

VANGUARD newsletter

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CEYLON AND BENGLA DESH

The "socialist" regime in Ceylon is, at this writing, crushing a revolt led by student revolutionists with bases in Sinhala rural areas. Also at this writing, the Pakistan militarist regime under General Yaya Khan has unleashed a massacre in East Pakistan, in an attempt at suppressing the national aspirations of its 75 million Bengali people.

The coalition government in Ceylon is made up of Madame Bandaranaike's bourgeois Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the ex-Trotskyist Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the Moscow-oriented Communist Party (CP).

It has appealed for and is receiving military assistance from India, the USSR--including MIG 17's with Soviet pilots--and, of course, from the US and Great Britain.

Ceylon's economic crisis has been increasingly manifested in the "impatience" of the growing army of unemployed, and among the peasants and agricultural laborers, with the "moderate socialist" policies of the Bandaranaike regime.

The Ceylonese youth, especially graduate students without any prospect of employment, have undergone a rapid radicalization. The Janatha

Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) or People's Liberation Front, also nick-named "Che Guevarists" by the press, has been able to attract support from the Sinhala student youth, peasants and agricultural laborers on a program of nationalization of basic industry and the land.

The LSSP has joined its coalition partners, and has even managed to go beyond them, in demanding the extermination of the student revolutionists and the death penalty for anyone supporting the JVP.

Pakistan, separated from India in 1947, was formed on the basis of the common Moslem religion between the Baluchis, Sindhus, Pathans, Jats and Rajputs in the West, who use Urdu as the official language, and the Bengalis in the East, who speak their own language, and who are,

moreover, separated from West Pakistan by over a thousand miles of Indian territory.

The exploitation of the resources of the East by the West Pakistani military rulers, the discriminatory expenditures for industrial development, the callousness shown the Bengali people after the recent tidal wave, which resulted in an enormous initial loss of life, and in an even greater loss later from starvation and disease, stimulated the growth of national sentiment and for the bourgeois nationalist Awami League led by Mujibur Rahman.

The West Pakistan army is engaged in the deliberate slaughter of the unarmed Bengalis--including the cold-blooded murder of the civilian population, of Bengalis in the army, of any individual who could focus an opposition--and the destruction, also deliberate, of food stores and productive facilities.

The US government, which has backed these atrocities with military "hardware", including bomber and fighter planes, has now been joined by the Chinese Stalinists. They have coupled a strident warning to

India, not to "interfere", with support for Pakistan "unity" achieved by the slaughter of the Bengali majority. The Russian Stalinists have assumed the pose of impartial mediator between their good friends, India and Pakistan. The Indian "socialist", Indira Gandhi, has taken the opportunity to pose as the champion of the Bengalis, with essentially, verbal support.

VANGUARD NEWSLETTER gives critical support to the students and peasants now in revolt against the Ceylonese bourgeois regime. We also support the right of Bengla Desh to exist as an independent state, and their struggle against national oppression from a Marxist standpoint.

This preliminary statement will be followed by a further elaboration of our positions on both these questions in our May issue.

As we will show, not only the Stalinists, but also so-called "Trotskyists", have exposed their opportunism, their departure from Leninism and Trotskyism, their inability to provide consistent and integral revolutionary positions on either or both these questions.

END GANGSTERISM IN THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT!

On April 9th, members of the Movimiento Pro-Independencia (MPI) were involved in a murderous assault with knives and lead pipes on members and supporters of the Workers League (WL), who had been selling the "Bulletin" outside MPI headquarters.

According to the WL's press release and open letter of April 12th, this unprovoked attack was the culmination of a series of threats and beatings, which the MPI leadership has attempted to justify on the grounds that the "WL and Trotskyism" were pigs, police and CIA agents.

The MPI leadership, which calls its organization "socialist" and advocates transforming it into a "Leninist revolutionary vanguard", decided to prevent the sale of the "Bulletin" outside its headquarters, after its article criticizing the alliance of the MPI with the US and Puerto Rican Communist parties had appeared. The article by Juan Fariñas identified MPI as a middle-class organization, whose agreement

with the Stalinists was based on its neo-Menshevik program of the revolution in stages--first independence, then socialism.

WL supporters, who had been stationed nearby to protect the sale, came to the support of Fariñas, who was being beaten, and were met by the armed members of MPI. Three WL members required hospital treatment, one for concussion and two for stab wounds. One of those stabbed received seven stiches; the other had four tendons severed in his left wrist, and has only a 50% chance of regaining the full use of the hand.

The WL has called upon "all working class, minority and youth organizations" to give full publicity and indicate their opposition to "all

physical attacks on other tendencies in the working class movement", and to support the right of all such tendencies to "present their views and to sell their literature" against "government or hooligan attacks on these rights!"

It has also called upon them to "reject the charges" that "Trotskyists, and the Workers League in particular, are agents of the CIA or FBI".

The WL has proposed that an independent and impartial "commission of inquiry" be formed of representatives acceptable to both sides, and before whom MPI will agree to testify, to investigate the MPI attacks.

It further requests help in defending its members from attack and in preventing future attacks.

VANGUARD NEWSLETTER is, of course, in complete accord with the WL over the need to prevent and condemn the Stalinist gangster tactics, which MPI has resurrected from the '30's to use against it. We have always considered the use of threats and physical violence by any working class tendency against another such tendency to be a confession of political bankruptcy on its part.

Our readers will recall that it was the National Secretary of the WL, Tim Wohlforth, who threatened to have the nose of one of our members broken, if he were again to show himself at its headquarters. We trust that Wohlforth now understands the impermissibility of such conduct. We would welcome the WL's change in attitude were it not for the possibility that it has only adopted a "one-way street" approach on this question. How does it define "other tendencies"? Are only threats and physical violence against its members and supporters, or against those tendencies which it is courting to be condemned? While a reply from Trotskyists, i. e., principled and revolutionary Marxists could be expected, we do not anticipate receiving one from the WL.

We believe that the WL has significantly departed from Trotskyism, not only in this respect, but more fundamentally, in program. As we have often indicated, it has abandoned

Lenin's and Trotsky's position on the national question. It rejects the concept that the Black and Spanish-speaking minorities suffer a special oppression, and opposes the right of self-determination for any national minority which is situated in a "bourgeois democratic" country.

It has also made a number of other opportunist adaptations. It has hailed Mao's "Cultural Revolution", the petty-bourgeois "socialists" in the Middle East based on fedayeen peasant guerrillas as the "Arab Revolution", and has cooperated with international Stalinism in covering up the NLF program of betrayal of the Indochinese revolution.

We, of course, unconditionally defend it from charges of being agents of the CIA or FBI. Any organization which tries to utilize the filth of the Stalinist Moscow "trials" against Trotskyism, and today's tendencies which identify themselves as Trotskyist, merits the contempt and condemnation of every individual with a spark of honesty. The MPI leadership makes its organization the direct accomplice of the Stalinist bureaucracy which, under the banner of anti-Trotskyism, killed hundreds of thousands of revolutionists. Their betrayal of the program of Lenin and Trotsky helped bring death and suffering to millions of workers and peasants, and continues to do so.

We believe that the WL's proposal for an impartial commission of inquiry into the MPI's attacks to be principled and correct, and, therefore, support it.

We will also help defend the WL from physical attack by the MPI or any other organization, and will ask our readers to join us. If it will inform us when and where our help is needed, we will undertake to send a delegation from our organization, which will include Cde. Robins whose nose Wohlforth finds so displeasing.

Part V, the concluding section of the series, "State and Revolution In Latin America", will appear in our May issue.

THE NEWARK TEACHERS' DEFEAT by Hugh Fredricks and Harry Turner

As Mayor Kenneth A. Gibson has testified, Newark, with a population of approximately 400,000, 60% Black and 10% Puerto Rican, has a higher proportion of unemployment, slum housing, over-crowded schools, crime, drug abuse and environmental pollution than any other comparable city.

The inflation produced by the Indochinese War, supplemented by monopoly prices, has given Newark one of the highest costs of living. As in the rest of the country, the working class has been robbed of all of the monetary gains which it had achieved by years of struggle.

It is in this context that one can measure the extent of the defeat administered to the Newark Teachers Union by the coalition of Mayor Gibson, the Board of Education and "community control" advocates.

For the first year of the new contract, the teachers receive no salary increase whatsoever. Only in its second year, are they given an increase of \$500, i. e., less than a 3% increase a year over the 2 year period, and less than half the annual rate of inflation.

In addition, the teachers have agreed--"voluntarily"--to return to some of the non-professional chores which the earlier contract had eliminated.

The leadership of the "Committee for a Unified NewArk", led by Imamu Amiri Baraka, previously known as LeRoi Jones, has focused its attack on the teachers' refusal to perform non-professional chores as a "lack of sensitivity" by white teachers to Black children, as a desire to avoid a "human relationship" with them.

But this aspect of the teachers' role, which the "Committee" has again forced on them, is simply that of acting as a "cop" to the students, of "disciplining" them and inculcating "respect" for private property and other bourgeois verities.

Teachers fulfill a dual role in bourgeois society. As educators, they instruct working class youth in the rudiments required for participating in a technically advanced industrial society. Middle and upper class youth are trained in the knowledge and skills which will enable them to function in the

ruling class apparatus. In addition, however, teachers are required to instill the values of bourgeois society--of "God, home and country"--into the youth.

As teachers have organized into unions, as their ranks have been filled with young and radicalized teachers, the second role has been increasingly rejected by them. The "cop" function has been particularly onerous to white teachers dealing with minority youth, as it acts to exacerbate racial attitudes.

In reality, in the name of "sensitivity", the teachers, who are one-third Black, are again being forced into a repressive and alienated relationship with their students.

The real union-smashing purpose of the "sensitivity" gimmick was made clear by Baraka in a letter to the NY Times on April 16, 1971, in which he attempted to deny it. The promoters of the Black nationalist reactionary utopia of Black enclaves, controlled and operated on capitalist lines by the Black petty-bourgeoisie, in a minuscule duplication of "white" capitalist society, were completely exposed by Baraka's statement that:

"The union's salary demands are completely out of line with the community's economic level and life style. They want \$10,000 a year and a welfare fund in a city where there is over 25% unemployment in the black community."

Like any boss, Baraka wants to force workers to take on more tasks during the course of the working day for less pay, and demagogically appeals to anti-intellectual plebian attitudes among the especially oppressed minorities, for strike-breaking purposes.

The teachers in school systems sell their labor-power, as do all other workers in capitalist society.

The price they receive, their salary, is determined, as are the wages of all workers, in Marx's words, by the "labor-time necessary for the production, and...reproduction" of this labor-power. Teachers must be able to purchase, not only basic commodities such as food, clothing and shelter but also, training for themselves and for the next generation of teachers. Like other workers, they have organized to prevent their bosses from driving their salaries below the value of their labor power. In recent years, they have been able to greatly improve the conditions and salaries of this profession.

Baraka and his committee would like to beat down the price of the teachers' labor-power to the "community's economic level", i.e., to the wage levels of the especially oppressed and super-exploited Black and Puerto Rican workers. Baraka is not concerned with ending this super-exploitation, but with placing it at the disposal of Black capitalists, and with bringing teachers' salaries into this "line". He and his committee are convicted by his own letter, as the enemy of not only white, but also Black workers, as we have always contended is the case for Black nationalism in general.

The Black workers, for the most part blue-collar workers, form a disproportionate part of the unemployed. As such, they are forced to take the least desirable jobs at the lowest rate of pay.

Every effort is made by the exploiters to divide the workers, in and out of unions, on racial, religious or sexual grounds, and to play one group against another. The Black woman is triply exploited, as a worker, as a Black and as a woman. By this means, the capitalist class is able to increase its rate and mass of profit.

Black nationalism takes the real content of the Black struggle, which is directed against the special oppression of Black people and the super-exploitation of Black workers, and diverts it into reactionary and self-defeating channels. The Puerto Rican workers, who find themselves in a similar situation, are also

subjected to petty-bourgeois nationalist propaganda.

The insistence of the NTU on "binding arbitration" of grievances testifies, on the one hand, to the illusions of the teachers and their leaders in the "democratic" process, in which some "impartial" and "classless" body will safeguard their rights, and, on the other, to the weakness of the NTU. Despite the decisions favorable to the NTU which arbitrators have thus far handed down, the history of labor struggles shows that, in the long run and in most cases, they are "neutral" on the side of the bosses. Even on this point, the NTU retreated. The arbitration provision in the new contract is considered to be more favorable to the Board of Education.

In addition to yielding on this question, wages and non-professional chores, the NTU also surrendered on the issue of smaller class size.

Not satisfied with the "compromise" which permits the NTU to survive, the "community" acting under the direction of Baraka and Board of Education President Jesse L. Jacob has prevented 100 teachers from returning to their classes at 6 schools. These teachers have been warned that unless they accept their reassignments to other schools, their salaries would be stopped.

The same Jacob indicated his touching concern for students by informing them that no arrangements would be made to provide additional instruction to make up the more than half of the school term which they had lost. It was just too bad, said Jacob. The schools had been open, and it was their own fault if they had not attended. But all information indicates that very little learning could or did take place, with more than 60% of the teachers on strike, even in "open" schools.

In another punitive action, 9 Newark teachers were found guilty of violating the injunction against the strike, were fined from \$250 to \$500, and were sentenced to jail terms ranging from 3 to 6 months each.

But this type of "punishment" was foreshadowed by the supine behavior of the trade union leaders in New

Jersey and New York.

After the 1968 strike of NYC's teachers, Shanker, eager for a martyr's role, served a short jail term without even attempting to appeal his sentence for the violation of the anti-strike injunction, not to speak about a militant struggle in and by the unions against it.

In the wake of the sentences given the NTU of cumulative fines in excess of \$60,000--now over \$250,000 --and 6 months jail terms to NTU Pres. Carole Graves and 2 other officers, plus an extra 3 months each for violating last year's injunction, the NJ AFL-CIO head Charles Marciante threatened to "shut Newark down" in a general strike. He quickly called it off on the pretext that negotiations between the NTU and the Board of Education had resumed.

Not only the labor bureaucrats, but the rank and file will pay dearly for their lack of backbone, their servile "respect" for the "majesty of the law". Had Shanker and the AFL-CIO in NY City, Marciante in NJ and other such "leaders" of labor made clear to the ruling class, and its executive, legislative and judicial branches of government that all of labor in the City and/or State would have declared a general strike if trade union leaders were jailed, not a single Newark teacher would have sat or would be sitting there now! But then, they would not be the labor "fakers" that they are.

Mayor Gibson played a particularly deceitful role, aided by the CP.

As the crisis of capitalism sharpens, all bosses are concluding that the trade unions have to be broken, that the right to strike must be destroyed and the unions placed under the control of the state. The most vulnerable and, therefore, the first to be attacked are those which represent City, State and Federal service workers.

In NY State, the Taylor Law was passed for just this purpose. Although some of its provisions may not, as yet, be enforced, when and if the unions are strong, this law is a powerful strike-breaking weapon in the hands of the ruling class.

Gibson, in threatening to turn the Newark school system over to the State, was, in effect, asking for a similar type of weapon against Newark's teachers.

Like Lindsay in NYC, Gibson sat back and allowed the "community" and Board of Education to do his strike-breaking work for him, while posing as neutral, as only concerned with the welfare of the children.

In NYC, the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district administration subsidized by a Ford Foundation grant, attempted to destroy the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) in a similar manner. It also fought against NYC Board of Education's sham "decentralization" plan, in an effort at achieving real control.

The struggle began when white and Black UFT spokesmen and members were fired as "racist" and incompetent, along with more than 100 teachers who had engaged in a work stoppage to demand their reinstatement. The real meaning of this attack on the UFT was clear, coming so soon after the passage of the Taylor Law.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) joined the Stalinists and other social-opportunists in scabbing on the UFT on the basis that the Black "community" had the right to "control" Black schools, including the hiring of Black administrators, more Black teachers and the firing of "racist" teachers. But the "Militant" opportunists found it impossible to maintain their position of 1968 in the Newark strike. 40% of the NTU is Black. Its president and many of its officers are Black. The union-busting by Baraka and Jacob was too open.

The SWP managed to pay lip service to the NTU strike, to attack the "Gibson Administration and the courts", while backing the Black nationalist demagoguery about "insensitivity", and without a word of condemnation for Baraka and Jacob. They focused instead on student demands in their typical centrist, opportunist fashion.

It is true, however, that the NTU (and also the UFT in both of NYC's strikes) did not attempt to win the students to their side, to incorpor-

ate those needs and demands, which were justified from a class viewpoint, and thus strengthen its position as against the "community", Board of Education and Mayor.

Shanker, in 1968, expressed the chauvinism of some of the white teachers in "defending" the union. In Newark, the failure to forthrightly condemn and reject all support from Anthony Imperiale, the fascist leader of the "Iron-Bound Citizens Committee", who organized some white support to the NTU picketlines and in closing some schools, also gave ammunition to Baraka and Jacob, as did the NTU demand for more "security guards" in schools.

What about Black "community control"? The Workers League (WL), in consonance with its policy of passive adaptation to white chauvinism, attempts to wave this question aside. Its approach to the Black workers is, essentially, "think class and forget about race". In the name of Trotskyism and Leninism, the WL has only become the mirror-image to the SWP, which adapts to the Black nationalist concept, "think race and forget about class".

As we have often stated, only the struggle against white chauvinism makes possible a successful struggle against Black nationalism. Only the fight against special oppression can unite white and Black workers in their immediate interests and for the socialist revolution.

We do not oppose the control of the community by workers. On the contrary, we fight for the understanding by the Black and Spanish-speaking workers in the ghettos, that they, together with teacher-workers, Black and white, and the students, who will be workers tomorrow, should organize for "control" of the schools, for "control" of the ghettos, and, together with the white workers, for "control" of society--for the overthrow of capitalist rule, and the victory of working class rule.

"Control" of this kind is directly opposed to the Black nationalist conception, which seeks to divide the Black from white workers, and place them under the domination of

the Black petty-bourgeoisie.

In the schools, worker control would act to eliminate all aspects of racial discrimination, including racist teachers and racist history. Special subjects of particular interest to the Black and Spanish-speaking people would be taught, as a matter-of-course. White as well as Black students would learn of the historic contributions of the Black people to human culture.

Unity of teachers, parents and students on a working class program in the large cities of the US would make possible, not only the defense of teachers' standards, but would also prepare the ground for a working class offensive, for the beginning of a mobilization of the working class against capitalism, against an irrational system in which abundance also means crises, inflation, poverty and war. But this perspective requires that its revolutionary socialist vanguard party, a Leninist and Trotskyist party, be built which can lead the working class to power.

The continuing attacks against the NTU since the new contract was signed, is part of the general attack against public service employees by the ruling class through its government agencies and allies. The capitulation of the NTU's leadership, the alienation of a large part of the Black and Puerto Rican working class from the NTU, is a measure of the success of the ruling class in dividing workers against themselves.

Individual unions today can only defend themselves from ruling class attack by uniting their ranks. The organized workers now have to take a political step forward to a political party of their own, a labor party, if they are to defeat the attacks of the ruling class. The weak, always ready to capitulate, labor bureaucrats, must be replaced by leaders from rank and file caucuses which fight for the transitional program and revolutionary perspective of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER.

It is on the basis of its transitional program, in which the fight against special oppression is prominently posed, that the Leninist and Trotskyist party will be built.

TROTSKY AND THE SWP "DIVISION OF LABOR" - by Harold Robins

[/The division between "brain" and "brawn", the "antithesis between mental and physical labor", in the words of Marx, which seems so natural to us, only arose with the production and exchange of commodities.

[/The ability of society to achieve a surplus product is the fundamental requirement for the rise of such "specialists" as the priest caste, and then the cleavage of society into classes. The "specialist" in philosophy also emerged from the ruling class, while the rest of humanity continued to toil, the majority as slaves.

[/The division of labor, which was further developed, had its justification in higher productivity, in the expansion of the productive forces by the progression of slave, feudal and capitalist societies, i.e., class societies.

[/Marxism, however, introduces a revolution into this "eternal" division as well. The "dictatorship of the proletariat", in which every cook will learn to rule, in Lenin's words, is transitional to a classless society, in which the high level of productivity achieved,

finally does away with the "enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor".

[/The process of preparing the socialist revolution is in itself a break with the antithesis between "thinkers" and "doers". The most oppressed layers of the working class, who are drawn into the revolutionary party, find that, not only their physical, but also their mental capacities are demanded. A revolutionary Marxist party worthy of the name fights for the political development of the workers in its ranks. The revolutionary Marxists fight for the future in the present--no less within the revolutionary party, to make it a working class vanguard.

[/Trotsky was always concerned with the composition of the revolutionary party. He fought over a life-time against the tendency of articulate and self-assertive petty-bourgeois elements in the party to drown out the voice of the workers.

[/Cde. Robins details a significant example of this struggle, in discussing Trotsky's reaction to the SWP's "division of labor".]

* * * * *

When, as a new member of the guard, I was on duty one day in late November 1939, Comrade Trotsky approached me and asked, "How long have you been in our movement, Comrade Robins?"

"About ten or twelve years", I replied.

"And on what subjects have you written for our press during this period?"

"On none, I guess."

"How can you explain this," Cde. Trotsky asked?

"I suppose I am not a good writer. I have been a political activist in the party, in its campaigns and the trade unions. But I suppose that I have no talent as a writer. There are other comrades who specialize in writing for our press, while the rest of us carry on with other responsible activities."

Cde. Trotsky persisted in pressing the matter. I was struck with admiration at the manner in which he had expanded the content of my

expression, "political activities".

He continued, "How can you justify not writing anything. If you are an active party comrade, participating in the class struggle, you must have some ideas worthy of the consideration of the readers of our press concerning our political role in the struggles and problems of the working class?"

"Yes, that is quite true", I answered, "but I guess that we function with a division of labor of sorts in our party. Some do the writing, while others like me are active in other areas."

For a long moment Cde. Trotsky looked at me very intently, and in silence. Then, raising both arms above his head, he exclaimed in a tone of astonishment, "Why, I've

never heard of such a thing in all my life!" He turned and walked away shaking his head.

At the time, I thought to myself, "Why the hell is he so disturbed over this perfectly rational division of labor set-up? Why?"

I pondered this matter for days, trying to figure out Trotsky's reasons for his sharp objection to the "division of labor" that I had described. It seemed to me that Cde. Trotsky must be thinking to himself, "What sort of revolutionary workers' party is this, which maintains such a division of labor?"

After all, for years Cde. Trotsky had been writing to the American party, urging upon it the adoption of Lenin's concept of proletarianization. Lenin and Trotsky always asked, "What do the workers say", and, "What do the workers think?"

But, we comrades in the SWP were raised in the tradition of following in the footsteps of that exemplary rank and filer, "Jimmie Higgins", while some of us were made for other things! It is understandable for a select group of writers to fill the pages of a periodical of a small political propaganda group. But, is such a set-up "understandable" in an organization whose members are active in the trade unions and other organizations of the working class? Cde. Trotsky had been persistently urging a transformation of our press, so that the voice of the workers might be heard there.

I finally came to the conclusion that Cde. Trotsky was absolutely correct in this matter. He was relating activity in the class struggle to development of the talents of worker-revolutionists, including a talent for writing--and, of course, this always means better thinking. I was going along with the SWP practice, which had been established in the years of our isolation from class struggle activities. The old instruments of development had turned into obstacles. In short, like the cadres of the SWP, and unlike Cde. Trotsky, I was operating with concepts which no longer reflected the current stage of our

activities in the class struggle. That this was not an isolated question of who writes in the pages of our press was demonstrated by the life and death struggle with disoriented, frantic, unproletarianized petty-bourgeois elements led by Burnham and Shachtmen. The method is the party, one might say.

During the latter days of World War II, the beginnings of a "Trotskyist" change could be seen in the "Militant", as the voice of worker-revolutionists was heard there. But still not the voice of workers beginning to move towards political consciousness, or those at an even more elementary level of class consciousness. We never reached that stage of development.

In any event, as the radicals were thrown out of positions of leadership and even of notable activity in the trade unions during the days when reaction was triumphant, the voice of the revolutionary worker and the problems of the working class were meticulously excluded from the pages of the "Militant" once again.

To return to the methods of Cde. Trotsky (and, of course, Robins and others) on this matter of writing by revolutionary activists, there is more to tell. I decided to write a contribution to the political discussion then raging in the party's internal "Discussion Bulletins". The axis of my contribution was the method of Marx and Engels in dealing with the problems of defense of historically progressive developments in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, as background to the related question of the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism.

The first draft of the article ran to some 40 legal size pages, which I cut down to a final copy of 7 pages, about a month prior to the split convention of the SWP in 1940.

I approached Cde. Trotsky, and told him that I had thought the matter over of worker-revolutionists writing for the press, and was now convinced that he was absolutely right in this matter. I told him that I had finally finished a con-

tribution to the discussion raging in the party, and that I was sending it in to the "Discussion Bulletin" that night.

Trotsky asked if he might see it before I sent it off. I objected that I could not permit myself to take up his working time with my comparatively primitive writing, but that I was very appreciative of the trouble he offered to take in the matter.

Gently, but firmly, he persisted. He was interested enough to read it, and to let me know his criticism. I was to let him decide what was worthy or unworthy of his time. Still apologetic, I brought him my typed manuscript.

Next afternoon, he met me in the patio, and returned my article. He had read it through carefully, he said. After a short pause, he said that he thought it worthy of publication, "as a party pamphlet written by a revolutionary worker on the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union." He added that he was writing to this effect to the Political Committee of the SWP, urging that it be published.

It was, however, buried by that body, and all reference to it was meticulously excluded from Trotsky's published letters of that period, along with a number of other political matters in dispute with the leadership of the SWP at the time. When In Defense of Marxism was released in 1942, Cde. Wright, known to his intimates as Usick, who had been my closest friend in the party over a long time, told me, shamefacedly, that the decision to omit Trotsky's letters dealing with me was motivated by their lack of significant political pertinency. Friend Usick was obviously, relaying a decision of the leadership, which he found distasteful, and from which a mistaken conception of party loyalty kept him from disassociating himself.

For revolutionists, for Marxists, what is significant here is the matter of method. "What are his politics", Trotsky demanded? "The man is the method", he would repeat. Let us review here Cde.

Trotsky's criteria in judging the man and the method.

His answer to a letter from Shachtman appears in In Defense of Marxism, as follows:

"Comrade Shachtman's latest article, "An Open Letter to Leon Trotsky", is an alarming symptom. It reveals that Shachtman refuses to learn from the discussion and persists instead in deepening his mistakes, exploiting thereby not only the inadequate theoretical level of the party, but also the specific prejudices of the petty-bourgeois wing. Everybody is aware of the facility with which Shachtman is able to weave various historical episodes around one or another axis. This ability makes Shachtman a talented journalist. Unfortunately, this by itself is not enough. The main question is what axis to select. Shachtman is absorbed always by the reflection of politics in literature and in the press. He lacks interest in the actual processes of the class struggle, the life of the masses, the inter-relationships between different layers within the working class itself, etc. I have read not a few excellent and even brilliant articles by Shachtman but I have never seen a single commentary of his which actually probed into the life of the American working class or its vanguard.

"A qualification must be made to this extent--that not only Shachtman's personal failing is embodied therein, but the fate of a whole revolutionary generation which because of a special conjuncture of historical conditions grew up outside the labor movement. More than once in the past I have had occasion to speak and write about the danger of these valuable elements degenerating DESPITE their devotion to the revolution. What was an incapable characteristic of adolescence in its day has become a weakness. Weakness invites disease. If neglected, the disease can become fatal. To escape

this danger it is necessary to open a new chapter consciously in the development of the party. The propagandists and journalists of the Fourth International must begin a new chapter in their own consciousness. It is necessary to re-arm. It is necessary to make an about face on one's own axis: to turn one's back to the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, and to face toward the workers... As a matter of fact, the gist of the present crisis consists in the conservatism of the petty-bourgeois elements who have passed through a purely propagandistic school and who have not yet found a pathway to the road of the class

struggle...His "Open Letter" represents...a crystalization of his weak traits.

"Shachtman has left out a trifle: his class position...He replaces class analysis with disconnected historical anecdotes for the sole purpose of covering up his own shift, for camouflaging the contradiction between his yesterday and today. This is Shachtman's procedure with the history of Marxism, the history of his own party, and the history of the Russian Opposition..."

(pps. 104-105, my emphasis)

(to be continued)

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editors:

April 1, 1971

Why has VANGUARD NEWSLETTER been silent in regard to the latest outbreak of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union as evidenced by the Leningrad trials? ... S. S.

* * * * *

VANGUARD NEWSLETTER has attempted to respond to every national and international development, in pursuit of its primary goal, the organization of the working class in its own historic interests.

All, or almost all, of our attention is directed to winning and educating class conscious workers for the overthrow of the capitalist exploiters and bureaucratic oppressors of the working classes and the minorities.

We, obviously, do not, at this time, have the resources to deal with every crime, and sometimes major crimes, committed by capitalism, imperialism and Stalinism.

We have and will continue to attack their anti-working class and anti-popular actions--their anti-Semitic outrages as well--to the extent that we have the time and space to do so.

Our program and perspective is opposed to every petty-bourgeois nationalist reactionary utopia, including the Zionist. We have a differing social-historical program, outlook, methodology and direction: that of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

Capitalist society has always

meant the monstrous oppression of nations and national minorities. Israel continues this "tradition".

The "democratic" American capitalist class accepted and profited from the enslavement of Blacks until this form of exploitation came into conflict with its fundamental class interests. It waged wars of extermination against the original Indian inhabitants. Today, the remaining Indians continue to suffer a brutal discrimination. American capitalism has profited and continues to profit from the oppression of the Black and Spanish-speaking minorities.

European capitalism in its maturity and in its moribund stage continued and still continues to carry out the "enslavement and entombment", to use Marx's words, of the masses in Africa, Asia and Latin America which it initiated in its primitive stage of accumulation.

The socialist-opportunists, who write off the working class in the

? advanced and under-developed sectors, try to ignore or minimize the fact that capitalism in the "third world", in sharpening national and tribal antagonisms, is also writing a bloody chapter in respect to the treatment of nations and national minorities, e.g., the slaughter of Ibos by Nigeria, of Bengalis by Pakistan, of pagan tribesmen by Sudanese Moslems.

The Stalinists in the degenerated and deformed workers' states, in addition to their other betrayals, continue the practice of capitalism in national oppression, including anti-Semitism, in the guise of and along with their anti-Zionism, in violation of the Leninist program for nationalities.

They didn't answer the key question
Fraternally, The Editors

TROTSKYISM TODAY (Part VI) - by Harry Turner

The Split In the Spartacist League

By the fall of 1967, the Spartacist League (SL) was displaying increased symptoms of an incipient crisis.

A marked disorientation was becoming evident in diminished activity and initiative in the local organizations, and in a falling membership.

The lack of a perspective--demonstrated in the organization's self-description as a not-yet viable "splinter propaganda group", and by its infrequently and irregularly published organ--was, by then, beginning to unleash centrifugal forces within it.

James Robertson, the National Chairman and then-editor of "Spartacist", who was responsible for both the designation and publishing policy, supported the "Memorandum On the Negro Struggle", which this writer had submitted, as a timely and badly-needed morale booster for the organization. Although it did, initially, serve that purpose, the crisis was only postponed for a few months. The "Memorandum" was then to help bring it to a boil with redoubled force.

This writer had been somewhat surprised at the ease with which the "Memorandum" had been accepted, but also perturbed at the almost complete lack of discussion by the SL's "Political Bureau". Not one of its members had examined the "Memorandum" critically; argued its merits and limitations, tried to concretely determine its applicability or to suggest improvements. Instead, the "leading" body of the SL gave it a bland and unanimous acceptance. A dispirited and passive plenary ses-

sion of the "Central Committee", held at the end of 1967, was also to adopt the "Memorandum" in the same manner, uncritically and unanimously.

The basic strategic and tactical orientation of the "Memorandum" has stood the test of time, has demonstrated its validity, although some secondary aspects of its program have required modification in the light of developments since 1967.

Both the pragmatic and dogmatic "Marxists" discard Marxist theory as a "guide to action". The dogmatist turns the body of philosophical, economic and historical knowledge into a set of rigid formulæ, into a religious exercise. The pragmatist rejects "religion", and operates eclectically: whatever "works" is good. But without a unifying revolutionary conception which takes into account development, that which "works" at one moment, turns into its opposite at the next.

The "Memorandum" attempted to provide the SL with an integral and coherent perspective for the building of the revolutionary socialist party, which unites the Marxist theory and practice of the past to present reality viewed dialectically.

By the end of 1967, it was becoming increasingly clear that the post-World War II expansion of world capitalism was ending.

The ruling class could, therefore, be expected to try to shore up the falling rate and mass of profit

through an attack on the workers' wages and working conditions, and by shifting the "burden of the Vietnam war onto their backs". It would find it necessary to outlaw "the right to strike in major industries".

To defend its standards, the working class would be required to go beyond the economic, "to an all-encompassing struggle which includes the political plane".

In his discussions on the Transitional Program, Trotsky made the point that:

"The idea of a fixed class of unemployed, a class of pariahs... is absolutely the psychological preparation for fascism."

A fascist development in the racially divided US, he felt, "will be the most terrible of all".

Trotsky had always emphasized the centrality of the Negro question to the building of a working class party in the US.

It was with this same understanding that the "Memorandum" posed the need for a turn to the trade unions, as a major focus for the SL, in becoming the Leninist and Trotskyist vanguard party.

It was at the "point of production" that Black and white workers could become aware that "unity against the class enemy" is both possible and necessary.

In essence, the "Memorandum" proposed the building of a transitional organization in the trade unions, which would base itself on a transitional program, in which the struggle against special oppression was posed in the immediate and fundamental interests of all workers.

The road into the ghettos was seen as beginning in the work-place, with the Black workers who had been won to a class and socialist outlook. They would conduct the fight for jobs, housing and education in the ghettos on a class, a revolutionary socialist basis. They would also fight for labor candidates and an independent labor party in the ghettos, united to the national labor party based on the unions.

The "Memorandum" aimed at first

attracting "the most oppressed and discriminated...the most dynamic milieu of the working class", in Trotsky's words, and, therefore, recommended that rank and file caucuses--inaptly named "civil rights" caucuses--be initiated in those trade unions with a high proportion of Black and Spanish-speaking workers.

That the workers from these minorities, and the young workers in particular, are the most radicalized sectors of the class, has been made abundantly clear. The appearance of the Black Panther Party followed by the Young Lords--although on a confused program of reformism, guerillaism and socialism--their support among the Black and Puerto Rican peoples, in spite of police frame-ups and murders, testifies to the revolutionary potential which is present in these "most oppressed" layers of the working class.

But despite their militancy, Black and Spanish-speaking workers cannot achieve a working class identification, cannot be won to Marxian socialism, unless they experience the solidarity of the white workers, expressed in a struggle against their special oppression.

In his conversation with Swabeck in 1933, although Trotsky posed a possible national development, he emphasized just this concept: the need for revolutionists to carry on "an uncompromising merciless struggle" against the "colossal prejudices of the white workers".

In waging an "uncompromising" struggle against white chauvinism, the revolutionists would, at the same time, cut the ground from under Black nationalism. As the white workers became aware that racial discrimination played into the hands of the bosses; that any "advantage" white workers received over Black workers, was paid for by a lowering of wages and conditions for the class as a whole, i.e., their wages and conditions; as they reached the understanding under the compulsion of necessity, and through the work of the revolutionists, that only a class solution, could end unemployment and exploitation; and conducted

a class fight against special oppression in their "own" interests, then the Black nationalist reactionary utopia of "communities" exploited by their "own" Black capitalists would have little appeal to the Black workers.

It was this conception that would guide revolutionists in the rank and file caucuses.

Having achieved a base in unions with a high composition of minority workers, the "Memorandum" projected an expansion of the caucuses, from individual shop and union into "inter-union" and a "regional and national" network of caucuses.

The resulting national organization was seen as the analogue of the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL) which the American Communist Party had promoted in the early '20's. That organization had campaigned within the AFL on a program which included the call for industrial unionism, a labor party and a fight against racial discrimination.

The TUEL had scored initial successes until the labor bureaucracy attacked it as a "dual union". In 1929, when it could have taken the leadership, it was transformed into the Trade Union Unity League (TUUL). It then initiated a real dual union policy, and withdrew its forces from the AFL, under the spur of Stalin's ultra-left turn.

The rank and file caucuses would not only provide a base for recruitment into the revolutionary party, but also an alternative leadership for the organized workers. At a revolutionary moment, the caucuses could become the factory committees, workers' councils--"Soviets"--organs of "dual power". Under the leadership of the revolutionary party, and in conjunction with the other councils, the working class would be able to take power in a socialist revolution.

But the SL was merely a student-oriented personality cult around Robertson. It was incapable of seriously adopting, let alone of realizing this perspective.

The SL paraded itself as a "proletarian" tendency--but, alas, only to college students! It had con-

centrated for 4 years, at that time, on the professionals in NYC's Social Service Employees Union--which drew non-specializing college graduates--without recruiting a single solitary soul. But Robertson used the defection of the SL's 2 hospital workers to justify an end to the concentration in the hospitals, after 3 months--as if more SL members could not have been sent in!

In the ensuing struggle, Robertson and his coterie were to thoroughly expose themselves as a fairly common variety of petty-bourgeois radical academic circle.

The SL "splinter propagandist group" would be "burnt out" by the trade union concentration demanded by the minority--and besides, the forces could not be spared from the campuses. Black workers did not possess a "weltanschauung" and could not be recruited to a "splinter propagandist group". The SL should concentrate in unions whose members "are more like us". The Black and Spanish-speaking workers are not super-exploited, but even if they are, it doesn't matter! Cleaver should "mobilize the Black masses", not a "splinter propagandist group" like the SL!

With the premature departure of a section of the minority from the SL, the internal struggle was decided. Robertson proved himself particularly adept at using even cruder bureaucratic tactics to force the remaining minority out of the SL, that the SWP had used against the Spartacist forces.

As we stated in the initial issue of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER:

"The ebb in the revolutionary socialist movement, as seen by its fractionation into small circles, will, in the coming period, be reversed, as objective circumstances make clear the programmatic basis for its reconstruction."

All indications are that the revolutionary "flood" is now beginning, which will see the reconstruction of the world party of Lenin and Trotsky. It is to this task that VANGUARD NEWSLETTER is dedicated.

All power to the U.N.S

DEFEAT US CAPITALISM IN INDOCHINA — AND AT HOME !!

Opposition to US "involvement" in Indochina now embraces a majority of the American people. Along with a greater outpouring from campus, community and organized labor, more, and more "important" liberal ruling class representatives, e.g., Muskie and McGovern, are endorsing the anti-war demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco on April 24th.

A key demand of the "popular front" organizers of the demonstrations is that Nixon "set the date" for US troop withdrawal from Indochina. But, what if Nixon does not? Another demonstration? Liberal pressure politics by the coalition of liberals and Stalinists, tail-ended by the Socialist Workers Party, can only succeed in demoralizing the anti-war forces, and especially the newly radicalized Black and white youth.

And, if Nixon does "set the date"? Will "peace" have been secured either for the Indochinese or the American people?

The "peace" which ended World War II began a full quarter century of bloodshed and suffering for the Indochinese masses. Deferring to Stalin's policy of "socialism in one country", of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, the Indochinese Stalinists allowed the imperialists to return to Vietnam. Eight years of carnage "ended" at Dienbienphu in a "peace" arranged by the Soviet and Chinese Stalinists with imperialism at Geneva in 1954. It delivered half of Vietnam to the puppets of imperialism. By 1965, a major portion of US military might was slaughtering the Vietnamese to ensure landlord, capitalist and imperialist domination.

Now again, the Stalinists are offering a "deal" in Indochina as part of a world-wide "settlement" at the expense of the international socialist revolution. "Peace", i.e., the maintenance of capitalist relations there and throughout the world, will be guaranteed by the Soviet Union with the assistance of its counter-revolutionary Communist parties. This is the meaning of the "peoples peace treaty". This is the meaning of the NLF's program of "national unity" based on continued capitalist relations, which can only bring more suffering and bloodshed to the Vietnamese. The "new page" with the US, which Chou En-lai hails, prepares the same kind of deal with the Chinese Stalinists in behalf of their "socialism in one country".

Liberal Democrats and Republicans, alarmed over the radicalization of youth, the militancy of especially oppressed minorities, soaring inflation which is propelling the organized workers into struggle, the threat to the dollar on the world market, and to its international position, are ready to accept this deal as in the best interests of American imperialism. But the Nixon Administration, representing the hard wing of imperialism, demands greater guarantees, and a complete victory over North Vietnam and the NLF.

Despite all deals, neither the capitalist nor Stalinist status-quo can be maintained! The expanding productive forces increasingly press against the confines of capitalist property relations and the national state. The parasitic bureaucracies in the Soviet bloc and China increasingly collide with the collective property foundations. The post-war quarter century of capitalist expansion is now turning into its opposite. The downturn in world economy impels the masses in all countries into struggle against capitalist and all other forms of oppression.

World capitalism is required to act against this growing threat by repression at home and imperialist war abroad. While it survives, there

can be no peace! There can only be the destruction of the material foundations of life by an irrational economic system of production for the profit of a few through the exploitation of the overwhelming majority of mankind, the destruction of more "limited" predatory and genocidal wars such as in Indochina, and the increased threat of an unlimited nuclear holocaust which can destroy all humanity. To preserve its rule, it is capable of unleashing thousands of Calleys for My Lai slaughters here. The struggle against war requires a struggle against capitalism!

The Vietnamese and American masses can achieve victory over US imperialism through a struggle organized by the international working class in the advanced and under-developed countries, which is united to a struggle against world capitalism and not by demonstrations in support of counter-revolutionary deals.

An international campaign must be launched to boycott all US goods. All cargo to and from the US which can be used against the Indochinese must be blacklisted! It is a measure of the betrayal of revolutionary Marxism by the Socialist Workers Party and others that they have not raised this elementary requirement of international working class solidarity, in order to curry favor with liberals and Stalinists in the anti-war movement.

The Soviet Union and China have been sending North Vietnam and the NLF minimal military assistance, barely enabling them to continue a defensive struggle. An international campaign must demand that these "socialist" countries supply North Vietnam and the NLF with all modern weapons needed for defensive and offensive action against US forces in Indochina. US imperialism's defeat in Laos was a victory for the American working class!

The struggle against US imperialism must be united on a revolutionary basis in all of Indochina. Not separate defensive operations which wait out a new Soviet-imperialist deal, but a coordinated offensive throughout Indochina! Not the program of concessions to landlords, but the confiscation of their estates and distribution to landless peasants! Not the program of guarantees to "national" capitalists, but the socialization of the means of production and working class rule!

American workers can be mobilized for political and strike action against the war, as they become convinced that the Indochinese masses are fighting their own enemy, American capitalism. It is the same enemy which is trying to make the American worker pay for the "recession" and the inflation which the war has inflamed, through unemployment, slashed wages and living standards, by destroying the right to strike. The workers must break with the twin parties of capitalism, and build their own political party, a labor party based on the unions.

The struggle against the US imperialist war in Indochina requires an international Leninist and Trotskyist working class vanguard party which fights for the socialist revolution.

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

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To: Those Attending the "National Rank and File Conference

We, in VANGUARD NEWSLETTER, have called for a national rank and file movement since 1966, as the following pages reprinted from the August 1969 VANGUARD NEWSLETTER points out. But our program is not that offered to you by the organizers of this conference. They ask you to march behind your "liberal" labor mis-leaders, to make them more "progressive", to "defend trade unions...against racism, inflation and corporation attack ...to end the war--get out of Asia."

But these leaders are the same ones who have gone along with racist practices; have made sell-out deals with the bosses; and are now working with the "government and corporations" to put over a wage-freeze by calling it a "wage-price-profit freeze". These same leaders would also like to see the "membership right to ratify contracts" destroyed.

These same "liberal" labor-fakers supported the Eisenhower-Kennedy-Johnson-Nixon murder-machine in Indochina. A few of them have begun to shift to an "end the war" position, because, as loyal "labor-lieutenants", they reflect the liberal wing of the ruling class, who oppose the continuation of the war as prohibitively costly--in inflation, in the radicalization of the youth, women, Black and Spanish-speaking minorities, and in growing rank and file militancy, and are, therefore, now ready to make a deal to preserve capitalism in Southeast Asia.

The "popular front" politics of the reformist Communist Party tries to ignore the responsibility of Kennedy and Johnson for the Vietnam war and its escalation--which for a time gave the corporations the fattest profits in history--talks only about the "Nixon big corporation strategy" --because it wants to limit you to politics acceptable to the "liberal" wing of the Democratic Party. But as the US and world economy goes deeper into crisis, the ruling class, including its "liberal" wing, will try to maintain its profits by cracking down on the American workers, as it is now beginning to do.

VANGUARD NEWSLETTER, an organization of revolutionary socialists, believes that now is the time to organize a struggle against the developing capitalist offensive. It is necessary to break with the political parties of big-business. To defend and advance their immediate and fundamental interests, the workers must fight on the political as well as on the economic front. Not the politics of the bosses and their labor-stooges, but a party of their own, a labor party based on the unions.

But to fight the bosses, they must also fight their influence in the shape of labor bureaucrats. This struggle is not "splitting" or "dual unionism", as the conference organizers infer, but is directed toward creating a fighting leadership for the working class. It is toward this goal that the following program is directed.

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