Your apparent equation of Lenin's recognition of the right of Soviet republics to secede re your acquiescence of the right of the Black section of the American working class to national separatism I think is unfortunate. But perhaps you had better expand on this theme. And while at it--since you did mention the old position of Marx and Engels re Croatian and Romanian nationalism in the 1848 revolutions, you might also include some comments on their views on the "right" of the American

southern confederacy to secede; in fact some comments on the general question of national identity and the right of secession or independent separate political organization might be broached. The North American proletarian revolution will be sorely prevailed upon at the time of its imminent success if major sections of the working class push for the balkanization of the North American continent. The relative strength of the North American capitalist class and system in this continent is based, in my opinion, in large measure on the fact that excessive balkanization was prevented. I have strong feelings that the same situation will exist for a new socialist system. Full autonomous self-determination within an otherwise federalized system would seem to be a minimal requirement. At any rate, I would call them as I see them.

The next comments concern the contents of the Aug. '69 VN (pps. 13-15). I personally found your "trade union perspective" section rather interesting. First, because you seem to have gone back to classical Trotskyist transitional demand formulations; second because of rather interesting similarities and differences to the "What Is To Be Done Now" section in the attached 1960 "Survival Is The Issue" pamphlet. The latter was an experiment in which I participated in about 10 years ago. The approach has raised some interest among some of our west coast comrades and this material may be revised and updated for current use. Some comradely comments are solicited.

The last point I wish to mention concerns another apparently small matter. In the March 1970 VN (page 1) you used the expression, "...The earliest social response is found--not among the workers...but among the intellectuals. This strata, and its student component in particular...". I think I can almost speak for the vast majority of our "confederacy" in saying that MDLism rejects the essentials of such formulations insofar as they purport to reflect a class analysis, or desig-

nation. "Intellectuals" in this day are a cross-class occupational category--including employers, self-employed (the true modern middle class--when you can find them), and the employed (i.e., the intellectual occupational strata of the working class). The "intellectuals" you implicitly refer to are overwhelmingly working class in fact, albeit higher-income working class. Similarly the "students" are working class in origin, albeit from middle and upper income sections of the working class. I am not, of course, referring to the sense of class consciousness. But to restrict the "working class" to the lower income occupational strata of that class is essentially a violation of a very basic Marxist analytical premise.

I here refer you to a very careful rereading of the Communist Manifesto. In our own theoretical and agitational work, it is our job to foster an all-encompassing class-wide sense of class consciousness while yet making the sub-class distinctions that have to be made in order to be understood. Therefore, it is not the "middle class", but middle income workers or, if you please, upper-income workers. One can and should similarly talk in terms of intellectually-skilled or professionally-skilled workers (the second fastest growing occupational group in the American economy after clerical and allied office-type workers--about 12% of the labor force, 88% being employees), when appropriate. * * *

June 6, 1970

We welcome your letter not only for its fraternal spirit, but equally for its criticisms which afford us the opportunity to elaborate our positions and the perspective which governs them.

Although we try for precision in presenting our ideas, and consider them to be correct in their essentials, we do not treat our every word as "Holy Writ", to be unconditionally defended. As dialectical materialists, we understand that every meaningful discussion also acts on us, enables us to sharpen our positions, make them more concrete, improve our formulations and even correct errors and misconceptions.

In this connection, we are glad to have you call attention to our inadvertant mis-labeling of your organization, along with our misunderstandings in connection with the SLP splits. Our knowledge of the internal affairs of the SLP was, obviously, far from extensive. We had known about the earlier expulsions in 1967, but had only learned about the newer crop of resignations through the SCC bulletins, the first of which, as you will remember, devoted itself largely to Eric Hass' and others resignations.

As to more fundamental considerations, the first area in which you express differences with us, the

dialectical materialist philosophy of Marxism, we also consider to be central to your other criticisms.

Did Marx and Engels "reject" philosophy, formal or otherwise? They did oppose "philosophical rubbish" and philosophical "systems", of "philosophy standing above the other sciences", but you will recall that Engels, in Anti-Dühring states that, with the increase in scientific knowledge in its several branches, philosophy as "a special science" dealing with the totality of science, in the manner of Hegel, becomes "superfluous". But he then goes on to state that, "What independently survives of all former philosophy is the science of thought and its laws--formal logic and dialectics", i.e., part of philosophy remains.

Is there a "'Marxist method and dialectical method'" as we affirm? As you will recall, Engels in Feuerbach, in discussing the contradictory sides of Hegel's philosophy, distinguishes between his "system" and the "dialectical method".

Marx and Engels viewed philosophy, as they did all else, dialectically. They understood that its beginnings in ancient Greece, as a totality of the knowledge of man and nature, reflected, on the one hand, a negative--the limited scientific knowledge obtaining, the absence of the necessary tools and data for scientific investigation and specialization; and, on the other hand, a positive--an over-view, which made possible the first expressions of the laws of dialectics, in both materialist and idealist formulations. With the accumulation of knowledge, the specialized sciences emerged, but the necessary and positive investigation, of analysis and classification of facets of nature; had as its negative aspect, a "metaphysical" or static and disconnected view of phenomena, again posed in both idealist and materialist forms. The "negation" of the dialectical outlook by the metaphysical, was once again "negated" with the development of Marxian dialectics. Hegel was the first to comprehensively formulate the dialectical laws, but the "rescue of conscious dialectics" from Hegel's idealism, "and its application to the materialist conception of nature and history" was the work of Marx and Engels.

Marx, in his "Afterward to the Second German Edition of Capital", states the following:

"...My dialectical method is not only different from the Hegelian, but its direct opposite...in its rational form it is a scandal and abomination of bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it included in its comprehension and affirmation recognition of the existing state of things, and at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up, because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore, takes into account its transitory nature not less than its momentary existence, because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in essence critical and revolutionary."

And, in fact, are the works of Marx and Engels in general, and Marx's Capital in particular, conceivable without the materialist dialectic, e.g., the commodity as a unity of use and exchange value, the mode of production as a unity of productive forces and production relations, social revolution as the "negation" of earlier property relations as a result of this antagonism, capitalism as a unity of capital and wage-labor?

We too share your objections to the doctrinaire imposition of "dialectic" triads on the real world. However, artificial imposition of schemas, also charged against Marx by Duhring, as you will recall, is not the Marxian dialectic but its caricature. Indeed, your contention that a "scientific postulate can be quite dialectical and still prove out to be wrong or otherwise not the most effective working concept..." seems to be an idealist understanding of dialectics, which borrows from this caricature.

The materialist dialectic is not just one of a number of possible "scientific theoretical mechanisms" as you see it, but the generalization of the laws of matter in motion, i.e., of "nature, human society and thought", as Engels puts it. This recognition does not, of course, provide us with the "philosophers stone", with the key to instant knowledge. Engels also points out in Anti-Duhring, that an understanding of the general laws does not save anyone from the task of determining the specific laws of motion of the particular phenomenon under investigation, in "nature, human society" or "thought".

It is not enough to be aware that "the barley plant and the infinitesimal calculus" or even the class struggle operate in accordance with the dialectical laws of transformation of quantity to quality, interpenetration of opposites, and negation of the negation. It is also necessary to understand agriculture, higher mathematics, and in the last case, the social revolution as a theoretical and practical revolutionary process.

That the dialectical materialist philosophy of Marxism is viewed with a jaundiced eye by many revolutionists today, is certainly understandable. Was not the "pope" of the Second International, Kautsky, also a practitioner of this "art"? The SLP which lays claim likewise to dialectics, also manages to maintain a self-isolating sectarianism. The counter-revolutionary Stalinists justify every betrayal and brutality in the name of dialectics. Most "Trotskyists" and "near-Trotskyists", from reformist to sectarian, from adventurist to arm-chair varieties, claim to be dialectical materialists.

Does the materialist dialectic have any "practical" purpose then? We believe that only through the dialectic can one explain the behavior of these and other ostensibly revolutionary organizations without descending into the saint and devil theory of history. Furthermore, we believe that it is not possible to adequately understand any complex movement or development without a recognition that its behavior results from internal contradictions, that its dynamic equilibrium exists as a unity of opposites, that its progressive transformations result from qualitative leaps and through a process of negation. We will try to illustrate the dialectical process concretely in discussing the several political questions which you have raised.

But before we do, we would take issue with your contention that the dialectic as an "effective working concept" is now generally accepted in the natural sciences, if not in the social--even in the limited sense of your summary. The method of the natural scientists is still basically today what it was in Engels' time, one or another variant of empiricism. Generalizations from the dynamic behavior observed in an individual phenomenon or even groups of phenomena to the separate sciences, or to science as a whole is still largely absent. The recognition that theory can illuminate practice is still avoided in one or another degree, particularly in the social, but also in the physical

sciences. Your own partial recognition and limited acceptance of dialectics as one of a number of possible "scientific mechanisms", and concern to exclude philosophy from "scientific method", would also seem to place your method within the scope of logical positivism or logical empiricism, as it is known today. You should consider the following by Engels in Dialectics of Nature:

"Natural scientists...who abuse philosophy most are slaves to precisely the worst relics of the worst philosophies...It is only a question whether they want to be dominated by a bad, fashionable philosophy, or by a form of thought which rests on acquaintance with the best of thought and its achievements."

As to the more concrete political questions which you raise, they seem to fall into three basic categories: the role of revolutionary leadership, the nature of the state --capitalist and Soviet, and the national question.

You have asked us to define what we consider to be the "uniquely Leninist and Trotskyist" contributions to Marxism. We believe that they made signal contributions in all these areas. They could do so, only because they were uncompromising revolutionists who thoroughly understood and could apply the dialectical materialist method of Marxism.

Lenin achieved his place in history because he was able to forge the necessary instrument, the vanguard party, which led the first and only successful proletarian revolution, in October 1917. Lenin, as those who have read What Is To Be Done know, was not the first to understand the proletarian party as a unity of opposites, of intellectual and proletarian, of scientific socialism as a qualitative synthesis of the highest achievements of bourgeois thought in economics, philosophy and history and the working class, but he understood it more thoroughly and concretely than any-

one else.

It was because Lenin thoroughly understood the working class as a product of historical development, as possessing both advanced and backward strata, as subject to bourgeois ideology in all its guises, as well as to the influence of the revolutionary party, that he fought against tendencies to worship working class spontaneity, and insisted on a democratic-centralist party which could provide leadership to the working class in the daily struggle and at a revolutionary moment.

We see the revolutionary party as much more than a "catalyst" or "enzymatic agent" which triggers the social revolution. We believe this formulation to be one-sided, to fail to appreciate the need for leadership in the immediate struggles, at the revolutionary moment, at and after the victory of the socialist revolution. It reflects, in our opinion, the isolation of the De Leonists from class struggles, and represents, in effect, a dependence on working class spontaneity. This concept also seems to bear within it illusions as to the nature of the capitalist state, an under-estimation of the ability of and ferocity with which the exploiters will resist the social revolution, as well as an under-estimation of the problems of socialist construction.

History continues to prove over and over again, and most recently in France in 1968, that objective conditions can propel the workers, the subjective factor in history, into revolutionary motion, but that without its vanguard party, it cannot achieve a successful revolution. Is it "leadership fetishism" to make this assertion? But what else was lacking? The bulk of the French workers, who mistakenly support the Communist Party as the party of social revolution, and who had been seething with discontent and frustration for years, responded to the student revolutionaries by a general strike. Despite the CP's trade-union arm, the CGT, which tried to prevent it, the workers occupied the most decisive industries, and hoist-

ed their banner, the red flag of revolution, over them. The peasants and middle classes generally were neutralized. The state was paralyzed. Even the police discovered a new "brotherhood" with the strikers. De Gaulle, fearing to call on the armed forces within France, made a surreptitious visit to Germany to determine whether the French army there could be made to march against the workers. According to Lenin, when the "lower classes" do not want the old and when the "upper classes" cannot continue in the old way, then only can the revolution be victorious." The one ingredient lacking for a successful proletarian revolution was the revolutionary party.

A party of this type is not, of course, built in a day, but must be created well in advance of the revolutionary crisis. We agree with you that it will have to do the "right homework". To us this means that it will have to gain the confidence of the workers through involvement in immediate struggles, through a program which can relate these struggles to the need for a socialist revolution, and which also prepares them to take power when a revolutionary situation develops. A situation of this kind is not manufactured on demand, nor does it last long. But it is what the party does with its accumulated capital at this point that is decisive.

Lenin and Trotsky were able to lead the Bolshevik party and the Russian workers and peasants to their October because they understood this process, because they understood development, not as a mechanical unfolding, but as a process of uneven development, of leaps in both subjective and objective aspects of reality, in both consciousness and material conditions. Not a priori triads or an invariant scheme, e.g., proletarian revolution first in the countries which had achieved the fullest capitalist development, but the concrete analysis of conditions in which subjective and objective interact; the breaking of the chain of capitalism

at its weakest link; the leap in consciousness of the proletarian and peasant masses under the intolerable burden of an imperialist war, which its backward economy was least prepared to withstand. Not the "proletariat" as an abstraction, but a proletariat hardly a generation removed from its peasant forebears, at a lower level of culture, but also without the conservative traditions of the proletariat of the advanced countries.

It was this understanding of the need to relate the subjective factor, the existing level of consciousness of the working class, to the objective conditions behind which it tends to lag, that Trotsky incorporated in The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International, the "Transitional Program". This document encapsulated not only the theory and practice of the Bolsheviks, but of revolutionary Marxism in general, on this question, beginning with the Communist Manifesto, e.g., "The communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement."

As the title of the "Transitional Program" makes clear, this program was formulated in and for a period in which the contradictions of the world capitalist system, which had entered into its moribund, imperialist, phase at the turn of the century, had reached a stage of intolerable sharpness, was demonstrating the convulsions of "death agony". The additional quarter of a century lease on life given it by the neo-Social-Democrats, the Stalinists, since the second World War, the growth of capitalism since 1945 on the basis of a new world division of labor geared to the pax Americana, inevitably limited the revolutionary opportunities, and therefore, the significance of the "Transitional Program". The rapidly maturing world crisis of capitalism is now reinvesting this program with all its revolutionary meaning.

We have attempted, in our trade-union program, not to mechanically superimpose Trotsky's "Transitional Program" formulated in 1938, onto the present reality, but rather, to use the method of Trotsky, adapting what is valid and applicable from it and from the revolutionary theory and practice of the past to present conditions, or rather to conditions in the process of development.

We began with a perspective based upon our prognosis of coming events. We then developed a program of transitional demands which, we believe, recognizes the present level of consciousness of the workers, their objective needs and subjective readiness to struggle to maintain their living standards, and the necessary intermediate steps which have to be taken "in the movement of the present" to "take care of the future of that movement", to win the workers to socialist consciousness.

Our program takes into account the division of American workers on racial lines, projects the need to struggle against both the exploiters and their "labor-lieutenants" within the unions, which now cover more than 18 million ~~workers~~ and the most basic industries, poses the "rank and file" or "left-wing" caucus as the key to, not only an alternative and revolutionary leadership within particular unions, but also to a transitional organization, a network of such caucuses, which can become in time, the factory committees, the councils or "Soviets"--the "Socialist Industrial Union", in De Leonist terms--the organs of "dual power", of working class rule.

It would seem that your group, which began with De Leon's "Socialist Industrial Union" concept, and we, with Trotsky's "Transitional Program", have arrived in part at somewhat parallel approaches, judging from the felicitously entitled "What Is To Be Done Now" section of the pamphlet, "Survival Is the Issue". Thus your group also addressed itself to the central question of transforming the existing trade-union movement, with its narrow craft and "business-unionism" outlook, into a united, industry-

wide class organization, whose democratic function would be guaranteed by a class-conscious rank and file. That you did so some six years before us, does you credit, and also reinforces our own confidence in our program.

As to our criticisms of this program--and recognizing that your Cleveland group originated it ten years ago, that conditions have considerably altered since then, and that you are presently engaged in modifying it in the light of present conditions--our principle criticism is directed at what seems to relate to your SLP origins, its lack of a transitional quality. For example, a programmatic point in the pamphlet which is similar to ours, e.g., "reduce the work week...with no cut in income" is posed as something to be achieved after the achievement of "planned production for social use". In general, there is no attempt to connect the immediately felt needs and struggles, the present level of consciousness to the "future of the movement". Even the question of "rank and file" democracy is presented apart from the economic struggle. We note that your draft statement, "What Is SLIG", now proposes to build "RSIU / Revolutionary Socialist Industrial Union / caucuses within...existing unions", and not merely propagandize from outside. But again, the question of leadership in the economic struggles, "in the movement of the present" is ignored.

The pamphlet also treats the division of American workers on racial lines very gingerly where it refers to it at all, and the "What Is To Be Done Now" section completely ignores this central question. That this treatment is not accidental, can be seen from the other materials which you were kind enough to send us. Even the recent "Society In Crisis" refers to the Black people and other economically submerged portions of the population" only in conclusion, in recognition that they "will not certainly be resigned to suffering while they wait for socialism", while the draft statement says nothing whatsoever in

this connection.

We believe, as we have often stated, that class unity can be achieved, not by ignoring the divisions or by accommodating to the prejudices of the workers, but by struggle against these prejudices. One of the most pernicious manifestations of bourgeois ideology in the working class is racism. We cannot hope to win white or Black workers to socialist consciousness without directly confronting white supremacist ideology in all its forms. The struggle against it is not to be conducted on moral grounds or other bourgeois eternal verities, of course, but by relating it to present struggles, as well as to the fundamental needs of the workers. We believe that any accommodation on this issue can only diminish class-consciousness--in ourselves as well.

We understand the relationship between workers and intellectuals as you do, as we both use Marxist class criteria. We recognize that while intellectuals represent an inter-class or "cross-class occupational category", the majority today are "brain-workers", sell their labor-power in order to live, and are even productive workers, i.e., produce surplus-value for the bourgeoisie. In a number of fields, e.g., teaching, social-work, journalism, etc., they have also joined trade-unions, and it is of prime importance for revolutionists to carry on political work among them.

However, we must also remember that a division between mental and physical labor exists, which will be eliminated only with socialism. We must, therefore, understand the intellectual, not only from the formal economic criteria, but from social-political relationships as well. The intellectual workers also represent a privileged formation in the working class. Their way of life tends to imbue them, and especially their higher echelons, not with class-consciousness, but with a bourgeois outlook. Today, some "New Left" radicals are emphasizing the "new working class", meaning themselves, and minimizing

the role of "blue-collar" production workers. But the relative specific weight of the latter is much higher than that of the "white-collar" intellectuals. Put schematically, a general strike of industrial, transportation and communication workers, i.e., where the "blue-collar" workers are concentrated, would bring the economy to a dead halt in a matter of days. But the teachers? The social-workers?

As to our criticisms of the SLP as "sectarian", "opportunist" and "anti-Soviet", we grant you that we would and should change and even eliminate certain adjectives we have used, now that we have gained greater knowledge about that organization, without however, retracting the criticisms as such.

We mean by sectarianism, in the case of the SLP, self-isolating behavior, e.g., presenting a program to the workers as an ultimatum, on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, without having developed the necessary strategy and tactics, the intermediate steps, by which the workers' understanding can be raised to the socialist level; its refusal to be involved in struggle, its purely propagandistic stance--for generations. We have been treated to several renditions of De Leon's statements on "boring from within". De Leon, as Lenin points out, was an uncompromising revolutionary Marxist. He was also a revolutionary innovator. Having developed the concept of "Socialist Industrial Unionism", he posed it in "dual union" terms--a mistake, we believe. But I find it difficult to believe that De Leon would have let fifty or sixty years elapse, during which time a movement of the significance of the CIO took place, without having posed new approaches, new tactics, to win the working class for this position--as some of his present-day followers are now attempting.

As to "opportunism", we mean by this term, possessing and sowing illusions about the nature of class relations and/or in the capitalist state. We realize that such illusions may be retained in all sin-

cerity, but they remain opportunist nevertheless--and in the last analysis, even if unconsciously, represent an adaptation to the pressures of bourgeois society. It was one thing for De Leon, before the first World War and before fascism, to have talked about "civilized methods", and of achieving the transfer of power to the workers, to the SIU, through the ballot, and only raising as a possibility the use of armed terror by the exploiters. But today--with the spectacle of the American imperialist murder-machine in Indochina before our eyes, with the experience of two world slaughters and lesser "police actions", with the knowledge of what bestialities capitalism is capable of visiting on the workers who threaten its power--can there be any doubt that the American capitalists also will discard bourgeois democracy and try to maintain its class rule by force when it finds itself threatened? We believe that a program which sets forth the peaceful transition to socialism as the most likely possibility, preserves and propagates illusions in the nature of the capitalist state.

We also wish to use the electoral machinery to educate, to prepare the workers for the social revolution--and this to us also means the "fight for the attainment of the immediate aims"--but we also make clear that the ruling class will not permit them to vote in socialism, that they will have to create their organs of dual power, and then resolve the revolutionary crisis the way the Bolsheviks did by removing bourgeois "democracy" and replacing it with proletarian democracy. We believe that any other course, which banks on "democratic" institutions and constitutions, demonstrates a failure to understand that bourgeois-democracy, even at its "democratic" best is also and always a form of concentrated force and violence against the working class. Hyde is never very far from Jekyll, and will appear more often as the crisis of capitalism matures.

We can agree with you that the SLP's "criticisms of the Soviet

Union have always taken second place to its principle concern with the 'home enemy', to American capitalism". And yet, we compare its statements about "civilized methods" for the social revolution in the US, and about Soviet "despotism". We know full well the despotic nature of Stalinism. At the same time, we still see the retention of the conquests of the proletarian revolution, not only in the enormous development of the productive forces in the Soviet Union, but also in the consciousness of its workers and peasants who are now preparing a political revolution against the parasitic bureaucracy. It would seem that in the area of the capitalist and Soviet state as well, the SLP and the De Leonists in general have tended to emphasize form -- "democratic institutions" in the US and "despotism" in the Soviet Union -- at the expense of minimizing, distorting or ignoring elements of content -- the force and violence inherent in these institutions in the first, and the still-existing heritage of the October Revolution in the second.

It seems to us that the SLP and De Leonists in general have been content to repeat static formula. It was Heraclitus, you will recall, who stated that one cannot step into the same river twice, to which one of his disciples added -- not even once. The elements of which the river is composed are in motion even as one steps into it. It was for this reason that Trotsky saw the need to examine the content of formulas daily. We recognize that tendencies toward a static, metaphysical mode of thought, toward the separation of form and content, toward the eclectic elevation of form or aspects of content, exist in all of us.

This mode of thought is nowhere more clearly revealed, by the other socialist tendencies, than on the national question. It was because Lenin functioned as a revolutionary Marxist in the Tsarist "prison-house of nations", where more than 100 separate nationalities have emerged since the October Revolution, and

because he was a dialectical materialist, that he proposed his solution to the national question, the right of nations to self-determination. Lenin upheld this right not only for "Soviet republics", but for oppressed nations under capitalism.

Is the right of nations to self-determination a "principled question" with us in an absolute sense? Our fundamental principle is the abolition of capitalist and all other forms of oppression through the establishment of an international socialist community. All other principles must be congruent with and are therefore, subordinate to this principle. We fully understand that the national "principle" has arisen with the bourgeoisie, and will depart with it. Not only do we not make a fetish of it, but as revolutionary Marxists, we understand it to be a "fetter" on humanity, on the productive forces.

As Marx has noted, the workers become aware of their oppression and begin to fight out the class war within national boundaries. To this extent, the form of the struggle is national. But in essence, because socialism, as a rational, planned and classless society, can only exist on a world-wide basis, its struggle is international.

But the workers who are divided by national boundaries, and who, moreover, live in a world where some nations dominate, oppress and exploit others, have to be convinced of this truth. And this cannot be done by waving propaganda tracts at them.

Lenin understood that this contradictory unity, the national question, could not be treated metaphysically, one-sidedly; that to ignore the reality of national oppression in the name of internationalism would only play into the hands of the bourgeoisie of both oppressor and oppressed nations. Why the oppressor? Because the indifference to "nationalism" in this instance would only be a mask for annexationists, would not be internationalism, but only nationalism in disguise. To elevate the "nation" into an absolute principle, again

plays into the hands of the bourgeoisie, and again of both the oppressor and oppressed nations, uniting each with their respective bourgeoisie, at great cost to the masses, to the "nation", and to the negation of internationalism.

How can the workers within national boundaries be won for internationalism, be made to realize that security from national oppression, can only be achieved through the international socialist revolution? To this question, Lenin answered as Marx had answered on the Irish question before him, that the workers of the oppressed nation would have to be convinced that the workers of the oppressor nation were not allied with their "own" bourgeoisie in national oppression; that they would not consider the state borders of their "own" state, in which the oppressed nation was confined, to be sacrosanct, and would fight for the right of the oppressed nation to constitute itself as a separate nation. By showing themselves to be true internationalists, the workers of the oppressed could repose confidence in the working class of the oppressor nation. Then, after separation, might come federation, said Marx, in the case of Ireland. Then, the workers of the oppressed nation might decide not to separate, said Lenin.

Have we said anything qualitatively different on the national question in this respect? We have introduced a modification which we see as consistent with the Leninist position on the national question. Although the Black people in this country do not have a common territory, and are therefore, not a nation, we have said that should a majority of the Black people demand a separate territory, we would not consider the present boundaries of the US to be holy, but would support their right to separate. We state clearly that we do not consider this to be the best solution; we note that the overthrow of capitalism in the US will have to be accomplished before separation would be possible; we call for the united

struggle of Black and white workers for this social revolution--not on the basis of ignoring the special oppressed status of the Black people, but in a struggle against this special oppression as in the fundamental interests of all workers. The result? The Black workers can develop confidence in us and in the white workers as consistent revolutionists and internationalists, as class brothers, and may therefore, decide not to separate. What other course is there? To inform them that the white workers will oppose them, that they insist on retaining the territory of the US "inviolate"? This course can only serve to unite them with their "own" bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie under the banner of Black nationalism.

We consider our conception of a transitional organization in the trade-unions to be the method by which the "RSIU" can be built, and this common denominator can be the basis for fraternal relations between the De Leonists and ourselves. We believe that we can arrive at a greater mutual understanding of each others point of view through a process of "discussion, debate and unity in action". We sincerely hope that the discussion initiated will continue and be broadened to include others, and that we can be involved in common action in the building of a broad revolutionary movement.

* * *

OUR NEW SERIES

VANGUARD NEWSLETTER will begin an analysis in September of, "What Is The Spartacist League", the series now appearing in the "Bulletin".

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INFLATION AND THE ECONOMY - What Inflation Does

The "technical side of inflation", the growing inability of money to function as a stable measure of the value of commodities, as a result of the increase in the "money supply" in circulation, was discussed in our last issue.

We also defined the "broad" money supply as including, in addition to coins, Federal Reserve Notes and checking account deposits, "time and savings deposits, saving and loan shares, savings bonds and short term US government obligations..."

But the causes of the inflationary spiral, despite the "monetary" economists are not technical but, are rooted in the fundamental economic relationships of world capitalism.

During the second world war, and for the first years immediately thereafter, prices soared in all countries--so-called "demand-pull" inflation, where, as a result of the diversion of production to war goods and/or war-time shortages, excess money circulated in relation to available goods. Despite price controls, wholesale prices in the US increased by 20% during the war, and by an additional 50% in the five post-war years.

However, the present inflation results neither from "demand-pull" or "cost-push", i.e., "unreasonable" wage demands. The latter is a deliberate lie by a ruling class which hopes to utilize the middle classes and the unorganized workers against the organized, to keep the workers from winning back that which inflation has already taken from them, and to continue lowering their "real" wages even further.

Today's world-wide inflation is one of the symptoms of a developing malady, is an indication that changes in the relative positions of the capitalist countries are taking place within the world capitalist system, whose inherent contradictions are again reaching a stage of extreme sharpness.

US capitalism emerged from the second world war as the dominant nation in world capitalism, possessing most of its productive capacity and as its main support. The counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism

had ensured the survival of capitalism in Europe, but in a greatly weakened state. In these circumstances, the American ruling class was able to achieve its economic goals of shoring up the economy of Europe through "Marshall Plan" financial aid and loans. It thereby ensured against the possibility that social revolution might breach the restraints of the Stalinists and social-democrats, while also opening up the European economy to American capitalist penetration.

During the second world war and the immediate post-war period, the US was able to appropriate the bulk of the world's gold reserves.

Its preponderant economic strength also enabled American capitalism to suspend the law of value in international trade. The dollar became a world, "convertible" currency as a result of the Bretton Woods agreement in 1944, along with its dependent, the British pound, on the basis of gold priced at \$35 per ounce, a price established in 1934. But the prices of other commodities had more than doubled in the period from 1934 to 1950. American capitalism was therefore able to exchange less commodities for more gold. The dollar had to be accepted by European capitalism at its inflated value in international trade, in European capital investment.

Its greater productive capacity enabled American capitalism to achieve a large "positive" balance in world trade, of exports over imports, thereby forcing other countries to "devalue", to inflate, their currencies.

Devaluation of a currency enables the capitalists of a country with a "negative" balance of payments to sell their goods abroad at a lower price, i.e., encourages exports. It also makes imports more costly, and thereby, discourages them, thus improving the balance.

The further worsening of the relationship of other currencies to the dollar produced additional benefits for American capitalism. It was able to penetrate foreign corporate industry more readily with fewer dollars. It could purchase all commodities in these countries, including labor-power, at a lower cost in dollars, thereby deriving a higher profit from the cheapening of constant capital and from the increased rate of exploitation.

The new world division of labor, with American capitalism in the predominant role, which followed the second world war, and aided by the stimuli of deficit financing and a greatly expanded arms industry, became the basis for the quarter century of economic growth of American and world capitalism, and furnished the sinews which enabled the US ruling class to function as the gendarme for world capitalism.

The law of uneven development is now transforming the old relations. No longer is American capitalism without serious capitalist rivals. It is today being challenged in the market-place, and, first of all, in the sphere of production by its once prostrate foes. Germany and Japan, armed with the most modern productive facilities, and able to extract a higher rate of exploitation from its labor-forces, are now posing a growing threat to its hegemony.

In the automotive, steel and electronics, as well as the textile and shoe industries, not only is the position of America in world trade being eroded, but now its domestic market is being "invaded". Sectors of American industry are now demanding "protective" tariffs to protect the higher and increasingly inflated prices of its commodities, and its dwindling profits, from its foreign competitors.

The US has had a "negative" balance of payments for most of the past 20 years, with military spending and foreign "assistance" as large contributing factors, but its commercial trade balance was "positive" until 1968. It has since tended increasingly toward the "negative".

Today, as the "liquidity crisis"

worsens--the difficulties which such giant corporations as Penn Central are experiencing in "finding" liquid assets with which to pay off its short-term obligations--as interest rates for money capital increases, with the curtailing of the money supply and credit, foreign capital begins to seek profits from the American "corporate structure".

US capitalism is now over-extended in its role as the watch-dog of world capitalism, and is finding it difficult to cope with the added strain of an enlarging war in Indochina, added to the costs of maintaining thousands of military installations throughout the world and vast expenditures for nuclear and "conventional" weapons.

Its Keynesian techniques, e.g., tax and monetary manipulation, deficit financing, no longer act as effective stimulants to, or "controls" for, the economy. Inflation threatens to "get out of hand", to wreck the economy, to bring on, not a "recession" but, a "depression". In trying to curb inflation by decreasing the money in circulation and tightening credit, the Nixon Administration has "traded off" unemployment. Even if the economy responds to the easing of credit and monetary restraints in response to the pleas of assorted representatives of the ruling class, unemployment is now expected to reach the 6% mark.

The value of "blue chip" stocks, the estimated worth of industrial capital, as measured by such indicators as the Dow-Jones average, has fallen by one-third in the past year and a half, reflecting the new economic realities, and the growing conviction of the owners of corporate wealth and stock market speculators that the American economy is in serious straits.

While the signs of growing difficulties for American and world capitalism continue to multiply, the American ruling class is still able to maneuver, but only to keep the economy precariously perched, to perhaps stave off a prolonged downturn for the present, only to ensure a worse collapse in the near future.

(to be continued)

NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

The Arab-Israeli Question --Program For The Middle East

Our program follows logically from our premises.

If as we have stated, Israel is a capitalist state, and not simply an "outpost of imperialism", if the surrounding "Arab" states are, not "socialist" but also, capitalist states, albeit with productive forces at a lower level of development, then the struggle against one's "own" capitalism is the "lesser evil", in Lenin's words. Not unity with the "bourgeoisie in defense of the national interest", but the unity of the Arab and Jewish masses against "their" bourgeoisie and the Bonapartist surrogates.

[This requires that the Jewish masses demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from the territories occupied in the 1967 war, as well as the immediate and unconditional return of the Palestinian Arabs to the lands stolen from them by the Israeli state.] Only this will convince the Arab masses that the Jewish masses are brothers in the struggle against class oppression.

But what about the Jewish settlers who now, individually and collectively, possess these lands? And can the economy of the tiny state of Israel support an additional 2 million inhabitants?

[In joining the Arab masses in these demands, and also in the demand that all laws which discriminate against Arabs, such as the "Law of Return", be ended, the ground is prepared for a socialist revolution which will put an end to the Zionist semi-theocratic Israeli state together with the Arab regimes, and result in a Middle East socialist federation.]

From the viewpoint of continuing capitalist relations in the Middle East and elsewhere, this program seems "unrealistic" and therefore, "unreasonable". But "reason" on a capitalist basis means an inexorable escalation of the present war in the Middle East, and perhaps, the in-

volvement of the US and USSR in a nuclear holocaust, with at the least, the sacrifice of many millions of lives, and agony for countless millions of others.

The Middle East like the world in general has no future under capitalism. Indeed in Goethe's words, reason becomes unreason and kindness a pest. The "rational" relations of capitalism in general were long ago transformed into a "unreason", became "irrational", while the socialist solution, on the contrary, is becoming more necessary, more "rational" and more "real" with each day.

In denying the humanity of Arabs, in condemning them to refugee camps and to the "largess" of the Arab rulers, what have the Zionists achieved for the Jewish masses? Their standard of living, on the average, may be three times higher than that of the Arabs, but it is still less than a third of that of the United States, at the expense of transforming Israel into a Jewish enclave in a hostile Arab sea.

The maturing world crisis of capitalism will mean an end to the \$200 million a year donated to Israel by Jews in the rest of the world. Financial support from the US will also come to an end. From economic considerations alone, Israel as a Zionist state will not be viable in these conditions. In 1966-7, despite outside financial assistance, Israel suffered an economic crisis. As mass unemployment developed, Jews began to emigrate.

The crisis of world Stalinism is also becoming sharper. While crises of a cyclical character can no longer occur in the Soviet Union and the deformed workers' states, the growing complexity of the economy makes the Stalinist Bonapartist caste increasingly incompatible with the collective property foundations. The growing economic disequilibrium,

is the basis for the approaching political revolution, whose symptoms are becoming increasingly evident. As the economic difficulties grow, less support for the military-bureaucratic regimes in the Middle East will be possible.

A political revolution in the Soviet Union would, of course, end the counter-revolutionary policy of support for the "liberal" bourgeoisie in the advanced countries and the Bonapartist regimes elsewhere, for a "deal" with imperialism, and for short-range "gains", at the expense of the proletarian revolution.

Within a socialist perspective, the seemingly insurmountable problems in the Middle East find their solution.

Even a cursory examination of the natural resources--the mineral and oil deposits, the possibilities for agriculture through irrigation--reveals its potential for the future.

The "justification" for driving a people from its lands, so that others can have a "homeland" will only be understood as an aberrant obscenity as the greatly enlarged means of production, owned in common, operated on the basis of a rational plan, and integrated into a world socialist community, begin to pour forth a presently unimagined abundance, and as the memory of the daily meagre ration under capitalism recedes into the past.

The Israeli Socialist Organization, which publishes "Matzpen", is the only "socialist" organization in the Middle East which poses the struggle for socialism as the road to peace, and which conducts the struggle against its "own" ruling class as the main enemy. However, its Stalinist origins and present relations with the "United Secretariat of the 4th International", and the SWP in this country, make it susceptible to opportunist conceptions on the national question and the "Arab Revolution". Thus, it demands a de-Zionized Israeli state, while also supporting its opposite, "the right" of the Jewish people to a state of its own, i.e., the right, in this instance, to exclude Arab "undesirables". It also adapts to the peasant-guerrillas and to the

Arab states on which they all lean --in one or another degree--by insisting that as an Israeli movement, it does not have the right to tell another people how it should conduct its resistance movement or what its aims should be.

The revolutionary party which will fight for a Leninist and Trotskyist perspective and program for the socialist revolution in the Middle East has still to be created.

LESSONS... (continued from p. 57)

They merely abstained from voting on issues, on such "trifles" as the labor party. By its obsequious conduct, the SWP exposed its eagerness to re-establish its "popular front" bloc with the CP, as well as its open abandonment of the labor party position for classless Black and Chicano "people's" parties.

VANGUARD NEWSLETTER's foresight --on the need for a transitional organization, for a net-work of "rank and file" or "left-wing" caucuses in the trade unions, which would fight to unite the class against the bosses and their labor leaders, which would fight against white chauvinism and its reflection, Black nationalism, was conclusively demonstrated at Chicago, but in the negative. Utilized by the CP for its class-collaborationist politics, it was turned into its opposite.

But as the world crisis of capitalism develops, the working class also moves to throw off the restraint of the social-reformists of all stripes. The CP in this country, will not become a serious impediment to working class radicalization--even for a short period at this historic juncture--provided that, and to the extent that, a mass revolutionary party exists. The construction of just such a party, under the new objective conditions, is now possible.

However, the other self-proclaimed "revolutionary" organizations at the Chicago conference have again shown that they are not only incapable of building the revolutionary vanguard party, but are, moreover, barriers to its construction.