

VANGUARD NEWSLETTER

Published monthly by independent revolutionary socialists

Editors: Harry Turner, Hugh Fredricks, Robert Davis

P. O. Box 67, Peck Slip Station, New York, N. Y. 10038

Vol. 2 No. 9 Price 10¢ (\$1.00 per year) Labor donated October 1970

Contents: Canadian Working Class Under Attack	p. 91
Inflation and the Economy	
--The Nature of the Crisis	94
Electoral Policy and Economics	96
IC Courts United Secretariat	99
Trotskyism Today	
--The Split In the SWP Left Tendency	102

CANADIAN WORKING CLASS UNDER ATTACK

∟The invocation of the War Measures Act in Canada is an attack on the Canadian working class as a whole, and not only on the French-Canadians in Quebec, as the following report makes clear.

∟As can be seen by the reaction of official Washington, the American ruling class holds in reserve a similar assault on its working class, is also preparing to deal with Black, student and working class militants through open police state measures, and is "educating" the public for this eventuality.

∟The attacks on workers and students in North America and throughout the world, have to be related to the sharpening contradictions of the world capitalist system and of Stalinism. As the crisis of capitalism deepens, both the US and Canadian bourgeoisie are compelled to place its growing burden on their working classes. Where there are specially oppressed minorities and or oppressed nations, its effects, such as inflation and unemployment tend to fall with greater weight upon them, producing a heightened national and ethnic consciousness and struggle.

∟VANGUARD NEWSLETTER and the LABOR ACTION COMMITTEE of Canada have recognized that the unity of the working class for the socialist revolu-

tion can only be forged when the workers of the oppressor nation conduct an uncompromising struggle for the democratic rights of the oppressed nation, national and ethnic minorities, including the right to national self-determination, i.e., the right to separate. To the extent that the workers of the dominant nation recognizes that such a struggle is necessary in their own immediate and fundamental interests, and carry it out, it becomes possible for the workers of the oppressed nation to decide not to separate, to remain within the same national state or to achieve a federated relationship with it on a voluntary basis.

∟National and racial oppression in turn generates acts of individual and organizational terrorism, sometimes under a "Marxist" label and with socialism as the projected goal. But, while unconditionally defending the individuals and groups concerned against the repressive acts of the ruling class, Marxists have always opposed this tactic on two counts. It is, first of all, an elitist substitution of a small group for the working class, whose action alone can accomplish the social overturn. In addition, the tactic only serves to unleash a police terror against the student-

intellectuals, revolutionists and advanced workers, and often plays into the hands of the ruling class, in this respect.

✓The workers in both Canada and the US are moving into struggle, are refusing to allow their capitalists to shift the burden of the crisis onto their backs. The bourgeoisie in both countries is determined to overcome this "obstinacy", to destroy the right to strike, to ensure that a docile trade union bureaucracy controls the rank and file, and to place the unions under state control.

✓Terrorist acts give the ruling class the excuse it seeks to mobilize the middle classes and backward workers for a union-smashing police terror to end "unreasonable union demands", i.e., reduce the living

standards of the working class, and to "restore law and order".

✓As the report also shows, the construction of an independent labor party in both Canada and the US is of the greatest import to the workers in their fight to maintain their living standards, and as a step toward socialist consciousness and the socialist revolution.

✓VANGUARD NEWSLETTER joins the LAC in calling for the formation of an international defence committee, and in calling upon the militants in the American trade unions to demand that action be taken in support of the Canadian working class, to demand the revocation of the War Measures Act, and the immediate release of all those jailed under its provisions.✓

* * * * *

The imposition of the War Measures Act by the Trudeau government is a clear attack on the national rights and aspirations of the Quebec people and on the working and student masses of Canada as a whole.

In the early morning hours of 16 October, the Trudeau government through its direct agents, the Canadian Armed Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Quebec and local police, began a campaign to round up labor and student militants primarily in Quebec and its largest city, Montreal, which was being occupied by 10,000 fully armed soldiers. All told, nearly 400 were picked up and held under the Act. The majority of these are still being held in secret without legal counsel.

The War Measures Act, which was instituted following the kidnapping of and death threats to British Trade Commissioner James Cross and Quebec Labor and Immigration Minister Pierre Laporte, gives the government practically unlimited powers. Under the Act, which has completely by-passed Parliament, detainment without arrest, and search without warrant becomes the right of any soldier or policeman throughout the country. Any political group can be outlawed, as was the Front de Liberation du Quebec (FLQ). Imprisonment for up to 5 years can be ordered for any past

or present member, person who conveys messages, or who advocates the program or any sections of the program of the outlawed group.

Under the Act, freedom of speech and press become objects of government censorship. The RCMP has already censored several English language newspapers outside of Quebec under its provisions which empowers them to control all means of communication. The LABOR ACTION COMMITTEE, as well as other socialist groups have faced severe limitations as a result. Simple opposition to the War Measures Act by individuals, has even been considered illegal and has resulted in the jailing of more than one person.

Jailed under the Act, are a number of trade union leaders, among them Michel Chartrand, president of the Montreal executive of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CNTU), representing more than 66,000 workers. Many other trade unionists are being detained, including one who was dragged from a negotiating table, while engaging in a labor dispute with the government. Of particular interest was

the jailing of key people in the Montreal civic election campaign of the Front d'Action Politique (FRAP). FRAP, which is constituted as a labor-socialist party with the backing of trade unions, is seen as the most powerful opponent of Montreal Mayor Drapeau, and is campaigning on a program of some benefit to labor, which also recognizes the national rights of the Quebecois. Jean Marchand, Federal Regional Expansion Minister, added fuel to the fire by declaring that FRAP was a "front" for the FLQ, and by implication, illegal. Although Marchand later qualified his statement for the "record, Drapeau repeated the slander, and warned in addition, that "blood will flow" if FRAP wins the election.

As if the government had not been granted extensive enough powers to smash the left in Quebec, police are complaining that their powers are not broad enough. There have been public reports of expressions of approval for "our own liquidation squad--maybe Brazil has the right idea". Real Caouette, leader of the Ralliement Creditiste, the powerful proto-fascist party in Quebec, which has 14 members of parliament, has called for the execution of 10 hostages held under the War Measures Act, to avenge the death of Pierre Laporte, whom the FLQ referred to as the Minister of Unemployment and Assimilation.

The major trade unions in Quebec have united in their opposition to the War Measures Act. The CNTU, the Quebec Workers Federation, the Quebec Teachers Corporation and the Parti Quebecois have issued a joint communique condemning the Act. In Parliament, only the New Democratic Party (NDP) has opposed it. Yet in its "opposition", the NDP proposed a slightly less stringent form of "emergency" legislation to deal with "insurrectionists".

Trudeau most clearly revealed the true thinking of the government, when he said, "I wish the leader of the New Democratic Party would ask himself how much information Krensky had in the spring of 1917 when he was pooh-poohing the possibility

of insurrection which in fact happened October 1917."

The use of the War Measures Act cannot be divorced from Trudeau's so-called "price-wage restraint" program which he had hoped to ram down the throats of the Canadian working class with the help of the Canadian labor movement. The Canadian workers have refused to "cooperate". They have also indicated that they would have no part of the government's new scheme for a "voluntary" limit of 6% on annual wage increases.

This Act must also be related to the amendments proposed earlier this year to the Canadian collective bargaining act of 1947, which follows the general line of the anti-labor Rand Report, and which provides for a labor court to levy fines on militant unions, which permits scabs to be members of unions, and which defines unions as legal entities responsible to the government.

It will not be long before the labor movement throughout the country will begin to feel the brunt of the government's reactionary policies under the War Measures Act (which has 6 more months to go) or similar legislation. The official disinterest of the Canadian Labor Congress to the events in Quebec will have to be broken down, and a common front created between the organizations of the English and French working classes. The American workers can play an extremely important role by having their unions express their solidarity with the Canadian workers in opposition to this Act, in demanding the release of those jailed under it, and in helping to organize an international defense committee to aid political prisoners and their families. Among union militants in Quebec, there is a drive for a general strike to oppose the War Measures Act. Such an action by the working class needs its political companion, a labor party. The creation of FRAP is an indication that an independent party of the working class is now found to be an urgent necessity by many trade unionists.

INFLATION AND THE ECONOMY - The Nature of the Crisis

Trotsky, in April 1939, wrote as an introduction to the Living Thought of Karl Marx, an abridgement of the first volume of Capital by Otto Rühle, an essay, now in pamphlet form, entitled Marxism In Our Time.

In defending Marx's prognosis that the sharpening contradictions of capitalism would result in its "catastrophic collapse", against the opportunist theoreticians of "peaceful development", Trotsky made the point that:

"The life of monopolistic capitalism in our time is a chain of crises. Each crisis is a catastrophe. The need of salvation from these partial catastrophes by means of tariff walls, inflation, increase of government spending and debts lays the ground for additional, deeper and more widespread crises. The struggle for markets, for raw materials, for colonies makes military catastrophe unavoidable. All in all, they prepare revolutionary catastrophes."

It is as though Trotsky was writing not in 1939 but in 1970!

But the capitalist "catastrophe" which was being prepared in 1939, was not resolved by the workers in a revolutionary manner. With the help of Stalinism, world capitalism survived the blood bath of the second World War, but with large areas no longer under its control. The Stalinist bureaucracy was able to prevent the working class from leading the masses to the successful accomplishment of the social overturn. Instead, the Stalinist surrogates in the East were able to construct societies not qualitatively differing from the workers' state in its degenerate form.

World capitalism was able to achieve, first a re-stabilization with the aid of American imperialism, and then a new period of growth.

Trotsky was confident that the working class under the leadership of the Fourth International would achieve a revolutionary breakthrough in western Europe and the political overthrow of the Soviet bureaucracy; that the alternative to a socialist

revolution would be the re-conquest of the Soviet Union by a world capitalism under fascist leadership, the decline of civilization, and a return to a new barbarism. But the possibility of a new period of capitalist growth was foreseen by Trotsky.

In 1921, reporting on "The World Economic Crisis and New Tasks of the Communist International", to the Third World Congress of the CI, Trotsky said the following:

"If we grant...that the working class fails to rise in revolutionary struggle, but allows the bourgeoisie the opportunity to rule the world's destiny for a long number of years, say two or three decades, then assuredly some new sort of equilibrium will be established. Europe will be thrown violently into reverse gear. Millions of European workers will die from unemployment and malnutrition. The US will be compelled to reorient itself on the world market, reconvert its industry, and suffer curtailment for a considerable period. Afterwards, after a new world division of labor is thus established in agony for 15, 20 or 25 years, a new epoch of capitalist upsurge might ensue.

"But this entire conception is exceedingly abstract and one-sided. Matters are pictured here as if the proletariat had ceased to struggle." (First 5 Years of the CI, Vol. 1, p. 211)

Trotsky's conception could not help but be "exceedingly abstract" in 1921. The precise development could not be foreseen. But his mastery of the Marxist method enabled him to understand the possible paths of development, even of a path which he could only conceive of as a logical construct at that time.

The masses did not cease struggling, but the Bonapartist caste which was shortly to come to power aided

by its international apparatus, did succeed in handcuffing them, in leading them back under the yoke of capitalism. "Millions of European workers did "die from...malnutrition" and from war. The US did "reconvert its industry..." , did "reorient itself in the world market..." , "a new world division of labor..." was established "in agony", with the US at the center, "25 years" after Trotsky's prophetic words, and "a new epoch of capitalist upsurge" did ensue.

Although the point at which quantity turns into quality is one of the most difficult determinations, we believe that this upsurge is now at an end, that it began to turn into its opposite in 1968, and that the economic downturn will prove to be "catastrophic".

We cannot, however, foretell the manner in which it will unfold. World capitalism is still, and has since 1968 been, precariously balanced on the edge of a precipice. As we have shown, all indications are that it has lost its balance, is in the process of falling. Can it still manage to teeter a while longer? Will it immediately and directly fall into the abyss, or will it manage to cling to the sides for a time as it goes down?

The complexity of the capitalist system makes any precise projection extremely difficult. While the Keynesian techniques of manipulating money, credit and taxes have lost their "magic", they can still exert an effect on the American economy. Within a world capitalism in crisis, countries such as West Germany, Japan and Italy have experienced an economic expansion since 1968. But here also, the growing inflation, the falling off of economic growth, and increasing unemployment signal the end of the expansion.

The existence of a bloc of non-capitalist states also affects the capitalist cycle.

The degenerate and deformed workers' states are no longer subject to the production and financial crises of capitalism. Socialization of the means of production, a planned economy and the monopoly of

foreign trade are the fruits of the October Revolution. Despite Stalinist mismanagement, and its growing threat to these conquests, they still survive.

The Soviet bureaucrats are able to boast with validity that "their" economy has not been subject to the world-wide inflation. While the law of value continues to operate in--not a "socialist" but a transitional economy between socialist and capitalist, and which still can move in either direction--while exchange takes place on the basis of the labor-content of products, this law no longer determines investment, does not regulate production, and is, therefore, not subject to the fundamental contradiction of capitalism, between the expanding productive forces and the capitalist rate of profit.

The Soviet market is now being eagerly investigated by leading capitalist countries, who are also investing in the construction of productive facilities. But the Soviet economy becomes increasingly incompatible with its bureaucratic caste, with state planning which results in increasing economic disproportions, inefficiency and waste as the economy grows. The growth rate of Soviet economy has drastically fallen in the past decade.

Funds for future expansion are becoming less available. The long-term credits which the Soviet Union requires, is just what crisis-ridden capitalism cannot afford.

The productive forces are increasingly clashing with capitalist and Stalinist controls. The "catastrophe" being prepared is already visible in the radicalization of youth, the struggles of the specially oppressed minorities, the growing working class struggles, the upheavals in advanced and underdeveloped countries. Capitalism now destroys the material foundations of human existence, the "ecology", and threatens a nuclear "catastrophe".

Only a revolutionary leadership can open the way to the socialist future. Without it, humanity is threatened, not only with a return to barbarism, but with extinction.

ELECTORAL POLICY AND ECONOMICS

Once again American voters are faced with the task of selecting candidates to represent them in national and state government.

Marxists have had to conduct a two-sided struggle against sectarians and opportunists on the proper approach to and use of the electoral machinery.

They have had to combat, on the one hand, those with a syndicalist orientation, who oppose the use of parliamentary bodies as platforms for agitation and propaganda, who cannot understand that it is necessary to conduct a fight there to link the immediate interests of the working class to the fundamental need to overthrow capitalism, and on the other, the social-opportunists, who seek to ameliorate the injustices and inequalities inherent in capitalist society via the electoral machinery, who hope to fill the capitalist forms gradually with "socialist" content.

Politics is one of the elements of the super-structure which is more directly responsive to changes in the economic base. It is from their interaction that we view this and every election, to determine the psychology of the working class and other classes, and to pose the political program which we believe will best advance the revolutionary consciousness of American workers.

In 1964, the American economy was riding high. Keynesian manipulation of taxes and credit seemed to assure the ruling class of a new golden age, an enduring "prosperity", the abolition of crises and their concomitant social convulsions.

The expanding economy was reflected in the mood which pervaded all classes, and which was in turn reflected in the 1964 election returns which saw Johnson defeat Goldwater by one of the largest percentages of the popular vote in modern American history.

Four years later, the euphoric outlook had disappeared. The Republican party, represented by Nixon, who campaigned on a conservative platform, was able to defeat Humphrey, the presidential candidate

of the Democratic party. Wallace, at the head of a racist and reactionary movement, who had alarmed the politicians of the two main parties of capitalism by the receptivity of his "message" to white, and in particular, white "blue-collar" workers, was held to 13.5% of the national popular vote, and to victories in only southern states.

The shift in the voting pattern reflected the increasing dissatisfaction with the expanded involvement in the Vietnamese war, the galloping inflation and rising taxes to which it directly contributes, and with the increasing social unrest, with the "breakdown of law and order", i.e., the increasingly militant struggles of the Black people for an end to their special oppression, which had been manifested in uprisings in large cities, in demands for an end to police brutality, for jobs, housing and education, and in the radicalization of the youth, in militant student-campus actions.

The American government, which had used its unparalleled post-World War II economic strength to maintain the dollar as a currency which could be converted into gold at \$35 an ounce -- during a period when world prices of all other commodities tripled -- is now finding that the uneven development of capitalism has produced rivals who can compete with it in the world market, in producing goods at a lower price, in invading her domestic market and in displacing her in foreign markets, as the ratio of imports to exports, the so-called balance of foreign payment testifies. Inflation is rising in the US and is transmitted throughout the world as a result of the deficit financing, and the resulting expansion of money and credit, which is required to pay for the US role of world gendarme, and to keep the economy at a high plateau in a world economy which has begun to turn downward.

The unending war in Vietnam, now in all of Indochina, becomes an increasingly intolerable burden on the economy. Its effect on the economy and in radicalizing the youth has split the ruling class, has caused a section of it to oppose its continuance, and has made it one of the most unpopular wars in US history. Nixon's "peace" demagoguery about withdrawing American troops, while helping increase the size of Saigon's army, must be seen in this context.

In these circumstances, the "war against poverty", which the Johnson Administration and the liberal wing of the capitalist class had proclaimed could be nothing but wind.

Many white workers, faced with deteriorating standards of living, fed propaganda about "welfare state" spending by conservative and racist demagogues, who also boost "defense" spending to protect "our way of life" in Indochina and elsewhere, and who also understand the tide of rising militancy among the Black and other specially oppressed minorities and youth as a threat to their security and living standards, were won to the "hard" policies of Nixon, with a sizeable section drawn toward the even "harder" policies of a Wallace.

The Democratic Party, had been able to maintain itself from 1936 on, as a "popular front" coalition headed by a section of the bourgeoisie, the so-called liberal wing who directed its policies, with organized labor, the Black, Spanish-speaking and Jewish minorities, the liberals, intellectuals and the political machines marching behind. The coalition managed to survive into the '60's, as long as the expanding economy could still afford economic concessions to all its components. With the slowing down of the economy, and the turn toward recession, the coalition went into crisis.

But the inflation has also required the workers to fight for the maintenance of their living standards against the capitalists and their labor-stooges, to reject sell-out contracts, has also resulted in a

sharp increase in the number and militancy of strikes since 1965.

In the past two years under the Nixon Administration, inflation has not abated, despite initially "tighter" monetary and credit policies, while the recession has resulted in an over-all unemployment rate in excess of 5.5%.

Using the traditional ruling class policy of divide and rule, the Nixon Administration, on the one hand, introduced the "Philadelphia Plan" to pit Black against white workers in construction, while, on the other, gaining the support of the more backward and racist of the construction workers for the genocidal war in Indochina, and for anti-Black and anti-student "law and order" policies.

Because the militant trade union traditions of the American working class evaporated under "New Deal" tutelage with Stalinist help and in the post-World War II economic upsurge, because of the isolation of the "left", of the socialist movement from the organized working class, the failure of the revolutionary socialists to build a base in the existing labor movement, because the workers, who are concerned to keep their living standards from being eroded, have not yet been won for independent working class politics, the 1970 elections promise to see increasing support for more conservative and right wing demagogues.

All election polls testify to the apathy of the voters, who have to choose between the "liberal" Democratic Party, which they hold responsible for the involvement in Vietnam, for unleashing the inflation, for not upholding "law and order", and the Republicans whose electioneering against "radical lawlessness" and "radical-liberals", has not made the workers absolve them for the continuing inflation and for the rapidly increasing unemployment. In these circumstances, more workers are paying greater attention to the siren song of the Buckley's in the more conservative parties, who promise to cut "welfare state" but not warfare spending, to decrease taxes, end inflation, and

crack-down on "criminals" and "trouble-makers", i.e., Blacks students and revolutionists.

The 1970 election returns will bring added proof, that an independent party of the working class, a labor party, is an indispensable step at this juncture, not only to end their support to the twin parties of capitalism, but also to point out a real, i.e., a class road of struggle for the maintenance and improvement in their standard of living. Without it, without a viable alternative, as the world crisis of capitalism worsens, as the capitalists try to solve the social contradictions at the expense of the working class, as the social fabric is rent by sharper struggles, in the ghettos, on the campuses and in longer and more militant strikes, the more backward workers will be drawn in increasing numbers to reactionary, pre-fascist and then to fascist "solutions".

Those "revolutionary socialists" who reject the labor party slogan as "parochial", who can only conceive of a labor party based on the trade unions as a vehicle for labor bureaucrats, who abandon their responsibility to struggle within the trade unions for the political content that an independent party of the working class must have, demonstrate that they have failed to understand that the same working class which is today backward, is being propelled into class struggles and is more and more, and especially its less aristocratic layers, becoming receptive to class and socialist politics. But the next step forward will not be to one of the minuscule socialist parties, but to an intermediate, a transitional organization, a labor party, within which the socialists can fight for a class program.

VANGUARD NEWSLETTER has called for the building of rank and file caucuses, which will unite the white and Black workers on a class struggle program, in the fight against the special oppression of minority workers within the context of a struggle for the immediate and fundamental interests of all workers.

It is on the foundation of these caucuses, that the labor party slogan must be understood.

The only "left" alternatives on the ballot are the Socialist Workers, Socialist Labor and Communist party candidates.

But the CP is running its candidates, not as spokesmen for the socialist cause, but rather to promote its popular front "anti-monopoly" coalition in support of the liberal bourgeoisie and its candidates for "peace" and for reforms which are acceptable to them. We believe that socialists who use a class criterion cannot support its program or the candidates who promote it.

As to the SWP and SLP, the platforms of both parties pose the issue of socialism.

However, the SWP has abandoned a working class orientation. It has long ignored serious work in trade unions, in the organized working class. In the struggle against the Indochinese war, it promotes classless anti-war coalitions and adapts to the popular front policies of the CP. As we indicate elsewhere in this issue, while it still formally retains the labor party plank in its electoral program, it has in reality abandoned it. It has made an opportunistic adaptation to every petty-bourgeois "third world" nationalist movement and panacea, apart from, over and against the working class, as we have shown.

The SLP maintains a sectarian policy of demanding that the workers abandon their existing unions for pure and revolutionary "socialist industrial unions", while also managing to sow opportunist illusions about voting out the ruling class "democratically" and in a "civilized" manner. Its abstentionist policies toward the organized working class is matched by an equally abstentionist policy of avoiding involvement in the rising struggles of the Black and Spanish-speaking workers, of women and youth.

We believe that the perennial candidates of the SWP and SLP can have little if any influence on the
(continued on p. 101)

IC COURTS UNITED SECRETARIAT

The national secretary of the Socialist Labour League, Gerry Healy, in behalf of the International Committee of the Fourth International (IC) has proposed discussions with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec) "centered on outstanding political differences and directed toward the holding of a joint international conference."

As his statement reprinted in the "Bulletin" of Sept. 21st made clear, Comrade Healy did not initiate "proposals as such for unity", but did intend serious discussions, and was not engaging in a "factional maneuver over unity".

Cde. Healy believes that the "favorable objective situation", e.g., "the working class of Britain and W Europe is moving toward open class conflict and into revolutionary politics on a scale never before experienced by our movement...", thereby requiring the two bodies to determine through such discussions "whether or not some advances could be made along this road."

In addition, both organizations are "thrust more and more into the bitterest struggles against the counter-revolutionary forces of Stalinism and social democracy..., the building of mass revolutionary parties is within...reach in a number of important countries...", and "there are now serious forces on both sides that want to have the discussion".

Cde. Healy proposes "the fullest and frankest discussion on all disputed questions", and is opposed to the evasion of any "important political difference".

To enable discussions to proceed in a "comradely" way, Cde. Healy announced his readiness to "enter into mutual agreement" to have them take place "internally within our respective organizations", and no longer in the "public press".

The USec reply, carried in the Oct. 5th "Intercontinental Press", amplified its earlier statement in July. At that time, it had pointed out that the IC proposal "stands in strong contrast with the slanderous attacks.../by/ the SLL and OT /Organisation Trotskyste/..." against their leaders, and the "systematic refusal to engage in common

actions in Britain and France, even in defending victims of repression by imperialism or Stalinism..." It had then also concluded that "unification is not a realistic perspective", because of the sharp political differences which exist between the two organizations.

Adopting a more strident tone, the USec charged the IC with disregarding the "key question; that is, the depth of the political and theoretical differences separating us and whether these have been lessening or growing greater." The USec believes these differences--manifested in two interrelated areas: (1) characterization of the two sides from a class standpoint; (2) specific political and theoretical issues--to have been "growing greater since 1963".

Content to defer the second area "for another time", the USec hastened to itemize its grievances concerning IC "characterization", e.g., "the SLL had charged the SWP with having 'capitulated to imperialism' and with having 'sold out the anti-war movement'"; it had identified the SWP as "'the left wing of the radical middle class'" and "'no longer a proletarian tendency'"; it had made similar "allegations" against Cannon; it had called for an uncompromising struggle against Pabloism and the SWP as the "'servants of the class enemy'"; it had made threats against those circulating Hanson's pamphlet, "Healy 'Reconstructs' the Fourth International", and had followed them up by a physical attack on one of its supporters; it had slandered one of its leaders as "'in the pay of the Bolivian government'", etc., etc.

The USec then demanded, in effect, that the IC issue a public retraction of the "slanders" as a condition for discussions, and that its leaders also state their "political

reasons for changing" their opinion toward it.

The exchanges between the IC and USec offer many useful lessons for the revolutionary Marxists in the struggle against opportunism and revisionism.

Assuming that Cde. Healy was completely sincere in his proposals for discussions, that he was not simply engaging in "a 'unity' maneuver", as the USec believes possible, and that he was trying to clear a road for revolutionary politics, it is still abundantly evident that the organizational step he proposed, could not resolve the political question at issue, the political and organizational defeat of Pabloite revisionism. Because the organizational approach did "disregard" or at least, minimize the "depth of the political and theoretical differences", as the USec was quick to announce, not only was the overture bound to be fruitless, but also tend to restore or preserve illusions in some "Trotskyist" opportunist leaders and organizations, to politically weaken if not immobilize members and sympathizers of IC sections.

How could the projected discussions have achieved "advances... along this unity road" in building "mass revolutionary parties"? By an agreement for a present revolutionary direction which ignores the culpability of a section of USec leaders for the opportunist policies of the past? Even if an approach of this kind was possible, and all indications are to the contrary, it would carry the seeds of a future debacle. As Trotsky has pointed out in Lessons of October and elsewhere, the revolutionary party is required to place its political capital on the scales at the decisive revolutionary moment. But just at that moment, an accumulated layer of conservatism in the leadership tends to hold it back from the revolutionary leap it must take. If the elements of conservatism in the party --which is in reality a form of opportunism--predominate, they will cause it to falter, to forego the revolutionary opportunity, to ruin itself and its cause, everything

which it has labored for years to build. The "mass revolutionary party" requires a leadership in which the confidence of the masses is not misplaced.

Cde. Healy is correct in pointing out that the problem of uniting the working class under revolutionary leadership is becoming increasingly acute, as the workers everywhere engage in heightened struggles against their capitalist rulers. The confusing assortment of "revolutionary" parties, self-identified Marxists, Leninists and Trotskyists, often with programmatic points in common, acts as an obstacle, tends to keep the workers from the Leninist working class party.

He justifies his overture to the Pabloites on the grounds that "our movement" has never beheld so unprecedented a working class upsurge. But "our" movement does not begin with Trotsky's struggles against the Stalinist bureaucracy. Cde. Healy, who emphasizes the continuity of Marxism, and the importance of the first four Congresses of the Communist International for revolutionary strategy and tactics is well aware that the international Communist movement under Lenin and Trotsky was faced with the same question on an even larger scale, of a working class "moving... into revolutionary politics". But they developed the tactic of the "united front" to deal with the opportunist leaderships, not Cde. Healy's tactic of "discussions" which take place "internally within... respective organizations", which are shielded from the "public press", and which can promote or preserve illusions in opportunist.

As we have often pointed out, the united front of working class organizations against the ruling class was based on a unity in action, on specific issues which advanced the workers' immediate and fundamental interests, which enabled the revolutionists to convince the ranks of the correctness of their program and of the superiority of their leadership, and to expose the opportunist leadership and program. Our approach to other radical and socialist for-

mations of "discussion, debate and unity in action" is an application of the united front tactic on a smaller scale, which does not make the slightest concession to opportunist organizations and policies, and without a moratorium on public criticism, as does Cde. Healy.

The Pabloite USec, which has and will continue to avoid political discussion and debate with revolutionary socialists at all costs, was able to attack the IC for its "refusal to engage in common actions ...". To the Pabloites, "common actions" inevitably means "popular front" anti-war blocs with the liberal bourgeoisie, adaptations to petty-bourgeois third world nationalists, Stalinists and to themselves. But our experiences with the WL, whose major action slogan seems to be "We will have nothing to do with ...", also indicated that it and the SLL do not understand, and cannot correctly apply the united front tactic when and if they attempt it, so as to cut the political ground from under the opportunists.

But perhaps there is a substantive basis for IC-USec discussions after all? We have on a number of occasions pointed to the unresolved elements of Pabloism in the political line of the WL and SLL. They have made and continue to make opportunist adaptations to petty-bourgeois nationalists and Stalinists in the under-developed countries. Under the banner of the "Arab Revolution", they encourage the illusion that Arab peasant-guerrilla nationalists are achieving a socialist revolution. They have yet to seriously analyze and attack the North Vietnamese Stalinist and NLF program which betrays the Vietnamese Revolution. The WL is now making an opportunist adaptation to the SWP in calling for electoral support to its candidates on the basis of the SWP labor party plank--a plank which it still retains in the fine print of its program, but which it has in reality abandoned for class-less Black and Chicano "peoples" parties.

It seems to have made an empirical turn in its approaches to the specially oppressed minorities, but with-

out re-examining its theoretical misconceptions in this area, e.g., its rejection of Trotsky on the Negro question, its refusal to recognize that the Black and Spanish-speaking peoples are specially oppressed minorities who, together with women in general, are subjected to super-exploitation in the workplace. It has at last recognized that the Black Panthers and Young Lords organizations have a socialist outlook, and that the recent NYC riots were led by prisoners who identify with these organizations as revolutionists. But now, its previous sectarian-opportunist policies are transformed into the opportunism of a different order. Its "Bulletin" now avoids all criticism of these organizations from a revolutionary, i.e., a consistent Marxist standpoint. It does not attempt to combat the elements of petty-bourgeois nationalism and opportunism which are united to their socialist outlook, and which has made them susceptible to the opportunist policies of the Communist Party and International Socialists. (See VN, July 1969, Black Panthers & Fascism)

It is not precluded, therefore, that the overture to the Pabloites was occasioned, not by a mistaken conception, a one-sided organizational approach toward overcoming Pabloite revisionism, or as a "unity" maneuver in the "war" ... against Pabloism", but by the common elements in the WL, SLL, and USec lines, and is "a political move toward a re-unification with a section of Pabloism" as Robert Sherwood of the Labor Action Committee of Canada had forewarned, in his letter of resignation from the WL. (See VN, Sept. 1969)

ELECTORAL...(continued from p. 98)

working class. However, in the absence of any serious independent working class candidates, let alone an independent working class party, we recommend that our readers vote for the candidates of either party in preference to abstention without illusions that either is a step toward real working class politics.

TROTSKYISM TODAY - The Split in the SWP Left Tendency by Harry Turner

Is it worthwhile "bothering" about "ancient" factional and organizational "squabbles" within the SWP and other ostensibly revolutionary organizations?

We believe that an examination of the interacting objective and subjective factors can provide Marxists with useful lessons in the struggle for the Leninist and Trotskyist vanguard party--and not least, in illuminating personalities who present themselves today as leaders.

Illusions in self-appointed, incompetent and opportunist leaders and their policies, can prove an insuperable barrier for the working class, in spite of the most promising revolutionary opportunities.

Our series, therefore, performs a needed political hygienic function.

Those who try to conceal past "mistakes", to distort the truth to promote their "revolutionary" organizations, are in reality, expressing an elitist attitude which can only negate real socialist consciousness in the working class.

From this standpoint, a revolutionary socialist is bound to treat the views of opponents with complete scrupulosity. It is impermissible to abstract phrases from context to give them a meaning contrary to their author's intention, or to deliberately omit passages from quotations which have an important bearing on the matter in question.

Part 5 of Wohlforth's series, "What Is Spartacist", quotes at length from the letter written to Gerry Healy by this writer on Jan. 10, 1969. The same letter was also referred to by James Robertson in an exchange VANGUARD NEWSLETTER printed in its February 1970 issue. As we demonstrated then, Robertson quoted a sentence "out of context in an attempt at identifying the WL's views on the Negro question as our own".

But Wohlforth also violated the integrity of the letter by giving his readers no inkling that between the paragraphs quoted, other paragraphs, perhaps not to his liking were also present.

Thus, while quoting our affirma-

tion that a "re-assessment...requires...a close look at two turning points, the original split /In the SWP/...in 1962, and the exclusion of Robertson at the London Conference of the IC in 1966...", he omits any indication of an intervening paragraph in which we informed Healy of our objection "to certain of the tactics used by the Wohlforth group against the Robertson group", while both were still in the SWP.

Again after citing our finding that Robertson bore the major responsibility for the "original split...in 1962", and his "exclusion ...in 1966", no reference is made to a short paragraph which informed Healy of our objection to "the forms chosen to disclose Robertson's essence" in 1962 and 1966.

The tone of the letter also reflected the circumstances in which it was written. At the time, we were still exchanging political views with the leaders and members of the WL, in attempting to convince them of the validity of our positions, and in particular, that a Leninist party could not be built in the US through passive adaptation to white chauvinism. We worded our letter to Healy diplomatically, but also registered our organizational and political agreements and disagreements with the WL and SLL.

As our examination of intra-tendency and later struggles will show, petty-bourgeois egoism, malice and heavy-handedness can play a disastrous role in politics, in this instance on the vital question of the construction of a Leninist vanguard party in the US, in the cornerstone of world imperialism.

In our "re-assessment" of the split in the left tendency, we stated that Robertson's differences with the IC were not of a character which required him to break with it.

One could infer from the eagerness of the Spartacist League to make the records which bear on the

split available in "Marxist" bulletins, that Robertson is motivated by a masochistic need, if it were also not evident that he is either unaware of or believes that his protestations mask the clear evidence that his entire course led to a break with the IC.

All the bleating by Robertson and his friends about violations of tendency democracy, cannot conceal the fact, except to political unsophisticates--a fact which emerges from the correspondence and documents which the SL itself circulates--that they were unwilling to subordinate their oversized egos to the needs of the international movement.

Both Wohlforth, despite an occasional extravagance, and Gerry Healy, on the contrary, emerge as the principled parties, who whatever personal factors were involved were concerned to conduct a serious struggle for revolutionary politics within the SWP as a vital part of the world Trotskyist movement.

The internal perspectives document by Robertson and Ireland, "The Centrism of the SWP and the Tasks of the Minority", which precipitated the break with the IC, has not a word to say about the relationship and responsibility of the tendency to an internationally organized struggle. Its focus is myopic and narrow. Its tactics are limited to the immediate tasks of the tendency within a national framework. Not an inkling exists that the tendency in the US, comprising a few dozen members at best, was directly connected to parties, to the SLL in England and to the then-named Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI), which represented thousands of Trotskyists in their own sections, and who in addition, had the responsibility for organizing a struggle in the other national sections of the world movement.

Instead of attacking the Robertson-Ireland document for its narrow parochialism however, Wohlforth's answer was restricted to the same national framework. He instead attempted to find a class basis for the sharpening differences through a specious argument about the work-

ing class nature of the SWP cadre, which had by then become badly attenuated. The class basis did exist, but Wohlforth did not present it at that time.

Robertson gave expression to the moods of petty-bourgeois impatience and instability, of personal rancor and pique in the face of the unprincipled organizational methods of the majority. He was able to win most of the tendency to his side in the struggle because of its poor composition, its high proportion of student-intellectuals. Unfortunately, the tactics pursued by Wohlforth and Healy, not only failed to expose Robertson's "essence" but instead played into his hands.

Quantity had already been transformed into quality, reluctant though Wohlforth and the IC leadership were to recognize that fact. The SWP leadership, which had shown unmistakable signs of the Pabloite infection earlier, despite its continued recitation of "orthodox" Trotskyist formula, had succumbed to the disease with the Cuban revolution. Wohlforth and Healy only strengthened Robertson within the tendency by not recognizing the fact that the leadership was "centrist", that its direction was increasingly opportunist, by trying to preserve illusions that a section of the leadership, "the Center", might still be won for revolutionary politics, when every new development proved the opposite. This unclarity, the reluctance to "make premature characterizations of the Center", which was justified on both tactical and political grounds, also resulted in an ambivalent attitude toward the leadership by Wohlforth, which Robertson could attack with justification as "conciliatory".

However, the struggle within the SWP and on the international plane required, along with a clear understanding of the nature of the leadership, a serious struggle to win the membership. It was necessary to combat the growing intransigence of Robertson and his coterie, which their tactics in the SWP and its youth organization reflected, in posing the tendency against the

organization, instead of as an alternative leadership for it.

The increasingly unrestrained factionalism which could and did result in actions which the SWP majority might have utilized against the national and international tendency, was in fact a "split perspective" even if those who held it were only "partially aware of, or not aware at all", as Wohlforth stated. (Toward the Working Class, 10-2-62)

The controversial conditions in the statement prepared by the IC, written by comrade Healy himself, acting in consultation with other comrades of the British SLL and also of the French IC group, were the following: that the tendency center its fire on the "right wing" in the SWP "while making no concession to the "Center...", that it "effect a united front where possible with the center elements against the right..." recognize the SWP as the main instrument for the realization of socialism in the United States..." and work as "loyal party members..." as "people who are responsible for their party..." that it not make "premature characterizations of the leadership of the SWP except of those groups such as Weiss and Swabeck..." that the majority "not be described as a finished centrist tendency in the same way as the Pabloites..." and that tendency members must "accept these conditions" to remain "members of the tendency".

True, the IC statement contained political formulations with which Robertson could not agree. However, he was not asked to agree, but to accept the conditions. As Robertson well knows, the members of the party of Lenin and Trotsky were never required to agree with all provisions, but were required to accept the program and carry it out.

Robertson and his friends reacted as petty-bourgeois nationalists. Their complaint, in essence, was that "outsiders" were dictating to the "insiders", who alone had the right to decide on matters which concerned their "turf".

Would acceptance of the IC's conditions have ruined the struggle

within the SWP for the international revolutionary party, let alone have constituted a betrayal of principle? Neither the one or the other. They contained illusions about the nature of the "Center". Some formulations were erroneous. But acceptance only meant delaying the inevitable confrontation between tendency and party organization. Valuable time might have been gained to enable the tendency to win SWP members for revolutionary policies. Had Robertson been concerned with advancing the principled struggle instead of his ego, he would have accepted the conditions, convinced his co-thinkers to do the same, and as a minority within the international tendency fought for better policies.

Instead, and as our letter to Healy pointed out,

"By splitting with the IC, he did, in fact, as you have stated, strengthen the SWP revisionists, who were able to out-manuever a disunited left opposition, and close off the minds of many of those in the SWP, who might have been reached by us. In addition, many waverers, who might have been held by a united left opposition, became confused and demoralized, and gave up the struggle entirely."

But what of the "forms" which Healy chose? By attempting to resolve the political question in an organizational manner, in the form of a statement which the tendency had not helped prepare, and which could not be altered, Healy presented Robertson with an ideal weapon, which he used for his own organizational purposes, and to obscure the real nature of the disagreement.

Unfortunately, we will often see the utilization of narrow organizational approaches to solve political tasks.

Several months after the split in the tendency, Wohlforth's illusions about the SWP leadership were to be expressed in an anti-Robertson organizational maneuver which served only to discredit Wohlforth.

(to be continued)

5
C
e
g
e
r