

Problems of the Fourth International

by **G. Healy**

A NEWSLETTER
PAMPHLET

Price: **2s. 6d.**

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Introduction

IN APRIL, 1966, the International Committee of the Fourth International called its Third Congress. At this gathering, representatives of Trotskyist organisations in several countries argued out the problems of building the international revolutionary movement.

The task of this movement is to resolve the crisis of leadership which has held back the working class from overthrowing capitalism on a world scale.

Cynics have often sneered at the many splits and disputes which feature in the history of the Marxist movement. This only reveals their adaptation to the bureaucratic apparatus which shackles the workers' movement, channelling its consciousness within the confines of capitalist society.

Fighting with the weapons of gossip they slander those who strive to break the working class from the bureaucratic stranglehold. They play their part in the attempt to debase the ideas of the revolutionary movement.

Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, each in his time, showed that, in order to liberate itself from capital, to establish its political independence, the working class had to become conscious of its historic role.

This involved a scientific understanding of the class struggle and, in order to achieve this, a centralised organisation, fighting to lead the workers in all their national and international struggles, had to be constructed.

The process of building such a movement is complex and contradictory. It raises problems whose solution embodies a distillation of the experience of the working class in active struggle.

The fight for theory within the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, whose importance is stressed continually in this pamphlet, is thus not an abstract, academic exercise, but is cradled within the living reality of the class struggle itself.

In 1967, the class struggle will sharpen throughout the world, throwing the Stalinist and social-democratic bureaucracies and all their hangers-on into violent crisis. Marxist preparation for these battles must comprise a careful examination of the problems faced by those who have fought to build a conscious revolutionary leadership. For a new generation of revolutionaries, especially, the experiences summarised in these pages are an essential basis for such preparation.

Problems of the Fourth International

WORLD imperialism is drifting rapidly towards its most severe economic crisis since the end of the second world war. Foremost, amongst those countries on the downward plunge is Great Britain. As the unemployment figures commence to climb, hundreds of previously well established businesses are threatened with bankruptcy during the coming months. The Prices and In-

comes Bill, which seeks to tie the trade unions firmly to the capitalist state machine, will introduce an era of political strikes which will continuously pose before the working class the problem of power.

The lessons from the seamen's strike confirm this perspective. When the strike began it was looked upon by rank-and-file seamen as an industrial dispute. Yet when

the Labour government and the state showed their hands in support of the shipowners, it immediately became clear to these same seamen within a matter of days that theirs was a political struggle against the Wilson government. A rapid political development had taken place in a union which had not engaged in a strike for 50 years.

Our Responsibility

This experience is an indication that a similar politicalisation of the British working class is on the way. A powerful new force is entering the arena of class struggle and that

force is the working class, which is now embarking on the road of class struggle in one of the most powerful countries in the world.

For over 25 years it has held

back, so long as it could improve its wages and working conditions in a period of capitalist inflationary boom. But this is now a thing of the past.

What the Labour government, the monopolists and the

state machine propose to do today is to attempt in the course of the coming year by means of unemployment and legislation against the trade unions to take away these gains and reduce the standard of living to what it was before the second world war.

A period of unparalleled revolutionary conflict lies ahead.

The Socialist Labour League now shoulders an enormous responsibility—that of constructing the mass revolutionary party which will lead the working class to power. By doing so it will inspire revolutionists in all countries to build similar parties to do the same.

We follow in the traditions of the Bolshevik Party which so far remains the only party

in the world, guided by Marxists, to consciously lead a successful socialist revolution.

Because of these aims, our organisation and members have to face a constant barrage of lies and hostility from the right-wing traitors of the Labour Party, the fake 'lefts' around 'Tribune', who cover up for them, and the Stalinists, as well as a variety of revisionist groups, such as the Pabloites and the Paris 'United Secretariat' who masquerade under the name of Trotskyism, and who have long ago liquidated themselves into the camps of Stalinism and social democracy, depending upon the countries they are operating in.

This is as it should be. The Socialist Labour League is en-

gaged in a fight to a finish against these betrayals of the working class and we won't yield an inch. We didn't in the pre-war days when the might of Stalinism, through its propaganda machine of lies and falsifications, was turned full blast against the international Trotskyist movement, denouncing us as fascists and agents of imperialism in order to cover up Stalin's foul deeds against the working class.

Trotskyism, which is the fight for the development of revolutionary Marxism in the post-Lenin era, can be best described by paraphrasing Trotsky's own description of Leninism—it is warlike from head to foot. In the struggle against its enemies, the Socialist Labour League follows in the footsteps of this tradition.

Revisionist Slanders

Our revisionist opponents such as Hansen of the American Socialist Workers' Party—the Party which sent the telegram of condolences to the arch imperialist Mrs. Kennedy when her husband, the President, was assassinated in 1963, are fond of slandering the Socialist Labour League on the grounds that it is insular to world problems, because it is working in Britain, which as everyone knows is an island off the continent of Europe.

Undoubtedly, the Socialist Labour League reflects the strength and weaknesses of the working class movement, but merely to say that is not enough. We are obliged to examine the history of the working class and the Socialist Labour League in a more serious way.

Behind Hansen's slander there is also a snigger of contempt for the British working class, who, having been the first to arrive on the historical scene, reflect in their thinking the trial and error, improvised empirical methods of thinking which characterise the methods of the industrial capitalists

who were forced to develop their industrial machines by 'trial and error'.

Amongst other things, this industrial machine built a huge empire, which in turn supplied vast sources of income, part of which was used by the British capitalist class to corrupt the leaders of the English Labour and trade union movement, as well as enabling the working class to enjoy standards of living even in the darkest days of slump and trade recession, far in excess of their colonial brothers in the Empire.

Thus the working class suffers from two serious handicaps.

The petty-bourgeois leaders and university-trained radicals of the labour movement constantly inject idealist and empirically-formed ideology into their ranks through all manner of propaganda techniques, thus taking advantage of its peculiar national historical origin. In this way, the struggle against Marxism is maintained by the Fabian Society.

The working class have up to now been prevented from

relating the theories of Marxism, which supply a conscious understanding of the history of the class struggle, to the historical tasks which face them in Britain. This is the task which must be undertaken by the Socialist Labour League.

Secondly, the crumbs from the table of the Empire which provided them with reforms in the past also tended to make them insular and divide them off from the struggles of the colonial peoples. Today this danger is reflected in the growth and dangers of racialism and forms a stubborn barrier which is exploited to the full by the Tory and Labour leaders as well as miscellaneous groups of fascists in preventing the working class from attaining class consciousness.

But these obstacles, although extremely powerful, must not be taken out of historical context.

We are obliged to take note of a further characteristic of the working class, which it has inherited from the ruling class and which today conceals a highly revolutionary content.

We are speaking about the tendency towards compromise.

Again the resources of the empire enabled such a tendency to develop as a dominant method of capitalist rule, under conditions where our rulers rule almost exclusively through the Labour and trade union bureaucracy.

But this was also a characteristic of the period before the seventeenth century Cromwellian Revolution. Trotsky in quoting the French historian Guizot in 'Where is Britain Going?' warmly applauds his comment on this period. 'When the time came for drawing the sword', wrote Guizot, 'all were astonished and deeply moved'.

For impressionist demagogues such as Hansen, this 'compromise' is deceptive. To him it appears to bolster up his cliché about 'insularity' but in reality it simply acts as

the thinnest of covers for a molecular revolutionary process going on today beneath the surface of class politics.

All appears well in the field of compromise on the top, until suddenly this period is over and there rushes now to the surface a revolutionary era of unprecedented proportions. That is the meaning of the present stage in British politics, a stage in which the working class is about to join the great colonial revolutions of Asia and Africa in struggle against the common imperialist enemy, world imperialism.

The seamen's strike supplied us with a small glimpse of what is on the way. It is this new wave of class struggle that will destroy for ever the historical obstacles which hold the British working class back and enable the revolutionary party to be built.

Hansen in his ignorance of

the history of the British working class tries to create an amalgam between its historical difficulties and the Socialist Labour League. This is something which will call forth titters of laughter amongst the anti-theoretical ignoramuses around 'Tribune', 'The Week', and similar centrist publications, but it is nonsense so far as a Marxist interpretation goes.

To take a fixed impression like 'insular' and then relate it in a mechanical way to the revolutionary experiences of the working class now on the order of the day in Britain, is to confuse form with content. To take this fixed impression further and attach it to the SLL and its struggles to build the party is to reveal oneself as a complete bankrupt in the field of Marxism, as a brief analysis of the history of our movement goes to show

A consistent defence of the Fourth International against national insularity

Of course the history of the Trotskyist movement in Britain is cradled within the working class and must directly or indirectly reflect its problems. In fact it has grown up in a struggle against these problems—that is a constant defence of the international teachings of Marxism and the Fourth International.

Shortly before the founding conference of the Fourth International in 1938 the Workers' International League opposed the unification of British Trotskyists on the tac-

tical grounds that it was necessary to discuss our attitude towards entry into the Labour Party before unification could be achieved. This was a serious mistake which certainly had at its roots a rejection of international responsibilities in favour of a nationalist approach.

But it was corrected in 1943 when some of the present leaders of the Socialist Labour League re-analysed their mistake and explained its origin within the movement.

The correction was made at

the second National Congress of the Workers' International League in September 1943 and it was bitterly opposed by the overwhelming majority of those present, led by Jock Haston, now educational director for the right-wing Electrical Trades Union.

Despite this it brought the movement back to a political understanding of internationalism so much so that by March 1944 reunification had been achieved and the Revolutionary Communist Party was founded.

The meaning of Haston's split from the Fourth International

Haston and his majority continued to oppose the policies of the Fourth International, especially towards work inside the Labour Party. During this period, from 1943 onwards, we collaborated closely with the

international movement and its various bodies. We fought the opportunist and sectarian effects of Haston's anti-internationalism right up until February 1950 when he deserted the Trotskyist movement and

applied to join the Labour Party.

Haston undoubtedly reflected the insular nationalism of the working class. He openly advocated and defended empirical thinking as a means for build-

ing the revolutionary party.

In the end he went to the right wing and broke for all time from Marxism.

It was a fitting end, but it may well not have happened in this way had it not been for the struggle which the present

leadership of the SLL carried out against him in defence of the programme and policies of the Fourth International.

Having corrected the mistake made in 1938 we have always insisted and defended the principle that it is impossible to build a revolutionary party in

Britain except through the clearest understanding of the role of the Fourth International. We subordinate always building of this party to our international obligations. Any other course would be a return to the barren nationalist course of Haston and company.

The Pablo experience

Then, in 1951, came Pablo, at that time Secretary of the international, with his theory that because of the imminence of the third world war, the Stalinist parties could, under the impact of this war, transform themselves into revolutionary parties.

His entry policy into the Communist and social-democratic parties now became the vehicle of liquidationist policies. Only the majority of the French section of the Fourth International opposed him at first.

The Socialist Workers' Party supported Pablo against the French section and we made at this point our second most serious mistake in the international movement, because we also supported the decision to expel the French comrades.

We didn't have long to wait to see the bitter fruits of that one. Barely over a year later Pablo had started his groups **hell-bent on a liquidationist course inside our organisation in Britain and the SWP in the USA.**

In Britain he gave full powers to the Lawrence minority to ignore the decisions of our majority. This encouraged them to publicly violate the discipline of our organisation. Naturally we expelled them immediately. Later Lawrence and his friends joined the Communist Party.

The SWP meanwhile publicly broke from Pablo's international leadership and issued

the 'Open Letter to all Trotskyist Organisations' in November 1953. This letter spoke about the struggle of the French comrades against Pabloism as follows:

6 By fiat of the International Secretariat, the elected majority of the French section was forbidden to exercise its rights to lead the political and propaganda work of the party. Instead the political bureau and the press were put under the control of a "parity commission".

At the time we deeply disapproved this action by which a minority was used to arbitrarily overturn a majority. As soon as we heard about it, we communicated our protest to Pablo.

However, we must admit that we made an error in not taking more vigorous action. This error was due to insufficient appreciation on our part of the real issues involved. We thought the differences between Pablo and the French section were tactical and this led us to side with Pablo, despite our misgivings about his organisational procedure, when, after months of disruptive factional struggle, the majority was expelled.

But at the bottom the differences were programmatic in character. The

fact is that the French comrades of the majority saw what was happening more clearly than we did. The Eighth Congress of their party declared that:

"A grave danger menaces the future and even the existence of the Fourth International. . . . Revisionist conceptions, born of cowardice and petty-bourgeois impressionism have appeared within its leadership. The still great weakness of the International, cut off from the life of the sections, has momentarily facilitated the installation of a system of personal rule, basing itself and its anti-democratic methods on revisionism of the Trotskyist programme and abandonment of the Marxist method." 9

How easy it is today for Hansen, Cannon and Dobbs to forget what they wrote in 1953. At the time we heartily endorsed the contents of this 'Open Letter' and we have never changed our minds.

All these important historical experiences establish one thing very clearly. In sharp contrast to the nationalist insular tendency of the British working class, the education of the present leadership of the SLL and through them the rank-and-file members is internationalist to the core. All our political successes in Britain are due in the main to this basic factor.

The legacy of Pabloism

IT would be very wrong to lay the blame for the development of liquidationist revisionism solely on the shoulders of Pablo. He was one of the principal mediums through which it penetrated the Fourth International, but only one. Pablo was an impressionist and an idealist. His theory about the inevitability of a Third World War fought out under conditions where the Stalinist parties would be transformed into revolutionary parties was impressionist to the core.

It left out of account the reactionary bureaucratic nature of the leaderships of these parties and the role of the international class struggle

against imperialism. It superficially saw things from the standpoint of great power politics and the goings-on in the apparatus of the corrupt leaderships.

Once a Marxist departs from a continuous study of the workers' movement from the standpoint of the struggle to build the revolutionary party, he departs from the science of Marxism and becomes an impressionist.

From impressionism to idealism is an easy jump either way.

After a wrong estimation of the international perspectives Pablo rapidly developed his theory of the self-reform of the Soviet bureaucracy, especially following Stalin's death in

1953.

This was only logical especially since he had already come to the conclusion that the Stalinist leaderships outside the Soviet Union could transform themselves into revolutionary parties. Here he substituted an idealistic conception of the self-reform of a bureaucracy, whose very presence on the international scene represented the results of the counter-revolutionary role of international capitalist pressure on the workers' movement.

From that time, that is from 1953 onwards, degeneration was rapid. The Marxist method was completely cast aside and the road to one betrayal after another was opened up.

Pabloite disintegration

In the summer of 1954 just after the split between the International Committee and Pablo, Lawrence and his group in England, together with the Mestre group in France, left him and turned towards the Communist Parties.

Pablo and his tendency gave up all pretences of being a revolutionary tendency and liquidated themselves into the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN), subordinating themselves to the leadership of Ben Bella and Boumedienne.

Those of their followers

such as Germain in Belgium who joined the social-democratic parties rapidly dissolved themselves into the centrist 'left wings'.

The stage was set for the 1964 betrayal in Ceylon when the overwhelming majority of Pablo's section joined the Bandaranaike government, under conditions where even Pablo's heirs, Frank and Germain, had to expel over 500 members of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party.

Nothing like this had ever been seen in the whole history

of the Trotskyist movement since its foundation. Just as the sectarian *débauche* of the German Communist Party in 1933 allowed Hitler to come to power and necessitated Trotsky declaiming that the Third International was dead, so the Ceylon betrayal signified the complete bankruptcy of Pabloism and the United Secretariat.

The responsibility for building the Fourth International now rests entirely with the parties of the International Committee.

Some important lessons from the entry experience

It is at this point, however, that the International Committee should take another look at the tactical question of entry, so that it may avoid

the opportunism of Pablo which led to liquidationism and the sectarianism which has in the past led to the isolation of so many potential

revolutionary groups.

The tactic of entry into the social-democratic parties was elaborated by Trotsky around 1934 in order to try and win

over to the Fourth International the left-centrist layers of those parties who were hovering between us and Stalinism.

It must be understood that from the outset Trotsky viewed entry as a tactic and not a principle.

It is necessary to emphasise this because there are still alleged supporters of Trotsky who wrongly insist that it is necessary for our parties to go through the social-democratic or communist parties at some time in their development.

This is the case of the so-called Revolutionary Socialist Labour League (Grant group) in England who in all essentials agree with Pablo's revisionist theories.

In order to liquidate the Fourth International Pablo insisted in practice that entry was a principle. He then went on to adapt his weak forces to the prevailing centrist currents within the social-democracy.

Gradually they completely lost their political bearings and became centrists themselves. The classical example is Belgium.

Although today Germain is expelled from the social-democratic party on the organisational grounds that he wanted minority rights, he still has not declared for a revolutionary party.

On the contrary he continues with a small centrist party whose weekly paper 'La Gauche' has less than a 2,400 circulation.

Germain did not fight the right wing around the programme and principles of the Fourth International. When he joined their party he became a centrist and remained a centrist even when he was expelled.

This was not Trotsky's conception of entry. He conceived of it as a temporary measure which was necessary in order to fight the right wing and win over members to the Fourth International.

Experiences have shown that this conception needs further elaboration. Entry cannot be successfully carried out unless there is a strong independent revolutionary party functioning actively in the daily experiences of the working class.

Only under exceptional circumstances can total entry of a section of the Fourth International be contemplated, and even then it will be absolutely essential for those who enter to be actively engaged in the struggles of the class so that they can bring their experiences into the fight against the right wing of the apparatus.

The essence of the entry tactic is that the revolutionary party and its leadership must constantly function within the working class *independent* of entry whilst at the same time utilising its experiences to fight the right wing.

Pablo, Germain and company turned their backs on the struggle of the working class and concentrated instead on a

verbal centrist argument against the bureaucratic right wing.

The essence of Marxism which is a continuous analysis of the experiences of the working class by an active participant in the building of the revolutionary party was cast aside. In its place came the idea that things were decided not by the working class but by developments within the bureaucratic apparatus.

Having abandoned a study of the working class for the theory of the inevitability of a Third World War and the self-reform of the Stalinist bureaucracy, Pablo, Germain and company turned the entry tactic into the opportunist opposite of what Trotsky originally proposed.

The work of the Socialist Labour League in the Young Socialists between 1960 and 1964 corrected to the full this mistake. Not only was this work most successful but it proved that by maintaining a strong independent revolutionary organisation and combining faction work with serious activity amongst youth in the local areas it was possible to win over the forces necessary to defeat the Labour Party bureaucracy.

We established in practice a united front from within with those youth who were moving to the left, whilst at the same time we exposed the role of the fake lefts in the fight against the right wing.

That, in our opinion, is how Trotsky advocated the application of the entry tactic.

How Pabloite Congresses are reported

The Pabloites on the United Secretariat are constantly boasting about the strength of their international relations, in the same way as they used to boast about the 'great party' in Ceylon.

In the winter 1960-1961 issue of their magazine 'Fourth International', No. 12, they report their Sixth Congress as

follows:

'The VIth World Congress of the Fourth International was held in Switzerland from 10th to 15th January, 1961. More than a hundred delegates, fraternal delegates, and invited comrades, coming from about 30 countries of all the continents,

participated in its labours.'

In June 1963 the 7th reunification congress was held and its character was noted as follows in Fall 1963 issue of 'International Socialist Review':

'... the overwhelming majority of the Trotskyist movement representing 26

countries have now been united...'

Note how the number of countries dropped from 30 to 26.

Now take a look at the representation at the VIIIth World Congress held at the end of 1965.

There were delegates present from Britain, Canada, Mexico, Venezuela, West Germany, Belgium, Austria, Italy, France, Ceylon, Greece, Switzerland, Algeria, Argentina, Denmark and one other country—in all

16 countries, a drop of 10 since the so-called unification of 1963.

Needless to say, this decline was never explained—the Congress was simply noted as 'a great success'.

There were observers from Spain, Iraq and Nigeria, some of whom were also present at the Third Congress of the International Committee held in April 1966.

To describe the two tiny groups (one opportunist and the other sectarian) in Britain

as 'a section' is to scrape the barrel to the utmost.

These people represented nothing of the slightest importance, and, in practice, are irreconcilably divided among themselves.

From these examples, it can be seen that no reliance whatsoever can be placed on the way the Pabloite United Secretariat reports its Congresses. Because of revisionist policies, their movement is disintegrating in one country after another.

Pablo has gone, but Pabloism lives on

It was at this VIIIth Congress that Pablo was expelled on the grounds that he and his followers had violated discipline over two years. But his departure did not in any way signify that his political ideas were rejected.

On the contrary, Livio, representing the Italian group and a leading collaborator of Germain and Frank, took the floor to report on the African revolution, claiming that in Egypt and Mali there was a

possibility of a socialist transformation without revolution.

Here we have the essence of Pablo's revisionism. But that is not the whole story.

After Livio spoke, Germain introduced an amendment making a definite concession to him. He declared that he is against opposing the Egypt led by the bourgeois nationalist, Nasser.

On the question of Ceylon, the Congress allowed one and a half hours to the discussion

and report covering the expulsion of 500 members. As soon as a crisis of this magnitude has to be discussed, Pabloite Congresses are not really interested.

It took just 90 minutes to dismiss what happened in Ceylon.

Although Pablo has been expelled, his political methods still dominate the thinking of the United Secretariat. Pablo has gone, but the legacy of Pabloism lives on.

The role of the Socialist Workers' Party

THE Socialist Workers' Party of the United States cannot for legal reasons be affiliated to the Fourth International. In the past, however, because the founders of this Party, Cannon, Schachtman and Abern, worked in the closest association with Trotsky, it exercised considerable influence within the international movement. During the period of the late twenties and thirties its leadership in collaboration with Trotsky harnessed their experience of work in the mass

movement to a greater extent than any other section at that time.

The early successes of the SWP were based on a combination of Trotsky's brilliant political analysis of the international scene as well as the problems of the Trotskyist movement and the maturity of its leadership in relation to their approach to the problems of the working class in the United States. In this respect, James P. Cannon was un-

doubtedly the most outstanding international Trotskyist leader during Trotsky's lifetime.

How then and under what conditions did the degeneration take place which today has transformed the SWP from being the staunchest defender of Marxism and Trotskyism into the leader of a rump of Pabloite revisionist supporters who have betrayed every principle of Marxism over the past 15 years?

Dialectical materialism and the revolutionary party

The answer to this question does not lie in the difficult conditions of the cold war and the boom under which the SWP has been operating in the United States, especially since 1949, although these have played a role, but in the origin of the early Trotskyist movement.

From its inception, this movement was based on a profound contradiction.

Its founder, Trotsky, went through all the early political experiences of the pre-revolutionary Soviet Union, the revolution itself, when he led and organised the Red Army, the post-Lenin degeneration and the growth of the Soviet bureaucracy under Stalin.

His supporters in the USA and in other countries came mainly from those who entered the communist movement after the foundation of the Third International in 1919. Their development was conditioned by the post-World War I defeats of the working class outside the Soviet Union and the growth of Stalinism.

These experiences should not be considered in an unrelated superficial way.

Building the revolutionary party is conditioned by them: but in a more fundamental way it is determined by a consistent struggle for the Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism against all forms of idealism which is the predominant philosophy of the ruling class.

Only Trotsky had participated in such an experience, especially during the pre-revolutionary period.

Lenin's leadership was constantly strengthened and developed around a consistent struggle for Marxist philosophy against all brands of idealist revisionism. Such a struggle was greatly facilitated by the growth of the revolutionary forces which were the forerunner of the revolution itself.

Without this experience the revolutionary leadership cannot be trained. The education of a Marxist cadre requires a continuous ideological struggle derived from Marxist theory

in participation and study of the workers' movement. Only in this way can leaders be historically selected for the great task of overthrowing capitalist society.

This was precisely the weakness of the Cannon-Trotsky combination.

Trotsky's theoretical genius flowed from the entire revolutionary experience of the Soviet Union, both in its triumph and degeneration.

Cannon's politics, on the other hand, were mainly derived during the period of Soviet degeneration and defeat for the international working class outside the USSR.

His early years in the Communist Party of the USA provided him with a meagre grasp of Marxist theory. Like the rest of the party leaders he was imbued with pragmatism (if it works it is right) and his relation with Trotsky was based on this method.

He correctly saw Trotsky as the co-leader with Lenin of the Russian revolution, and when the break with Stalin took

place after Lenin's death, he concluded that Trotsky had the correct political position.

Cannon was strengthened in his conclusion by the immediate conflict of factions within the American Communist Party. William Z. Foster and others joined with Stalin, Cannon took political sides with Trotsky. It was a pragmatic decision dictated by the factional situation within the CP of the USA which produced important results, especi-

ally during Trotsky's lifetime.

But this was not enough so far as the training of the leadership of the SWP went.

Cannon and his supporters accepted Trotsky's leadership without understanding the implications of the theoretical experience which lay behind it.

Their political development was therefore of a one-sided character—in effect they remained pragmatists.

At this point we can see the reason why Trotsky had

to wage a struggle on dialectical materialism in 1939-1940 against Burnham and Schachtman.

Although the American Trotskyist movement was 11 years old, he had to begin his struggle against the revisionists by outlining and explaining dialectical materialism, the ABC of Marxism (see 'In Defence of Marxism').

Trotsky's tragic assassination by the Stalinists in August 1940 left Cannon on his own.

Cannon and Trotsky

Now the real test began, and Cannon faced it in the following way.

The legend was fostered up that the SWP and its members were Trotsky's 'heirs', which to inexperienced people might seem plausible enough. It was implemented by the publication of Trotsky's writings, implying that he had said the last word on all the important questions.

Trotsky's insistence that the SWP should wage a continuous struggle within its ranks for dialectical materialism was ignored. Cannon replaced it with the conception that so long as he reprinted Trotsky's books it was sufficient.

In this way Trotsky was transformed from a revolutionary Marxist into an idol. After he died Cannon went straight over to idealism and kept the old leaders of the SWP in the dark as to his method. They, in any case, were unable to discern it since they were themselves educated under it.

From there on Cannon was

forced more and more to rely on pragmatism in his approach to the international as well as American problems.

Such an approach dominated his early relations with Pablo. Cannon desired 'another Trotsky' so he latched on to Pablo.

Almost immediately international relations were resumed after the end of the second World War, Pablo was taken to the USA so that he could be 'looked over'. He passed 'the test', if you can call it that, and then became the SWP-appointed 'Trotsky' for Western Europe.

So far, so good, but then the real crisis began because Pablo himself needed political assistance and guidance. Cannon desired Pablo to be another Trotsky, but the whole thing was based on a pragmatic illusion. Pablo wasn't Trotsky and yet Cannon wanted Trotsky tailor-made.

Having 'got away' so to speak with his pragmatic relation to Trotsky in the thirties,

Cannon was on the look-out for replacements.

This is where the Marxist method came in. Cannon from his insular nationalist United States outlook wanted someone to take charge of 'Fourth International' affairs, so he chose Pablo, under circumstances where Pablo was being pushed from pillar to post by his impressionism. Coming from a middle-class intellectual milieu in Western Europe Pablo was incapable of replacing Trotsky.

So Cannon had what appeared to be a breathing space until 1951. Then Pablo utilised a minority of the French Section to expel a majority.

At first Cannon applauded Pablo on this issue, then, when the latter began to organise a minority inside the SWP, Cannon was spurred into action against Pablo. It was OK presumably when it was going on in France, but quite a different story when it began to happen inside the USA.

1953 — a year of decision

The year was 1953 and the full implications of Cannon's pragmatism were now becoming clear to the international movement.

From the end of the Second World War onwards he had utilised the international movement as an international

front for what was happening in the United States. Just so long as Pablo kept his nose out of what was going on inside the SWP Cannon was happy.

Now we see the other side of Cannon's pragmatic method.

During the period when

Trotsky was alive it produced what appeared to be favourable results. Now after his death these results were dialectically turned into their opposite.

Cannon, who accepted pragmatically Trotsky's political line without question during

the period before the Second World War, was now plunged into an extremely different situation after his death.

His pragmatic use of Trotsky was now transferred to a pragmatic use of the Fourth International, which in practice meant that he based himself on a completely American nationalist approach to the international movement.

From a pragmatic attitude towards Trotsky and his teaching was but a small step towards American nationalism, which is the most reactionary version of idealist philosophy in the world.

It was this methodology which was responsible for the complete disintegration of the SWP as a Trotskyist organisation.

Cannon turns back to Pablo

When the split with Pablo was over in November 1953, we began immediately to discuss ways and means to bring the differences with Pablo into the open.

In the spring of 1954 we proposed a renewal of the discussion with Pablo and a committee was set up with an equal number from both sides to organise it.

The purpose of this discussion was not to heal the split but to bring out more clearly the fundamental reasons for it.

It was conceived by us as another stage of the struggle against Pablo. The unavoidably abrupt nature of the international split in November 1953 had left a number of comrades in different sections still confused—we wanted to expose Pablo and clarify them.

At first Cannon gave half-hearted support to these proposals, then in the late Autumn of 1954 we suddenly received a letter calling upon us to abandon the discussion. From that moment it was clear that an even more serious conflict was brewing between the International Committee and the

The struggle by Cannon against Pablo in 1953 marked the beginning of the end for the SWP. Pablo's supporters Cochran and Clarke forced Cannon's hand. He fought them back by organisational means—that is he expelled them.

Now, 13 years later, he and Farrell Dobbs, the present Secretary of the SWP, completely support every point which Cochran and Company fought for in 1953.

In other words, Cannon and Dobbs after expelling Cochran and Clarke then proceeded to adopt their revisionist programme.

The history of Cannon and Dobbs since 1953 is one of expelling those who disagreed with them in order to adopt the policy which those who

were expelled advocated. This was the end of the line for the pragmatists of the SWP. From 1953 onwards they were politically speaking turned upside down.

Almost immediately they turned towards the English Trotskyists in order to find an excuse for what they proposed to do. They built up the legend that because the English Trotskyists were the victims of Pablo's attack (they had broken from Pablo by means of the 'Open Letter' [1953]) they needed to save the English Trotskyists, which included 'Healy', from Pablo, by way of the 'Open Letter'.

This was a lie. The English Trotskyists in 1953, like the French Trotskyists in 1951, were well able to look after themselves.

SWP.

Even at this early date in 1954, when the split with Pablo was just concluded, the split with the SWP was **on the agenda**.

We believed that the political fight against Pablo was not an issue of abstract Marxist theory but one which was directly related to the struggle to build the party.

We felt that it was necessary to carry the fight against revisionism into the day-to-day work of the sections of the International Committee and ruthlessly expose Pabloism in the process.

The SWP wanted to forget about the fight as soon as it was over. In his usual pragmatic way Cannon couldn't care less about the problems of the international movement just so long as he had defeated Pablo's supporters inside the SWP.

So far as he was concerned it was the SWP first, last and always, no matter what happened to the international movement. Thus did pragmatism merge with nationalism.

The discussion on Pablo's role in the 1953 split was abruptly terminated by the SWP by June 1954. There matters stood for three years until Cannon, without consultation with the International Committee, wrote to Leslie Goonewardene, the secretary of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party in Ceylon, in April 1957 suggesting that a fresh effort should be made to achieve reunification between the International Committee and the Pabloites. This was the same Leslie Goonewardene who led the movement into the coalition government of Mrs. Bandaranaike in June 1964.

Cannon was at the end of his pragmatic road, now he had to do a political 'about face' before the entire international movement. Having split from Pablo and his own factions, Cochran and Clarke, in 1953, he now had to find ways and means to accept the policies of those from whom he had split and he had little time to do it since his own 'majority' was breaking up fast.

This is how his ideas were developing.

Dobbs, Novack and Cannon

Almost immediately after the split with Pablo in 1953 George Novack (Wm. F. Warde) announced to Cannon one day that he was in reality a supporter of Pablo's and was on his way over to join Cochran and Clarke.

This caused consternation in the Cannon camp because he had been boosted as their main theoretician.

Immediately they went into action. According to Cannon, Evelyn Reed, Novack's wife, announced she was staying with the SWP and he, Cannon, arranged that they (the Novacks,) were to join him in Los Angeles, California as soon as possible.

So they did, and that silenced George Novack, at least for the time being. He didn't break from Cannon but he temporarily kept his views on Pablo to himself.

George Breitman who went to Detroit in 1953 to replace the Cochran faction did the same thing in 1954.

Both Novack and Breitman were Pabloites from the start, but they were also friendly with Cannon. So, for the time being, they went along with him instinctively, knowing very well that sooner or later he would join them.

The reader may well ask: Why did Cannon eventually join the Pabloites?

In answering this question we do not have to refer to Novack (Warde) and Breitman.

The answer lies in Khrushchev's speech at the 20th Congress of the USSR early in 1956. But that, our readers may ask, is surely very difficult to understand—nothing of the sort.

Immediately, that is from the split of 1953, Cannon rejected the ideas which led to Khrushchev's speech. He didn't accept that the struggle against Pabloism was tied up with building revolutionary parties throughout the world and especially in the United States.

Once he believed that the SWP was free from the immediate menace of Pabloism, which to him meant Cochran and Clarke, he just turned his back, politically speaking, on the international movement.

But Khrushchev's speech, which virtually admitted that everything the Trotskyists fought for was right, changed all that.

In effect he posed an all-out struggle to expose and destroy Stalinism. It was at this point that Pabloite revisionism really strangled the international Trotskyist movement.

For five years it had turned the sections towards the possibility that the Stalinist bureaucracy, after Stalin's death, would reform itself. Now the cat was out of the bag.

It became a question as to whether or not the Fourth International would take advantage of Khrushchev's speech and fight as never before to expose and defeat Stalinism, or whether or not it would adapt itself to Khrushchev's variety of Stalinism.

Cannon then asked for unity with Pablo. That is the real significance of Cannon approaching the Ceylonese renegade Goonewardene in April 1957. He had decided to sell out to the Stalinist bureaucracy and the imperialists.

The Socialist Labour League saw things in an entirely different light. We saw Khrushchev's 20th Congress speech as an opportunity to expose Stalinism and Pabloite adaptation to Stalinism.

When Cannon was looking for unity with the Pabloites in 1957, we were fighting to clarify the 1953 split, and extend the struggle against Pabloism, utilising Khrushchev's speech in order to do this.

Immediately upon hearing about Cannon's letter to Goonewardene we wrote to the SWP and dissociated ourselves from Cannon.

He wrote back the kind of

a letter the lord of the manor writes to a serf. It was a letter from an arrogant American nationalist telling the English comrades where to get off.

We put the question about the importance of prior discussion before unification took place. Cannon said that there was no need for any discussion.

He had in effect completely capitulated to Pabloism. Right at the point when Khrushchev's speech opened up a real opportunity for the Trotskyist movement to fight Stalinism, Cannon ran into the arms of Pablo.

The leadership of the Socialist Labour League lost no opportunity in exposing the Stalinists over Khrushchev's speech. We were prepared, because of our political hostility to Pabloism, to take the fullest opportunity in order to fight the Stalinists—we gained more from this approach than all the Pabloite sections, including the SWP, did together.

Now let us look a little more closely at Cannon's cadre. Following the split of 1953 and Novack's threat to join Cochran (the American Pabloite) things went from bad to worse inside the leadership of the SWP.

Farrell Dobbs, who, before the split with Pablo, had been elected general secretary of the SWP, found he was unable to carry out his assignments because Cannon, he said, continuously interfered with his work as secretary from Los Angeles. Dobbs came to England early in 1958 in order to gain our support to fight Cannon.

He told us what happened to George Novack and his relations with Cannon. We insisted that the solution to these problems must be political and accordingly we told him to participate to the full at the first congress of the International Committee which was held in June 1958, although the SWP

was not a member because of the Voorhis Act.

But he did nothing of the sort. He was, he said, under instructions not to comment on the political questions.

Just imagine it. Here we were at the first congress of those sections who had fought the revisionism of Pablo, and the section which had led the fight in 1953 had nothing to say!

It was equally clear from the informal discussions with Dobbs that the SWP was being torn asunder by an internal crisis which on the surface appeared to centre around organisational issues.

Its failure to clarify the reasons for the Pablo split now meant that a number of factions inside the party were blindly fighting against each other, without the political

issues being clear.

The one thing that did emerge from all this squabbling was the undoubted right-wing revisionist orientation of all the factions.

Cannon did nothing to clear up this political mess; he simply intensified it. He took a position where he could play off the right-wing faction of Murry Weiss against the Dobbs faction. Small wonder that during his visit to Europe in 1958 Dobbs spent most of his time looking for allies in the struggle against Cannon.

Towards the end of September 1958 just before he was due to return to the United States he called for a special meeting of the English and French comrades at which he could deal with the problem of Cannon.

(There is a stenographic re-

port of this meeting available.)

At this meeting he announced that in all probability he would be removed from his post of general secretary of the SWP by Cannon when he returned from Europe.

Both ourselves and the French comrades were amazed by such a revelation. We told Dobbs bluntly that under no circumstances could we take any sides between him and Cannon.

It was agreed also that a comrade should travel to Canada late in November 1958 to see if it were possible to assist the leading members of the SWP to overcome this crisis.

Dobbs returned to the USA and things more or less stayed as they were until the visit of a member of the International Committee.

The SLL prepares the split

At this meeting Cannon proposed to the English comrade who was the delegate that they, the British, should join the Americans and break from the French comrades who led the fight, on the grounds that they were 'sectarian'.

We told them that this was not our conception of how an international movement should be educated and built.

Just as we refused to line up with Dobbs against Cannon, so we now refused to line up with Cannon against the French section.

We had made up our minds not to be the pawns in the SWP pragmatic game with the international movement as the

board.

The time had almost certainly come for the Socialist Labour League to split openly from the SWP. Since the split with Pablo in 1953 we had utilised every available means to fight his revisionism.

Now that it was clear that the SWP had capitulated to Pabloite revisionism, our task was clear—we had to organise the split from Cannon, Dobbs and Co. who had betrayed Trotsky and the Fourth International.

The development and growth of the Socialist Labour League is directly related to the struggle against Pabloite revisionism and the degeneration

of the SWP. There can be no compromise on these issues.

The Socialist Labour League is out to destroy Pabloism and its SWP accomplices. There can be and, we repeat, there never will be a compromise on these questions—the fight will go on until we destroy the Pabloites and the revisionist SWP.

Today the Socialist Labour League is, even in the eyes of its bitterest opponents, the strongest section in the international Trotskyist movement. We are confident we can continue along these lines and smash the unprincipled SWP leaders, Cannon, Dobbs and Co.

Who is Joseph Hansen?

THE Socialist Labour League delayed its political break from the Socialist Workers' Party until the end of 1960. We wanted, if possible, to have a serious discussion inside the International Committee in order to educate our comrades around the nature of the differences. We even arranged a special trip to Canada early February, 1960, in order to

meet the main leaders of the SWP to see if there were some common grounds to heal the breach between the two sections. There were none. In our opinion they were moving more and more towards a public acceptance of Pabloite revisionism.

Still we hesitated. When we finally wrote concerning the differences to their National

Committee early in January 1961, we hoped that there would still be a discussion under circumstances where the differences would be eventually clarified. We had no such discussion. Apart from a few brief letters of acknowledgement of correspondence between the SWP and the SLL the months dragged by without any discussion, either written or oral.

Cannon shows his hand

Suddenly the whole shabby business became clear. A letter from Cannon in Los Angeles instructing the SWP national office in New York not to have any discussion with the Socialist Labour League came into our possession.

The political degeneration of the SWP was out in the open. Here was a party claiming to be Trotskyist, whose leaders had pioneered the Trotskyist movement, the most controversial Marxist movement in the whole of history, deliberately

evading discussion.

How was it possible to educate anybody with such a method?

How was it possible to build the Fourth International in this way?

Cannon knew full well that if he began a discussion with the SLL his so-called cadre would fall apart. After all, there had been close on 20 years' collaboration between leading members of the SLL and the SWP.

But Cannon, starting from his pragmatist relation with

Trotsky, was by now an opportunist and a political coward.

He took full advantage of the insular 'all American way' in which the leaders in the SWP had been educated. His argument was, by implication: 'Don't discuss with the leaders of the SLL, they are "sectarian" and "insular".'

In other words he fell back on the arguments which the Stalinists had been using against us for almost 30 years in order to defend and justify capitulation to the pressures of American imperialism.

Enter Joseph Hansen

And so, discussion between the SWP and the SLL was halted for over a whole year.

Then Joseph Hansen entered the scene. His job was simple.

'Eventually', said Cannon, 'we cannot avoid discussion so your task Joe is to poison the political atmosphere inside the SWP against the SLL so that when we have to discuss our members will be dead against them.'

By implication he was saying: 'Never mind about principles and truth. We're pragmatists like President John F. Kennedy, so we do what is "best" to preserve ourselves now.'

And Joseph Hansen got to work.

His task, as an ex-Mormon from Salt Lake City, was to discredit the SLL, not by political argument, but by poisonous slander and gossip.

But let us look back a little. **Who is Joseph Hansen?**

Hansen was one of Trotsky's secretaries for a period during his exile in Mexico before his assassination. There were other secretaries such as the present day anti-Trotskyist Raya Dunayevskaya.

There are no records available to show that Hansen was politically outstanding as a secretary. Ever since Trotsky's

assassination he has been trying to build up a legend about himself, but as the years go by it becomes more and more faded and obscure.

One of the reasons why he has gone unchallenged is because those who worked with Trotsky during this period have mostly left the SWP and dropped out of political activity.

Following the assassination, Hansen returned to New York and almost immediately appointed himself as a cheer leader for Cannon. During the period early in 1944, when he and other leaders went to jail following the Minneapolis trial,

he was in his element.

His story describing how Cannon left New York is a masterpiece of journalistic bootlicking.

'As the crack train gathered speed along the banks of the river, the man soon to be

locked in a cell because of his beliefs leaned back in his seat watching the barren trees and the ice-fringed water skim by. The pillars of a famous geologic formation moved in stately procession into the past—scenes of the Hudson warmed

by the winter sun for this socialist fighter to remember in the hard days ahead. The sun fell on his hair as the train leaned round a curve and the iron gray waves lighted up luminously. Jim's lips moved; The Palisades are beautiful.'

Hansen's 'qualifications'

From then on Hansen had and has today a special role inside the SWP leadership. As a member of this leadership once said:

'When it comes to normal polemicising against opponents there are all sorts of comrades who can undertake this task, but when Cannon wants to sharpen things up, with a real dirty below the belt job, all eyes on the Committee turn automatically in the direction of Joe Hansen.'

This man is tailor-made for this kind of work, for he can write for and against the same argument with equal enthusiasm the moment he is called upon to do so.

In 1952 and 1953 he bitterly attacked the Cochran and Clark faction who were supported by Pablo. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the 'Open Letter' exposing Pablo. For six months following the split, he wrote article after article in the 'Militant' in 1954 denouncing Pablo.

As Cannon's interest in the whole affair began to wane because he pragmatically believed that what was left of the SWP was out of harm's way, Hansen stopped writing just as abruptly as he started.

After that he switched to an entirely different controversy, on, believe it or not, 'Cosmetics'.

Writing under the nom de plume of Jack Bustelo he plonked a large mimeographed bulletin into the SWP ranks late in 1954 (see 'Struggle for Marxism in the USA', by Tim Wohlforth, p. 143, Fourth International, Number 3, 1966).

In 1961 when Cannon, out of fear, told his henchmen in New York not to discuss with the SLL Hansen was then a natural for the 'dirty work'.

His job was to listen to all the tired middle-class renegades who had deserted the Trotskyist movement in Britain, chew over their gossip, add a few bits here and there himself and toss the garbage into the disoriented membership of the SWP.

What the SWP used to think about the SLL

At first Hansen encountered some temporary difficulties. For had not the SWP leaders described the SLL as follows in the Spring 1960 'International Socialist Review':

'In Britain during the past two years a major group of highly qualified intellectuals and workers in the mass movement broke away from the Communist party. The break was programmatic, entailing a thorough review and study of the very "Stalin-Trotsky" dispute which Cochran and his collaborators put in the same category as the Dempsey-Tunney fight. Among those in Britain who have broken definitively with Stalinism there has been impressive ideological ferment. A significant group, having studied the programmatic issues to the end, turned towards fusion with the British Trotskyists. This resulted

in formation of the Socialist Labor League, a group within the Labor Party and the unions dedicated to advancing the Marxist view.

'As an organizing centre of both class struggle action by militant unionists and theoretical struggle for Marxism, the SLL has been selected as a target for witch-hunting. The British capitalist press and the right-wing trade union bureaucrats are displaying the keenest alarm over the fact that the SLL has become an inspiring and attractive force for radical youth, for trade union militants for the entire left wing in the Labor Party. The SLL is in the forefront of every struggle to unite workers, students and intellectuals in the fight against British imperialism, for withdrawing British troops from every part of the world, for ending the H-bomb tests,

strengthening the socialist program of the Labor Party and defeating the right wing's attempts to scuttle the party's stand in favour of public ownership.

'The SLL is taking the lead in the fight for full democracy in the unions, the Labor Party and in every aspect of British life. The SLL has shown its fighting mettle in beating back racist attempts to whip up a lynch movement against Negro workers in London.

'Where did this magnificent movement come from? It is obviously without a trace of sectarianism or disdainful aloofness from the actual movement and life of the working class. It is popular energetic and colorful in its public appeal.

'The real secret of the strength of the SLL is its concern for the theoretical basis of social-

ism, its "preoccupation" if you please with the "old disputes" and its rejection of every attempt at lightminded improvisation in the field of principle. This is true of the SLL and its leadership as a whole, both those who came recently from the Communist Party as well as the older Trotskyist cadre.

'The British Trotskyists prepared for the opening of the kind of opportunities prevalent in their country today and that will surely confront us in the US tomorrow by struggling against

their own Cochran faction, the Lawrence group, back in 1953. They faced the same problem as the American Trotskyists in coping with destructive factional intervention on the part of Pablo. They too, had to overcome the effects of a split that was unnecessarily deep due to Pablo's influence. Their success in overcoming the internal dispute in a principled way, in strict accordance with Leninist tradition, is what prepared them to play their magnificent role today.'

Had not Hansen himself publicly endorsed in the pages of the weekly 'Militant' the statement of the Socialist Labour League on the expulsion of Peter Fryer and four of his cronies in the autumn of 1959, after they had publicly attacked the League?

Of course, and every informed comrade in the international movement knows this, Hansen had to invent his stories about the British Trotskyists.

Hansen gets busy

Hansen set about his task in two ways.

Firstly, there was the issue of Cuba. Hansen, of course, as well as the rest of the SWP leadership, got off to a very slow start so far as Cuba was concerned. The revolution was nearly two years old before they began to discuss it.

Indeed it was Henry Gitano, a supporter of Murry Weiss, who first started the ball rolling with an article also in the Spring issue of 'International Socialist Review'. This was followed up with another piece from Hansen himself.

Around that time Dobbs and Hansen visited Cuba and reported favourably on what they saw there.

But Cuba itself did not become an issue of difference between the SLL and the SWP until after we opened up the discussion early in 1961.

For two whole years after the Cuban revolution the SLL and the SWP were able to collaborate with each other despite the implications of the Cuban revolution. Now, how-

ever, when Cannon wanted to avoid a discussion on Pabloism, things took a different turn.

Together with the Pabloites, the SWP almost instantaneously, after having ignored the Cuban revolution for two years, now recognised Cuba as a workers' state.

This was the first major public turn towards Pabloite methods.

Hansen, who under instructions from Cannon in 1953-54 castigated Pablo for such methods, now became the most devout supporter of them. He argued with equal vehemence in favour, just as he was arguing a few years before against them.

Hansen got busy with his slander. Was it not US imperialism which oppressed the Cuban peoples? Of course it was, and if the SLL hesitated in characterising Cuba as a 'workers' state', did not that automatically mean that the SLL was an ally of US imperialism?

This was the story which he

peddled around the SWP in order to poison the political atmosphere against the SLL with whom they collaborated for 20 years.

Alongside all this, members of the SWP were organised to go to Cuba so they could see the 'land of socialism' for themselves.

Coming from the USA and its anti-red, witch-hunting atmosphere, everything which they saw in Cuba seemed fine from the tourist point of view, the one difficulty being that they were there only for a short time.

Nevertheless, it served Hansen's purpose. When the American and Canadian tourists returned he was saying 'Now you see how the SLL helps US imperialism. Don't bother to read their bulletins, Jim Cannon is right not to have discussion with 'supporters of US imperialism, is he not?'—and they in turn, unfortunately said 'Yes' to what was nothing more than shades of Stalinist distortion of Trotskyist method.

Cuba — a cover for a right-wing turn

The issues, however, were quite different.

The SLL was not necessarily opposed to the designation of Cuba as a 'workers' state'.

We wanted to keep an open

mind until after we had an objective discussion with those in the SWP we believed to be our co-thinkers.

They didn't want such a discussion because they were de-

serting to Pabloism. They were in fact rapidly turning towards the right and to liquidationism into the pacifist movement within the USA. Cuba was just a cover for the project.

For example, in discussing the class nature of the Chinese state in the years 1954-1955, Hansen himself circulated a memorandum to the SWP National Committee 'suggesting a state capitalist theory for China' (see 'Struggle for Marxism in the US', Fourth International, No. 3).

If it was permissible to have such a discussion inside the SWP in the middle fifties, why not between the SWP and the SLL on Cuba in 1962, especially since we had not

characterised Cuba as 'state capitalist' and we were open to be convinced by those whom we believed to be our collaborators?

We wanted discussion over the class nature of the Cuban state—the SWP did not because they were busy capitulating to the liquidationist policy of Pablo.

Their turn to the right wing and the pacifists had now begun in earnest. At all costs they had to break from the

SLL in order to get closer to their real international allies—the right wing Pabloites.

But how can such methods build the Fourth International in the revolutionary way that Trotsky wanted it to be built?

The short answer is that they cannot.

That is also why the split between the International Committee and the Pabloites of the Unified Secretariat cannot be healed in such an unprincipled way.

Cannon, Dobbs and Hansen prevent international discussion

In the autumn and winter of 1961 Hansen was sent on a tour of Latin America in order to confuse and disorient those sections supporting the International Committee.

He utilised the 'workers' state' theory in Cuba to the full in order to separate them from the SLL.

Once again the pragmatic SWP was using the international movement to turn towards Pablo just as it had tried to use it in 1953 against him.

Understandably, the Cuban revolution made a big impact on the Latin American comrades, especially in Chile and the Argentine, but the practice of placing ready-made labels, such as 'workers' state', without adequate international discussion on such developments is not only dangerous but downright opportunist.

It politically suited the SWP but it greatly weakened the comrades in Latin America.

The 'workers' state' theory in Cuba was the vehicle which finally dragged the SWP back into the Pabloite camp. Behind this theory was essentially the idea that a revolutionary party was not necessary.

It met with immediate response from the disorientated petty bourgeois inside the SWP. Led by Hansen and fortified by tourist trips to

Cuba, they were ready to believe anything they were told about the SLL.

Cannon gradually dropped his support for the Murry Weiss faction and switched it to Dobbs. Weiss, in turn, resigned and opened a bookshop.

Cannon, it is reported, sent him a donation so that he could buy some books, with a comforting letter saying that he understood how he felt.

After that the road was clear for Dobbs. Hansen naturally fell into line, voting with both hands for Dobbs.

Everything was set for the second stage of the campaign of slander against the SLL.

Early in February 1962 Hansen arrived in Europe for the funeral of Natalia Trotsky.

During his stay he visited England and attended a Central Committee meeting of the Socialist Labour League. On his return to the USA he immediately began a slander campaign against leading members of the SLL around gossip he picked up from renegades, although he never at any time opened his mouth when he was here.

At the meeting we briefly discussed the differences between the SLL and the SWP. Hansen freely admitted that he was a consistent empiricist.

Our next experience with him came later on in 1963,

when he arrived in Europe to negotiate closer relations with the Pabloites.

During the summer of 1962 the International Committee, accepting the recommendations of the Socialist Labour League, opened up negotiations with the Pabloite International Secretariat for discussion on the disputed questions.

This was decided after we found it absolutely impossible to draw the SWP into the open as regards their political positions.

Since we knew they now supported Pabloite revisionism we felt that an international discussion with every tendency involved would help the movement re-organise itself, by clarifying the issues.

But the SWP were dead against such a discussion.

They formally agreed with the negotiations we had started because it provided them with organisational reasons to collaborate more openly with the Pabloites.

But now, as in the past, they wanted this collaboration to proceed as if the split in 1953 had never taken place.

Just as discussion was about to open and documents were exchanged, Hansen suddenly announced that a unification had been arranged between a minority of the International Committee affiliates, namely

the small Swiss and Canadian sections, supported by the Chinese Peng who represented no-one but himself.

We appealed to them to proceed with the discussion but it fell on deaf ears.

Then in May 1963, just before this farcical unification, Ernest Germain, a leading Pablo man, came to England

and told the SLL that irrespective of unification the negotiations would go on with those sections of the International who desired discussion before unification.

He repeated the same proposal when he spoke to our summer school two months later in early August. There are hundreds of comrades who

heard him say these things.

After the unification Hansen returned to the USA for further instructions. He arrived back in Europe late in August and immediately told the Pabloites that the SWP was opposed to any discussion with the International Committee, so all negotiations were immediately broken off.

How the 'no discussion' decision applied in Ceylon

The most disastrous side of this decision was that it prevented all discussion inside the Pabloite ranks about what was happening in Ceylon, where already the majority of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party were preparing to enter the coalition government.

By preventing such a discussion they also prevented the revolutionary minority of the LSSP from waging an all-out political fight against the op-

portunist majority.

They were silenced by orders of Hansen and Co. right at the time they should have been fighting tooth and nail to clarify the party.

Hansen, Cannon, Dobbs and Co. had achieved what they set out to achieve.

Once more the small Pabloite rump in Paris, now masquerading as the 'Unified Secretariat' became the cover for

their 'Fourth International'.

Thus they were able to turn to the pacifists inside the USA without fear of international criticism.

The pragmatic methods flowing from nationalism had now merged with the completely opportunist Pabloite currents. This was essentially Hansen's contribution towards the destruction of Trotskyism, especially in the US and Ceylon.

'The good name of Trotskyism in Britain'

IN the period especially from 1940 onwards, the leadership of the Socialist Labour League learned much from the Socialist Workers' Party in the USA. Our fundamental criticism of the revisionist policy of this organisation today is not intended in any way to denigrate the positive side of that relationship.

The SWP members were especially helpful to us during the period between 1943 and 1949 in the struggle against the Haston clique. This group, which comprised a majority of the English Trotskyist organisation, was led essentially by Haston, his wife Mildred Haston and Ted Grant. The Hastons deserted in 1950 and moved towards agreement with the right wing of the Labour Party.

Pablo rescues Grant

Grant answered the advertisement and offered the same kind of service to Pablo as he had given Haston in his day—he was prepared to stop at nothing in his efforts to slander the English Trotskyists.

Earlier, in 1954, when a leading Trotskyist, Bill Hunter, was being expelled from a north London Labour Party, Grant, who was a member of the Management Committee, abstained when the right wing proposed Hunter's expulsion.

Afterwards he proposed a vote of thanks to the Assistant National Agent of the Labour Party who was present at the meeting and who had instigated the expulsion in the first place.

Naturally, Pablo was delighted with such a recruit. Forgotten was the decision of

Grant, however, did not take this road. Although he had been the political attorney for Haston, he could not bring himself to agree with the latter's liquidation into the Labour Party. At the same time, he could not bring himself to publicly denounce Haston's desertion from the Trotskyist movement.

When it was proposed on the Political Bureau early in March 1950 that Haston should be expelled for his renegacy, Grant abstained. The man is an incorrigible opportunist.

It was for this reason that Grant was expelled from the Trotskyist movement at the Third World Congress of the Fourth International in August 1951. Ernest Germain proposed the resolution for his expulsion and it was carried unanimously, on the grounds that Grant was a renegade.

the Third Congress expelling Grant for covering up for Haston. He was welcomed back as an ally in Pablo's unprincipled revisionist struggle against the English Trotskyists.

Forthwith, he was provided with the label 'official section' in an effort to confuse the situation in England.

The technique employed by Grant and Pablo to disrupt our movement was simple.

Normally the Grant group carries out little or no activity inside the labour movement. It is a thoroughly sectarian group which has opportunistically liquidated itself into the Labour Party.

The tactic of 'deep entry' in fact provided Grant with a cover to do nothing.

On occasions, however, the Grant group comes to life, but

Even Pablo, who at that time was already scheming to expel a majority of the French section, supported the expulsion.

The split between the forces of Pablo and the International Committee took place in the winter of 1953 and nothing was heard about Grant until 1957. Pablo was at this time fighting the forces of the International Committee tooth and nail.

When the English organisation during 1956 gained numerically from the crisis in the Communist Party following the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Pablo was desperate.

He went to 'Tribune', the weekly paper of the fake 'left' inside the Labour Party, and inserted an advertisement appealing for someone to come forward and support him.

this has nothing to do with the struggle of the working class. Such outbursts are invariably connected with the difficulties of the Socialist Labour League.

When someone leaves our organisation, such as Peter Fryer, Daniels and Cadogan in 1959, they are immediately approached by the Grant group (in this particular case by Pablo himself), who immediately proceeds to ignore the political reasons why they deserted the Socialist Labour League in order to glean whatever petty gossip they can against the League. Such gossip is then utilised to obscure the real political issues in dispute.

This is the essence of unprincipled factionalism, the method of the petty bourgeois in the struggle against Marv-

ism.

Whereas the Marxist will always try to reveal the class nature of the political differences, the petty-bourgeois revisionist will endeavour to obscure them with subjective gossip and slander.

This was then the method which Grant and Pablo applied against the SLL from 1957 onwards.

Now, we come to another ally of Pablo at that time, the group headed by T. Cliff, which claims that the 1917 revolution in the Soviet Union has been completely defeated and that Russia is today a state capitalist country.

Cliff arrived in England from Palestine (Israel) in September 1946.

He immediately joined forces with the Haston, Grant group and opposed those leaders who

were opposing their opportunist role.

After February, 1950, when Haston deserted the Trotskyist movement, Cliff's small group remained inside the Trotskyist organisation, until the Korean war broke out in the summer of 1950.

Delegates from Cliff's group proposed to our annual conference in August 1950 that we denounce the North Koreans as being just as responsible for the war in Korea as the United States imperialists. This position was overwhelmingly rejected by the delegates with one notable exception—Grant.

He attended the conference as a delegate and when the vote was taken against Cliff, **he abstained.**

After the conference, the Cliff group then proceeded to open disruption of the majority

conference decisions. On the Birmingham and St. Pancras Trades Councils they proposed resolutions denouncing the North Koreans as being as equally responsible for the war as the American imperialists.

Naturally we expelled them **immediately.**

However, much water has flowed under the bridges since that time.

Today the same Cliff group unites with the pro-Stalinists on the Vietnam Solidarity Committee in proposing 'peace' in South Vietnam. They have joined forces in the campaign against the Prices and Incomes Act with the Stalinists in England, who have betrayed and sabotaged this struggle and opposed the campaigns and demonstrations of the Young Socialists.

State capitalists join hands with Stalinists against SLL

In other words the state capitalist anti-Stalinists of the Korean war have now found themselves in the same camp as the Stalinists in 1966.

One of their youth members, Mr. Cafoor, openly writes in Communist Party publications whilst, at the same time, he denounces the Young Socialists and the Trotskyists.

So the anti-Stalinists of 1950 become the pro-Stalinists of

1966. Their method is the same.

When the Cliff group refused to defend the Soviet Union and the North Koreans against American imperialism in 1950 they were acting not on the basis of the Marxist method of class analysis, but on the method of petty-bourgeois impressionism. That is why they have wound up supporting the same Stalinism

which they opposed in 1950.

Up until the time the SWP refused to discuss with the SLL in 1961, there was no disagreement between us about the revisionist role of the Pablo, Grant and Cliff groups.

Then as soon as Cannon, Hansen and Dobbs made the political shift to Pablo, they also began to fish around in these gossip sewers in order to attack the SLL.

Hansen adopts Grant

In the autumn of 1964 Hansen took over where Pablo left off and called a conference in an effort to achieve a unification between the Grant group and another small band of middle-class warriors residing in the Midlands.

This latter group moves around in fake 'left' Labour circles and produces a duplicated periodical which is distinguished by the fact that it never deals with a single problem from a Trotskyist

point of view.

Apparently its motto is, 'if you want to convince the centrists, you must talk and look like them'.

Hansen's main trump card was that both groups hated the SLL and he imagined that this would be sufficient to keep them together.

On the surface of things the conference appeared to produce a limited success, but shortly afterwards trouble broke out between the group

leaders about what they were going to do inside the Labour Party and the whole thing blew apart, despite a last-minute intervention by Hansen himself.

So now the SWP-sponsored 'united secretariat' is without any section in Britain, although it favours the Midlands group more than Grant.

This experience reveals the blind-alley politics of revisionism.

From time to time it is possible for the method of subject-

tivism and gossip to make an impact on cynics and tired refugees from the class struggle, but this is purely temporary.

No movement can be built on such a basis, which is after all nothing more than a reflection of idealist method of thinking. The differences between revisionism and revolutionary Marxism today boils itself down to the differences between idealism and dialectical materialism and not what this individual or that individual is supposed to have done.

It is also very easy to exploit those tendencies who slander and gossip.

The police do this constantly. They simply send agents into these groups who will be prepared to join heartily in condemning the SLL. Naturally such leaders as Cliff and Grant, despite their politics, are sincere in their beliefs and have nothing whatsoever to do with the police.

'Ugly rumours'

In a recent pronouncement Hansen declared:

'For years rumours have circulated in the British labor movement about Healy's methods. Generally the sources turned out to be dissidents who walked out or were expelled from the Socialist Labour League. Some of the stories they told sounded to Trotskyists in other countries like gross exaggerations and thus tended to be discounted as due to factionalism. Yet it had to be noted that in the international scene, Healy's organisation was the only one claiming to represent Trotskyism that had such an ugly reputation in the labor movement because of continual tales about gross violations of the democratic rights of its own members.' Everything that is said here is a lie from beginning to end.

It is simply that the irresponsible anti-SLL factional climate in their groups assists the police.

The SLL leadership has plenty of information at its disposal to prove this and it is the reason why, from time to time, we make it our business to look into the affairs of these relatively tiny organisations.

So far as we are concerned, dealing with the activities of Hansen (who is not a police agent) in Britain was indeed a very simple job. The man has little knowledge of a mass movement activity and is wide open to the crudest impressionism.

The real political battle in Britain since 1960 between ourselves, the state capitalist Tony Cliff group, and the Pabloite Grant group, was waged inside the Young Socialists where both groups joined hands with the right-wing Labour leaders in fighting our tendency.

Mr. Joseph Hansen, ex-secretary to Trotsky, and now a renegade from Trotskyism conditionally supports the arch-Stalinist rogue Aptheker (who justified the Moscow Trials and the rape of Hungary on behalf of the Stalinists) in the coming New York elections.

Tell us why is it that you backed the Grant and Cliff groups who supported Wilson, the biggest renegade in the Labour Party since Ramsay MacDonald, when the Young Socialist majority were being expelled in 1964?

You protest, but the facts are clear.

You, Messrs. Hansen, Grant and Cliff did support Wilson against the Young Socialists when they were warning the working class to fight Wilson's betrayal in 1964.

They, the Young Socialists, were right, and you the self-

We won an outright victory against them all, even under conditions where Grant and Cliff joined hands to found the youth paper 'Young Guard' in opposition to the most successful youth paper since the end of the war, 'Keep Left'.

Our paper was proscribed in 1962 and theirs was allowed to function with the blessings of the right-wing leaders.

In spite of all this our youth comrades organised around 'Keep Left' won an outright majority at the Young Socialist national conferences in 1963 and again in 1964.

At this latter conference Hansen supported a united opposition of the Wilson right wing, the Grant group and the Cliff outfit against 'Keep Left'.

Here is a classical example of real petty-bourgeois factionalism in practice, at a decisive turning point in the conflict with Wilson and Co.

The Tory agents inside the British labour movement, Hansen, Grant, et al., lined up with Wilson.

proclaimed 'Marxists' were wrong.

You still protest, Mr. Hansen.

All right then, tell us why your duplicated house magazine 'World Outlook' refused to publish a single protest about Wilson's attack on the 'Young Socialists'? Yet you can support all sorts of renegades who now make 'left' noises to cover up their renegacy.

Mr. Hansen, you have rejected every principle that Comrade Trotsky fought for.

The 'good name' of Trotskyism in Britain today does not reside with your pet renegades, the Midlands group, Grant or Cliff. It lies with the Young Socialists and the Socialist Labour League.

What 'ugly rumours' does Hansen talk about in relation to the SLL?

Let us list our disagreement with various tendencies since 1938, by asking him directly:

1. **Were we right to expel Haston and his tendency in 1950 when they denounced the Fourth International by ultimately joining the right wing of the Labour Party?**
2. **Were we right in expelling John Lawrence, the disciple of Pablo, in 1953, when he left in 1954 to join the Communist Party?**
3. **Were we right in expelling Peter Fryer who left us in 1959 when he publicly denounced us to the capitalist press on his way to-**

ward writing idealist books on 'sex'?

4. **Were we right in expelling Peter Cadogan in 1959 who insisted that he should have the right to denounce the policies of the League publicly? This man is now a leading pacifist opportunist.**

But nobody else has been expelled from the SLL since then (1960). What other organisation in the working class movement can claim such a record?

Are we intolerant? Of course not. We try to keep every comrade in our movement, but when they join hands with the capitalists publicly, of course

we expel them.

But then, and this is the real problem for Hansen, how can he explain the fact that so many, many comrades who join the SLL remain members?

Inside the Socialist Labour League and the Young Socialists are hundreds and hundreds of young people who are fighting side-by-side, day-in and day-out with the SLL and the Young Socialists to build a socialist Britain.

Listen, Hansen! When you talk about the 'good name' of Trotskyism in Britain you are using a phrase to cover up your own support for renegades who have long since deserted the movement.

The Robertson group of the U.S.A.

AN important source of revisionism in the United States today is the protracted and relatively low political development of the working class. The post-war inflationary boom strengthened temporarily many illusions in the viability of American capitalism. At the same time the cold-war witch-hunt resulted in the best militants being expelled from their trade unions and sacked from a large number of the most important industries. The socialist Workers' Party suffered very severely from these setbacks.

The break-up of this situation became discernable in the early 1960s with the emergence of powerful movements amongst student youth around civil rights and later the war in Vietnam. In some respects this development resembled the CND movement in Britain during the late 1950s. They were, and are, predominantly

middle-class movements which indirectly reflect the re-emergence of the working class into class politics in the metropolitan capitalist countries.

But for a revolutionary Marxist party to orientate itself exclusively on such manifestations of struggle is a fundamental error in terms of Marxist theory. In practice it means basing the activity of the party around the idea that the middle class can change society, when, in fact, this is the task and the task alone which the working class has to perform under revolutionary leadership.

This does not in any way mean that the working class no longer needs the support of such middle-class layers. It does indeed, but here again the vehicle for consciously guiding such support towards the working class is the Marxist party, which on matters of principle bases itself on the revolutionary role of the working class.

The political degeneration

of the SWP internationally was greatly accelerated by its about turn towards the petty-bourgeois radical movement inside the USA.

From here on it was only a stone's throw to sympathising with the late President Kennedy's wife when he (the President) was assassinated and from demanding that Federal troops be sent into Mississippi to aid the Negroes. This also marked the uncritical turn towards Malcolm X and later the slogan of Black Power.

Whilst it is the duty of the revolutionary party to provide critical support for such movements in order to direct them towards the working class, the SWP completely capitulated to them.

And yet, without the intervention of the powerful American working class, all these movements are in a blind alley from which there is no way out unless the revolutionary party mobilises this working class against capitalism.

Robertson rejects internationalism

It is at this point that we can see the real political implications of internationalism for the SWP. The Fourth International—its theory and organisational conceptions—is the only force capable of guiding and rectifying the course of a national section when it starts from impressionism and begins to capitulate to its capitalist environment.

It was precisely when such a need arose that the SWP broke of all its relations with the International Committee of the Fourth International and turned towards the Pab-

loite revisionists.

Only the International Committee could have at this stage assisted the SWP to overcome its difficulties, but Cannon, Hansen and Dobbs were contemptuous of the Fourth International outside the United States.

They had become arrogant American nationalists who were now hopelessly entangled with the politics of the petty bourgeois in the USA. They wanted the kind of international they could utilise for their own revisionist ends and Pabloism filled the bill.

When the Fourth International was founded in the summer of 1938, it based itself essentially upon the revolutionary potential of the international working class.

Into its theoretical armour Trotsky poured all the lessons and principles derived from the struggles of the modern proletariat against the forces of international capital.

Revolutionary internationalism is inseparable from the Marxist conception that the working class is the **only class** capable of overthrowing capitalist society and establishing

socialism.

The revisionist Pabloite conception, which produced the split in the Fourth International in 1953, maintained that sections of the petty-bourgeois Stalinist bureaucracy would, under pressure, move into a leftward direction and substitute themselves for the revolutionary party by taking the power.

Here is the essential revi-

sionist bond which binds the SWP to the rump Pabloite outfit of Germain, Pierre Frank and Livio, which masquerades as the 'Unified Secretariat of the Fourth International' operating from Paris.

From its infancy the group in the USA, which is now led by James Robertson, was nurtured in the worst environment of petty-bourgeois politics, the Shachtman group which denounced the defence

of the Soviet Union in 1940 and split from the Fourth International.

The group joined the SWP in the late 1950s at a time when Cannon and Co. were rapidly moving away from the Fourth International. Hence the early anti-internationalist training which Robertson's group brought with it from Shachtman now blended with the anti-internationalism of the SWP.

Back to revisionism

This did not at all mean that from then on relations between Robertson and the SWP leadership would be plain sailing. The basic core of Robertson's group is first and foremost a clique of petty-bourgeois friends whose politics are determined by the need to maintain at all costs their own little group.

If the preservation of this clique sometimes takes on the form of abstractly defending the correct principles of the Fourth International, then they will turn enthusiastically towards defending them, provided it does not interfere with their little friendly circle.

At the time when Robertson joined the SWP the party leaders, having made up their minds to capitulate to Pabloism, were busily turning their attention towards the liquidation of all opposition to their policies.

They saw in Robertson's group a potential source of such opposition and this immediately raised the future of the clique.

For a time Robertson appeared to move politically in the direction of the Socialist Labour League and the International Committee.

Then came the crucial test.

Since the struggle of the SWP was essentially being waged against the International Committee of the Fourth International it became essential that all those who supported the Committee

should work under its leadership.

This is something which Robertson would not tolerate.

He and his clique wanted the right to say and do as they liked inside the SWP and the USA without any interference from the international movement.

In other words they wanted the political authority of the International Committee without in any way being organisationally responsible to it.

Naturally, bearing in mind the anti-internationalism which was prevalent in and around the SWP, we could never agree to such a position.

Accordingly, the Committee drew up a list of proposals in 1962 which we insisted must be agreed by all the US participants in the political fight against the revisionist SWP leadership. These were as follows:

1. The tendency expresses its general political agreement with the tendency of the International Committee which has agreement around the 1961 international perspectives presented by the Socialist Labour League. It must therefore begin from the standpoint of its responsibilities towards the political struggle of this tendency in relation to the construction of the revolutionary party in the United States.

The tendency recognises that the building of the SWP as a revolutionary party depends on

and derives from its adherence to the revolutionary international perspective and approach.

All discussion and disagreement within the tendency is part of the discussion within the international tendency. Patience will have to be exercised so that while time is allowed for such differences to be adequately discussed internationally, the political aims and functioning of the tendency remain unimpaired.

For this purpose, there will be facilities available for all members of the tendency to express their opinions in a special international tendency bulletin to be published by the Socialist Labour League. This bulletin will have a limited circulation amongst leaders of the international sections who will be invited to comment and participate in the discussion inside the tendency. All written discussion must be carried out within this bulletin.

2. The tendency must pay particular attention to the development of a perspective for work in the United States in relation to the trade union and the Negro movement. The main political work of the tendency within the party will be to patiently explain the nature of the Pabloite revisionism and liquidationism as a method, and its relation to the problem of developing a concrete revolutionary perspective for work in the trade union

and Negro movements. (Such a policy must be carefully presented, not in an artificial factional way, but in a way that will make sense to the activists in the party. The elaboration of the policy is therefore a matter that can only be carried out by most careful preparation.)

The more careful and thoughtful the preparation, the easier it will be to convince people in practice. If the preparation is carried out in a factional and subjective way, then barriers can be raised between the tendency and the rank and file which will slow down the rate of clarification.

The main political fight of the tendency must be directed against the right-wing elements in the party, the Weiss group and the Swabeck tendency. This does not in any way mean that we make the slightest concession to the centre element in the party who up to now have been trying to have the best of both worlds, but who have gradually shifted this position, for the time being at least, in a leftward direction. Because this shift to the left on pacifism is carried out empirically, it can easily become a shift to the right under different conditions. What it does is to open a favourable opportunity for a real struggle against the right-wing elements.

An analysis of the Weiss position adopted by the Pabloites, especially the French Pabloites, on Cuba will show a very clear difference between them and the majority of the SWP.

Our strategy should be to establish a political cohesion of our tendency in a way that can effect a united front where possible with the centre elements in the SWP against the right.

3. The tendency must recognise that the SWP is the main instrument for the realisation of socialism in the United States. There is no other organisation outside that movement which can decisively aid the struggle for socialism at

the present time. Our comrades must therefore work as loyal party members; contribute to all aspects of the work, literary and practical, taking part in all its electoral activity and sub-drives and accepting the administrative decisions of the leadership even though we might be very much against them.

Members of the tendency must recognise that the SWP is their party, and they must speak as people who are responsible for their party. The difficulties of the party must not be exploited in a factional way. This must be seen as the overhead price for lack of political clarification. Since the responsibility for this clarification now rests squarely on the shoulders of the tendency, to make factional capital out of the party's difficulties would be nothing more than shelving that task which is the main purpose for the existence of the tendency.

The tendency must not make premature characterisations of the leadership of the SWP except of those groups such as Weiss and Swabeck who have clearly revealed their Pabloism in theory and practice.

The centre group which is, of course, the majority cannot be described as a finished centrist tendency in the same way as the Pabloites. To be sure there are elements of centrism in its thinking and activity, but these do not predominate. To characterise the SWP majority tendency as a finished centrist tendency is to give up the political battle before it has begun.

We must believe that by common work and political discussion it will be possible to win a majority of the party to adopt a correct line on Pabloism and for the building of the revolutionary party in the United States.

4. The present tendency shall dissolve and shall re-establish itself on the basis of the preceding point.

5. Only those comrades who accept these conditions can be

members of the tendency.

Robertson and his clique rejected these proposals out of hand. They were not really concerned with the struggle inside the SWP to clarify the party, they were more concerned about what was to be the future of their own little group, which was now being pressed to make up its mind by two irreconcilable and antagonistic forces—the International Committee and the Pabloite revisionists of the SWP.

Caught by his unprincipled politics in this trap, Robertson beat a hasty retreat into the camp of revisionism.

Right in the middle of the most critical stage of the political struggle between the International Committee and the American Pabloites he preferred to split the weak forces of the Committee within the SWP rather than accept the international recommendations on how the struggle should be conducted.

Thus, Robertson's anti-internationalism played right into the hands of the revisionists and correspondingly strengthened them.

This was a serious warning to the International Committee and the Socialist Labour League as to the treacherous middle-class nature of this group. Still we resolved to proceed in a most patient way to try and educate Robertson and as many of his supporters as possible.

A few days after the split from comrade Wohlforth's group we replied to their arguments justifying the break as follows:

London

November 12, 1962

Dear Comrades,

We have received a letter dated November 4 in the names of L. Harper, L. Ireland, S. Mage, J. Robertson, S. Stoute written on behalf of a majority of the New York section of the Revolutionary Tendency of the SWP.

There appears to be some

misunderstanding amongst you about the proposals which we submitted through comrade Phillips. You appear, for example, to be labouring under a misapprehension that these proposals were drafted after we listened to an attack upon you by comrade Phillips.

This, of course, was not the case. If we had any criticisms to make of your good selves, we would do so in writing. We would certainly not listen to any kind of gossip in relation to your activity. We start from the assumption that you want seriously to construct the revolutionary party in the US and we would like to assure you that we are only too happy to discuss with you about the best possible way to do this.

We ourselves have, as you know, a long experience of working as a minority faction inside the British Trotskyist movement. We began this work in 1943 and it lasted for seven years. We did not assume leadership rights in England until 1950.

The proposals are based upon experiences we had during that time and are certainly not dictated by comrades Wohlforth and Phillips. During this period we accepted on a number of occasions advice with which we ourselves disagreed, but which we operated in practice because we accepted the revolutionary integrity and rich experience of those comrades who gave it to us. In this way we began to understand the real value of international collaboration.

Between September 1943 and March 1944, we fought a sharp struggle for the unification of all the Trotskyist groups in Britain. At the conference of our organisation the Workers' International League in September 1943, I was in a minority of one supporting this proposal. Then advice came from comrades in New York which laid down the terms for unification. These terms were presented as final and could not be debated or discussed. They had to be

accepted or rejected as they were by all parties concerned, including our minority.

Since the unprincipled majority of our section wanted to deprive us of an opportunity to continue the struggle against them, they immediately opened up relations with the opportunist elements in the other groups and decided to accept the terms. Their reasoning was that by moving towards acceptance of such terms they could isolate us by an unprincipled combination. They did just that. When the unification congress took place in March 1944, we were deprived of minority rights on the National Committee of the fused organisation, the Revolutionary Communist Party. Prior to this conference we raised the matter with the comrades responsible for the fusion terms but they told us that we could not insist on any rights and that we had also got to accept the terms as they were.

So reluctantly we accepted the terms and went ahead to make the fused organisation work. History has since revealed that the fusion was in our favour and not on the side of those who were manoeuvring and intriguing. If we had not accepted the terms and split from the fused organisation because we were not given any rights, then surely our tendency would have been destroyed.

I might add that we did not receive minority rights on the National Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party until almost two years later. Everything was done to persecute us as a faction but we refused under any circumstances to split no matter what the differences or to be driven out of the party. Our people were the best workers and nothing could be done to take this right away from them.

Early in the fusion it became clear that the leadership of the Revolutionary Communist Party contained a mixture

of ultra-Lefts, opportunists and centrists, but we resisted all attempts to characterise them as a centrist tendency since a premature characterisation of this description would have acted as a barrier between ourselves and the rank and file. Many comrades in our own tendency felt strongly about the politics of the majority but they had to resist their feelings in order to undertake a long term perspective of work to equip them to become what they did at a later stage—the leadership of the party.

The international struggle against Pabloite revisionism which resulted in the split of 1953 has now taken on a new form. Due to the lack of political clarification about the nature of this revisionism, the leadership of the SWP are tending to succumb to it as an approach to world problems. But this is by no means a clear-cut development. We know from reading the documents and publications of the party that certain elements such as Weiss, Swaback, Warde and Hansen have now developed a rounded out Pabloite approach. Others are, however, still very unclear and hesitant because amongst other things the SWP has a long record of fighting for a principled Trotskyist position, although it cannot, because of the Voorhis Act, participate in international activity.

Unfortunately, the activity of the Pabloites has been to some extent successful in provoking a factional atmosphere between ourselves and the majority. A good percentage of the activity of people like Dowson during his visit here was taken up with misrepresenting small factional points which were then relayed to the US in order to sharpen up the differences. We know only too well the harm that this kind of thing can do. The longer we have to discuss with the SWP, the more opportunity we will have to expose the Pabloites and assist the party itself. Our policy is to

speaking up clearly and sharply on the political differences and maintain a collaboration with the SWP for as long as possible.

For this reason we have been opposed to any attempt to sharpen up the internal faction struggle inside the SWP no matter what the provocation. Our proposals are designed towards this end in line with our past experience. We do not want to impose them on you. If you do not like to accept them, then there is no need to accept them. All those comrades who do accept them will be considered as part of an international tendency, as we were in the early days of our movement. Contrary to what comrade Mage said in his letter, it is perfectly permissible for this international tendency to discuss its affairs internally either in writing or oral discussion. We are part of a world party and not separate national groupings. The SLL as part of a world movement has every right to establish tendency relations when it feels these are necessary.

You can decide whether or not you want to be part of this international tendency. The SWP in the past has constantly spelled out its advice—and correctly so—not only to ourselves but to comrades in many parts of the world who have supported it in the various struggles. It is perfectly permissible for you to contribute to an internal tendency bulletin all the opinions which you have about the centrist nature of the SWP leadership and we will seriously discuss them with you.

We do want to bring to an end the internal struggle inside the minority so that comrades can bend their entire

efforts towards clarifying the party and helping it in this struggle. We feel sure that if you can see your way to do this we shall make important gains in the future.

We would like to ask you to accept these terms and continue a written discussion with us here. If it were possible you may be able to arrange to visit us some time in the spring or earlier if it could be managed.

Acceptance of the terms does not mean you give up your political positions. We are asking you to do what we had to do in the past, that is to accept the lessons of international experience and work together with us as part of an international tendency fighting against Pabloite revisionism for revolutionary Marxism.

We are asking you to put the international movement and the building of the party first, before any factional considerations. No one amongst us wants to lose a single comrade as a result of a misunderstanding. What you do is being decided not by us but by yourselves.

The political differences which comrade Phillips has are in some respects much more serious than yours, yet he has decided to accept these terms. We again urge you to do the same.

Awaiting your reply.

Best wishes,

G. HEALY,

On behalf of the Organising Committee.

We have reproduced this letter in full so that those who are interested may contrast the educational way in which we tried to assist Robertson, with

the lies and slander which he now utilises against the Socialist Labour League. The same method on our part prevailed during the April 1966 International Congress, which we shall deal with later.

Robertson's split from the International Committee in 1962 was a god-send to the revisionists, and he proceeded to help them in their moves towards the unprincipled unification with the Pabloites during the summer of 1963.

This split was carried out without any prior discussion. This, in turn, prevented the serious situation in Ceylon, which was developing towards a coalition between the Lanka Sama Samaja Party majority and the Bandaranaike government, from being discussed.

Robertson, in his political ignorance and lack of understanding of the struggle which the International Committee had waged against Pabloism since 1953, came out in favour of this unprincipled unity.

In a statement, which he issued in January 1964, he said:

'We also made it crystal clear **in advance** [his emphasis] that should the pro-Pabloist unification win a majority and go into effect, then the dissident and opposing minority internationally who shared our general outlook should go through the experience of the falsely-based unity attempt.'

At the most critical stage of the international struggle against revisionism, when the fate of the Ceylonese section hung in the balance, Robertson, for formally different reasons, found himself in the camp of the revisionists.

He accepted a revisionist unification which has from its inception led to one disaster after another.

Robertson returns to the politics of the S.W.P.

THEIR split from the International committee in 1962 did not save Robertson and his group from expulsion from the Socialist Workers' Party. As soon as Cannon, Dobbs, Hansen and Co. had come out in support of the reunification conference with the Pabloites they also made

preparation to throw Robertson and his group out of the SWP. This they did in December 1963, after a fake enquiry following so-called charges that in fact amounted to a frame-up.

Robertson went quietly. He did not volunteer to supply the Socialist Labour League

and the International Committee with copies of the relevant documents, just as one of his members supplied Hansen and the SWP with correspondence arising from the international conference of the International Committee of the Fourth International last April.

Ready to accept SWP discipline

He presented a mildly-written statement to the Control Commission of the SWP which pledged his group to abide 'by discipline,' i.e., the discipline by the Pabloite revisionists and to 'accepting decisions'. Contrast this declaration to the slander and lies which he pours out today in relation to the circumstances of the split from our International Conference.

In addition the chief witness in his favour at the Control Commission inquiry was one of the oldest advocates of unity with the Pabloites, Myra Tanner Weiss. Her testimony

reveals the middle-class nature of Robertson's group.

'Dobbs,' she says 'gets up and says they [Robertson's group], want to split the party, they don't want to remain in an empty shell. These comrades get up and say "We do want to remain in the party. We regard the SWP as being the basic revolutionary cadre in this country". They say [again referring to Robertson] "We will abide by discipline".'

Such a witness is naturally very hostile to the Socialist Labour League. 'Healy' she says 'is a sectarian', and 'Shane

Mage [Robertson's chief collaborator at the time] together with Robertson will have nothing to do with his procedural tyranny and bureaucracy.

'Mage', she goes on to say 'discussed his verbal disagreements with Healy. . . . I was thoroughly convinced that any collaboration between Healy and Mage and Robertson was out of the question.'

It should be understood that this statement of Myra Tanner Weiss was compiled from the discussions which she previously had with Robertson and Mage.

Theoretical sceptics

This same Mage has now left the Robertson group, rejecting Marxism and suggesting that what everybody needs is a dose of the drug LSD. Yet when we characterised him as a renegade, we were indignantly rebuked by two of Robertson's members, Turner and Sherwood, who wrote to us on April 30 insisting that 'he [Mage] is neither anti-Trotskyist nor a renegade'. To this day there are no written documents discussing the differences between Robertson

and Mage before the latter departed.

Another small extremely pessimistic group formerly associated with Robertson headed by one Peter Friedlander recently put out a leaflet which asks the question 'Is Marxism dead?' and answers it by saying 'It looks like it'.

The contents of the leaflet go on to reject Marxism and raises a series of questions such as 'Why did Stalinism become a mass movement embodying the most intelligent

and dedicated workers and intellectuals, while remaining an organisation of mysticism and deceit, a living lie?', and they again supply an answer.

'We are tired of the old Trotskyist formula, which has nevertheless been the best answer so far'—every word a masterpiece of theoretical scepticism.

What they are saying in effect is that 'we are tired of Trotskyism and we're looking for something new'.

After expulsion from the SWP

Following his expulsion from the SWP Robertson kept up the formal pretence of general political agreement with the International Committee, but this by itself was not enough.

The main question involving the political reasons behind Robertson's split from the International Committee in 1962 still remained unsettled. A further attempt had to be made to see if the political experiences of his group had produced a change in this respect for the better or whether or not the gap had widened.

This was the purpose of the Montreal Conference which took place in October 1965 and brought the Wohlforth and Robertson groups together around a unity agreement. The salient points of this agreement were as follows:

It could not become effective until after the International Conference of the International Committee, April, 1966. We wanted to see if Robertson still maintained his old political hostility towards internationalism before the International Committee agreed to unification. The next most important point was contained in the Section 4, which reads:

'4. The American Commission would be empowered to insist that the resolution or resolutions on perspectives, which was to be presented to

the Unification Conference, accepted the principles embodied in the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Communist International, the resolutions and documents agreed to by the 1938 Founding Conference of the Fourth International and the International resolution on perspectives adopted by the International Committee of the Fourth International Conference April 1966.

Tactical disagreements on the USA would not be an obstacle to unity provided they did not contravene the above decisions. They would be left to the majority of delegates at the Unification Conference to decide. The International Committee of the Fourth International reserves the right to make its political position on these matters known to the delegates at the Unification Conference if it considers this necessary.'

Both groups accepted these proposals unanimously and it was now left to the experience of the International Conference to see if unification could be realised.

Over the past few months, Robertson, actively assisted by Hansen of the SWP (one of the men who supported his expulsion in 1963), has been busy spreading lies, slander and gossip about what hap-

pened at this conference.

We are not in the least interested in such politically degenerated methods, except in so far as they reveal the political method of those who peddle such stories around. A ready-made audience for this sort of thing always exists in the ranks of disorientated petty bourgeois who have no belief in the power of the working class to change society, and, as a result, no confidence in their ability to build a revolutionary party.

In the months preceding the conference we had a glimpse of the unprincipled kind of politics which Robertson pursues in practice. A member of his group, Mark Tishman, who was temporarily resident in Britain, collaborated closely with the renegade state capitalist group of Tony Cliff. (Immediately the International Conference was over he supplied this group with a full report of what took place.)

A few weeks before the conference, Robertson proposed that this man should be one of his group's alternative delegates.

Our first reaction, knowing Tishman's associates, was to refuse this request, but we did not want to place any obstacles to Robertson attending the conference so we allowed the proposal to go through.

What happened at the Congress?

When Robertson and his delegation arrived in England for the international conference they were treated with the utmost courtesy. The Young Socialists invited them to their annual conference at Morecambe as their guests where their nominee spoke as a fraternal delegate.

To facilitate their political work at the conference an apartment one minute away from the meeting place was

placed at their disposal. No other international delegation enjoyed such good conditions of work.

We were sincerely working for the success of the unification, if it could be achieved on a principled political basis. If this could be attained we did not want the slightest hitch in the arrangements.

The conference opened with the main political report presented by comrade Cliff

Slaughter.

On the morning of the third day (Wednesday) Robertson intervened and, whilst expressing his general political agreement with the report, proceeded, as was his right, to make certain criticisms.

About ten minutes before the afternoon session was due to commence, Robertson said he wanted to rest because he was tired, having been working on a document on US per-

spectives the night before.

He had in fact been assigned to write this document as a result of the Montreal Conference decisions nearly seven months previously. Having left it to the last moment, he now claimed that he was tired and could not listen to the discussion of his own report.

Having made political criticisms he was not interested in hearing the answers.

Such arrogance immediately revealed the real role of this petty-bourgeois leader. For, if he was not prepared to listen to those who had differences with him in the international movement, it was reasonable to assume that he would not be prepared to listen to those who had differences with him in the proposed fused organisation in the United States.

He was, first and foremost, a clique leader who relied on his little group of cult worshippers to support and provide him with a majority at all costs.

If he didn't want to listen to criticism then he did not feel obliged to do so since he was assured of a clique vote in favour of such a position.

It was clear that since

Robertson felt that he would have a majority inside the fused group in the USA the Wohlforth minority could be curbed effectively and if necessary driven out at a later stage.

It was now established for all to see the kind of unprincipled unification which Robertson was working for.

But still the international conference was anxious to give him every opportunity to change his opinions. When it resumed in the afternoon a special messenger (Tishman) was sent to Robertson's apartment asking him to return to the conference and participate in the discussion on his report.

So far as physical tiredness was concerned, he was no more tired than any of the other delegates, some of whom had been concerned with the organisation of the conference, and others who had travelled long distances.

Robertson refused to return, knowing that such a refusal would be looked upon very seriously by the conference. It was obvious that he was not really concerned with the political work of the conference but saw it merely as a stepping-

stone towards an unprincipled unification inside the USA where his clique felt they had a majority.

It now became necessary to put this wrong approach to the test and that is what we proceeded to do.

When he returned later in the evening, he was asked to accept the authority of the conference and apologise for his absence. This he refused to do.

He was then allowed time to think out his position and remain until the vote was taken on the political report.

During the interval a number of delegates tried to prevail on him to accept the authority of the conference, even if he did this under protest. But he adamantly refused to do anything of the sort.

Such a reaction then prompted the question—if Robertson wouldn't accept the authority of the conference, there was not the slightest doubt that he would ignore the advice of the international movement if he became the leader of the fused organisation in the United States. In other words, section 4 of the unification agreement would become meaningless.

Robertson wants a centrist international

Naturally, Robertson, Hansen and Co. like to snigger about the discipline of the International Conference, but all this arises from the fact that they have an entirely different conception of responsibilities to the Fourth International than we have.

For us the conference was the highest and most authoritative body in the international movement. It embodied all the lessons from the theoretical and practical struggle of the Fourth International since it was founded in 1938. These included the experience of the international communist movement to apply the policies of the first four congresses of the Third Communist International

in the period before Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration.

There is no other body more politically authoritative today than the International Committee elected by the April conference.

When Robertson decided to split from this conference because he would not accept its political authority he split from the international Trotskyist movement.

He could have stayed even if he disagreed with the decisions. Indeed, one of his closest disciples, Rose Jersawitz, wrote in a letter dated April 9, 'In hindsight, it was probably a mistake for Jim [Robertson] not to have attended that session, or to

have done or said anything which could have been misinterpreted for that matter'.

Without knowing it, Rose Jersawitz has let the cat out of the bag so far as Robertson's alleged 'illness' is concerned. She knew, better than anyone else, since she was a member of his delegation, that his 'illness' or 'tiredness' need not have prevented him from participating in the conference.

This was nothing more than a cheap fraud and she pulls back from repeating it.

Likewise, the allegation that the conference wanted Robertson to denounce himself as a petty bourgeois is just a downright lie. It did nothing of the sort.

She had, of course, a definite political point of view so far as her estimations of the conference went, and that was, together with the French group Voix Ouvrière, a confirmed centrist position. In a letter dated May 6 she reports a conversation with Hardy, a representative of Voix Ouvrière.

'On rebuilding the FI (H)

(a) This task remains for us. The IC was (and maybe is) a hindrance only in so far as the illusion is held that they might have the capacity can best be shattered by going ahead with the task on two fronts: (1) building our own national sections and aiding those we can; (2) establishing as much of a dialogue as possible between as many tendencies as possible. V.O. plans to have an international mimeo publication soon, taking out the various pol. and org. questions beginning with recent conference. In this way we are hoping to begin an exchange with ICers and will attempt to draw in US, Pabloites and Posadasites as well as many 'independents' (such as us) and contacts of internationals (such as Japan) as possible. And to

begin to establish working relationships, personal exchanges, travelling, translation aids etc. In other words to begin the establishment of the org. committee which we had expected to come out of the conference. (me—Rose) I said that I did not think we were in a position to initiate or even play a major role in these activities.'

In other words, they envisaged a type of conference such as was organised by what Trotsky described as the International Bureau of squeezed lemons, the three and three quarter international, in the years before the Second World War.

The Independent Labour Party and others were members of this bureau which advocated 'all inclusive' conferences with opportunists, revisionists and others.

Hardy of Voix Ouvrière and Rose Jersawitz, Robertson and Co. wanted a similar type of conference where Pabloites and Posadists participated in order to finally agree that no one would be responsible for what was decided. Thus they could all go their own way immediately the conference was over.

In a letter written on May 23, 1965, when arrangements were already under way for the Montreal meeting, G. White, a colleague of Robertson's from Berkeley, placed a question mark over the issue of unification with the International Committee. 'What about our relations with Posadas?' he said. The Posadas group is an ultra-left split off group from the Pabloites in Latin America.

It is now clear that Robertson proceeded in the period before the conference as a man with two political faces.

One of these was turned towards his clique, assuring them that since they would have a majority in the fused group, they had nothing to fear from Wohlforth.

The other was turned towards the International Committee Conference, mouthing left phrases whilst at the same time doing everything to avoid being brought under the discipline of the Committee

He was prepared in December 1963 to work under the discipline of Cannon, Hansen and Dobbs group of revisionists but he was not prepared to work under the discipline of the International Committee in 1966.

Robertson returns to the politics of the SWP

It was very natural therefore for Hansen of the SWP to offer full support to Robertson in his unprincipled fight with the International Committee after the conference was over.

It was equally natural for Robertson to uncritically accept this support. He ordered bundles of their pamphlet attacking the International Committee and distributed them everywhere he could.

An unprincipled united front was launched against the International Committee, but with absolutely no success.

The anti-internationalist Robertson had merely rejoined the anti-internationalist SWP and nobody really cared two hoots what either of them would do. They had this much in common.

The SWP since Trotsky's death had utilised the Fourth International as a front, behind which they carried out their nationalist orientation inside the USA. Robertson wanted to use the International Committee of the Fourth International as a front behind which he arranged an unprincipled unification inside the USA for purely national reasons.

The 'real issue' at the conference is summed up by his disciple Tishman when he posed the question in his letter of May 7 as to 'whether the present international committee . . . constitutes the **sole organised successor** to the Trotskyist movement?'

He, together with Robertson, rejects this, we support it—that is why a definitive split had to take place both with Robertson and the Voix Ouvrière group in France.

Following a highly-successful conference it was a good, clear, politically - motivated split on the principled issue of

responsibility for carrying out the decisions of the international conference.

All the lessons which we had to learn in England from the experiences of the Founding Conference of the Fourth

International in 1938 were applied at this juncture.

We have broken from Robertson and his anti-internationalism for all time.

There is no future for such a group, no matter how much

activity it carries out. Revolutionary parties who will take the power can only be built henceforth on the principles, organisation and discipline of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

The Socialist Labour League

THE history of the Fourth International, and before it the Left Opposition inside the Soviet Union, is devoted entirely to a defence and application of revolutionary Marxism. This is not an abstract question. It is one which has required the concrete investigation of all major happenings inside the international labour movement over the past 30 years. But the success of such investigation could not have been achieved, above all by Trotsky, without a continuous study of all the day-to-day happenings in his own organisation, the Fourth International.

The most important Marxist analysis of the origin and role

of the Soviet bureaucracy is undoubtedly 'The Revolution Betrayed' which appeared in the late 1930s. At the time when Trotsky was writing this book he was also actively intervening and seeking solutions to the hundred and one different problems which affected the various sections of his movement.

It was a period of entry into the centrist and social-democratic parties, and the difficulties were numerous. But all this was in the political day's work so far as Trotsky was concerned.

It was, in fact, intimately bound up with writing the 'Revolution Betrayed', as well as the dozens of other articles which appeared in his name during those years.

So far as circumstances would allow, he was an active participant in the building of revolutionary parties until the day he was assassinated by Stalin's agent.

This was his greatness, and it was the crowning achievement of his political life, because it fused his whole thinking, being with Lenin and Leninism.

No revolutionary fighter ever got closer to applying the real meaning of Lenin's teachings than Trotsky. He was Lenin's great disciple, because at all stages he fought to fuse theory with practice. To him the theoretical analysis of Stalin's bureaucratic degeneration was inseparable from building the sections of the Fourth International.

Centrists and Theory

As usual, he came under fire from the centrists of the Independent Labour Party and the London Bureau. Since the hallmark of centrism is contempt for theory, they rounded on Trotsky for 'splitting hairs'.

Today the ILP has been reduced to the status of a small sect. The London Bureau disappeared long ago and with it any connections it had on the international field. Its old leaders who are still alive, such as Lord Brockway, have for some time come to terms of

co-existence with the Establishment.

In comparison to the fate of these anti-theory specialists, the Socialist Labour League goes forward amongst the youth and industrial workers and has established itself a much more influential position than ever the ILP enjoyed, even in its hey-day.

Anti-theory methods take different forms. There are those who try to place themselves on a moral pedestal 'above disputes' by playing

upon the weaknesses of people who just want to carry out practical activity, without bothering about reading and thinking.

In countries such as Britain where, in the past, the development of the class struggle has been slow, such people have sown confusion, invariably winding up in the camp of the opportunists around the Labour Party.

Their spokesmen are to be found chiefly in the ranks of the fake Parliamentary 'left'.

The role of Stalinism

The Stalinists in the Communist Party are constantly denouncing the Socialist Labour League as 'sectarian'. By using this term, they endeavour to prevent a serious discussion on the political

differences.

Close on their heels come the Socialist Workers' Party of the USA, the Pabloite Unified Secretariat in Paris, the state capitalist group of Tony Cliff in England and the small

gang of Pabloites, Messrs. Jordan, Taite, Coates, etc., who worship at the shrine of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation.

On every conceivable occasion they take time out to ex-

plain the SLL away as 'sectarian'.

When the SLL and the Young Socialists mobilise 1,500 trade unionists and youth in a demonstration, they say it is 'sectarian and unimportant'. When 500 Young Socialists travel to Liège in Belgium, they look the other way and say it doesn't matter—yet they themselves only represent a tiny handful.

However, this does not at all mean that such groups are Stalinist in their complete political outlook.

For the Stalinists, the use of the word 'sectarian' is merely a continuation of their description of the Trotskyist forces as fascist agents of Wall Street. Between Trotskyism and Stalinism there can be no compromise.

Although Stalin has been dead for over 13 years, the basic revisionist ideas for which he stood still dominate the thinking of the Communist parties all over the world. Stalin represented the most privileged bureaucratic caste ever to arise in the international workers' movement during the history of capitalism.

This bureaucratic caste in turn reflected a profound opportunist degeneration in the Soviet Union which is today expressed in the policy of the 'peaceful road to socialism'.

This policy emphasises that the bureaucracy wants peace with capitalism at all costs, which means that it is constantly in conflict with the working class, whose problems can only be solved by the overthrow of capitalism.

So far as the Soviet bureaucracy is concerned, their privileges come first and in order to protect them they are constantly prepared to do a deal with the imperialists at the expense of the working class.

Trotsky fought for the establishment of international socialism, which was Lenin's policy. In doing so he came into violent conflict with the Stalinists who persecuted, framed and murdered the majority of Lenin's Central Committee during the 1917 Revolution because they opposed them. They murdered some of the most prominent of Trotsky's secretaries, and, in the end, Trotsky himself.

For us today, Stalin is dead, but the ideas of Stalinism live on. Any revisionist tendencies which in one form or another adapt themselves politically to the Stalinists are, in our opinion, mortal enemies. This is the essence of our split from the Pabloites and other revisionists.

Let us start with the Pabloite Unified Secretariat.

They broke from Trotskyism in 1951 by developing the theory that de-Stalinisation after Stalin's death meant a decisive change in the Stalinist bureaucracy. Five years later the Stalinist chieftain, Khrushchev, drowned the Hungarian Revolution against the Rakosi-Gero bureaucracy in a sea of blood.

At that time the Pabloites formally criticised Khrushchev's intervention, but at the international youth demonstration in Liège, Belgium, on

October 15, they called in the police to remove banners from the French and English contingents who advocated support for the Hungarian Revolution on the occasion of its tenth anniversary.

Herein lies the difference between the Stalinists and the Unified Secretariat-revisionist capitulators to bureaucracy.

During the Hungarian revolution there was a powerful outburst of imperialist propaganda against the Soviet Union which took full advantage of the criminal actions of Khrushchev.

The gentlemen supporters of the Unified Secretariat found little difficulty at that time in condemning these actions. Today, it is different.

Now Johnson needs the Soviet bureaucracy to help to strangle the Vietnamese revolution, as well as the rising tide of revolutionary opposition from the working class in the metropolitan capitalist countries.

The youth, who perhaps more than any other section of the working-class movement enter politics as a result of a struggle against bureaucracy, are proving a real danger to the Soviet bureaucracy, which is moving steadily towards agreement with the arch-imperialists.

The Pabloite Unified Secretariat senses this rapprochement, and now emerges as the 'left cover' for bureaucracy and imperialism, and calls in the police to deal with the Young Socialists who commemorate the Hungarian Revolution.

The SWP covers up for the Stalinists

One of the most spectacular developments in the USA in recent years has been the vast movement to the left amongst the middle-class intelligentsia and the university youth. Unfortunately, this movement still remains isolated from the working class.

The policy of the Communist Party of the United States

is to turn it politically towards the capitalist Democratic Party, by taking advantage of this isolation.

However, it faces certain difficulties in the forthcoming Congressional Elections. Because there is widespread opposition to the Democratic Party, the Communist Party, has, especially in New York, to

arrange a stepping stone towards it.

That is the reason why Aptheker, a leading United States Stalinist, is standing for office in Brooklyn. He supports to the hilt the Democratic Party orientation of the Communist Party. A vote for Aptheker today is an invitation to be led by the nose to

the Democratic Party tomorrow.

At this point the Socialist Workers' Party intervenes and gives critical support to him. Whilst it criticises his attitude towards the Democratic Party, it nevertheless advocates voting for him. The significance of such a decision cannot be estimated solely within the geographical boundaries of New York.

Apthecker is an old Stalinist hack who has toed the Party line at all times, especially over Hungary. He is prepared to support not only the Democratic Party but any deal which the Soviet bureaucrats cook up with Johnson to betray the Vietnamese revolution. He is deliberately trying to manoeuvre United States radicals towards the capitalist Democratic Party.

By exploiting the use of the word 'critical support for Apthecker', the SWP is merely covering up the fact that it is initiating a sly, stage-by-stage orientation towards the Democratic Party itself.

If the SWP was really seriously inclined towards an exposure of Stalinism, and warning those who will be confused by Apthecker, then it should openly expose him and the counter-revolutionary policies of the Communist Party of the United States today.

The SWP will not take long to find out that revisionism must ultimately lead towards political capitulation to the politics of the capitalist parties.

On the experience of Liège, the weekly paper 'Militant', published by the SWP, remains silent, although it had a number of leading members present who were aware that

the police were called in to take down the banners of the British and French Young Socialists.

So be it, gentlemen. When you say A. for Apthecker, you will be soon shouting P. for the police.

The state capitalist group of Cliff characterises the Soviet Union as a capitalist country. On the surface this group is supposed to be very hostile towards Stalinism, but this is purely superficial.

By designating the Soviet Union as a capitalist country it contemptuously dismisses the economic conquests which remain as a result of the 1917 revolution. Over the past few years, this position has enabled it to cuddle up closer to the Labour Party right wing in the struggle against the Young Socialists.

Now that these same Young Socialists have emerged as a powerful force against the Prices and Incomes Act, the state capitalists weigh in whatever support they can muster behind the Stalinists.

From serving the social-democratic bureaucracy, they now embrace the agents of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Up until recently this change of ally did not bring them into open alliance with the Pabloites. However, the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation has established the bridge-head.

On that Committee the three open supporters of the Paris Unified Secretariat joined hands with the state capitalists recently in an attempt to prevent a speaker from the Socialist Labour League from exposing the counter-revolutionary role of the Soviet bureaucracy in relation to the war in Vietnam.

Thus all of those revisionist forces, no matter what their reservations about the role of Stalinism, inevitably find themselves in the same camp when it comes to providing a left cover for imperialism. Trust Bertrand Russell to thoughtfully provide the platform for such united action.

These anti-Marxists reject the principle that the working class can emancipate itself and overthrow capitalism through the building of a revolutionary party. They are turned exclusively towards the politics of the petty-bourgeois revisionists.

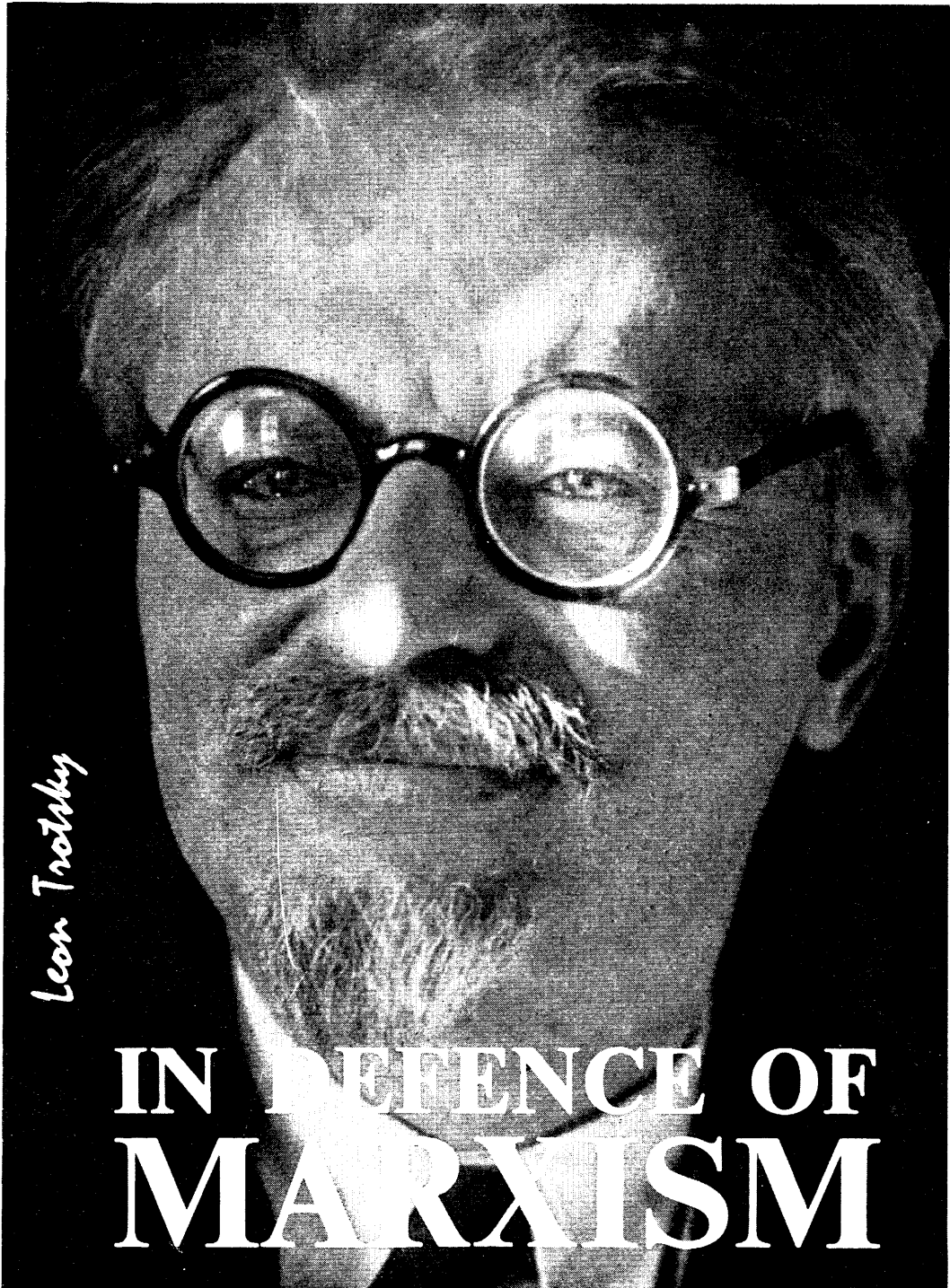
As a result, they constantly tend towards liquidation into Labour and social-democratic parties in some countries, and the Stalinist parties in others.

The Socialist Labour League has taken its stand clearly against these parties and their counter-revolutionary role. We politically oppose them and have set our course firmly towards the building of the revolutionary party, within the framework of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

This does not at all mean that we will not carry out an entry into their ranks in order to do battle against them as we have done in the past. It means that our principled conception of the struggle to develop Marxism against revisionism and its reformist and Stalinist allies is inseparable from the day-to-day struggles to build the revolutionary party.

The Socialist Labour League follows in the footsteps of Lenin and Trotsky in the constant struggle to develop Marxist theory.

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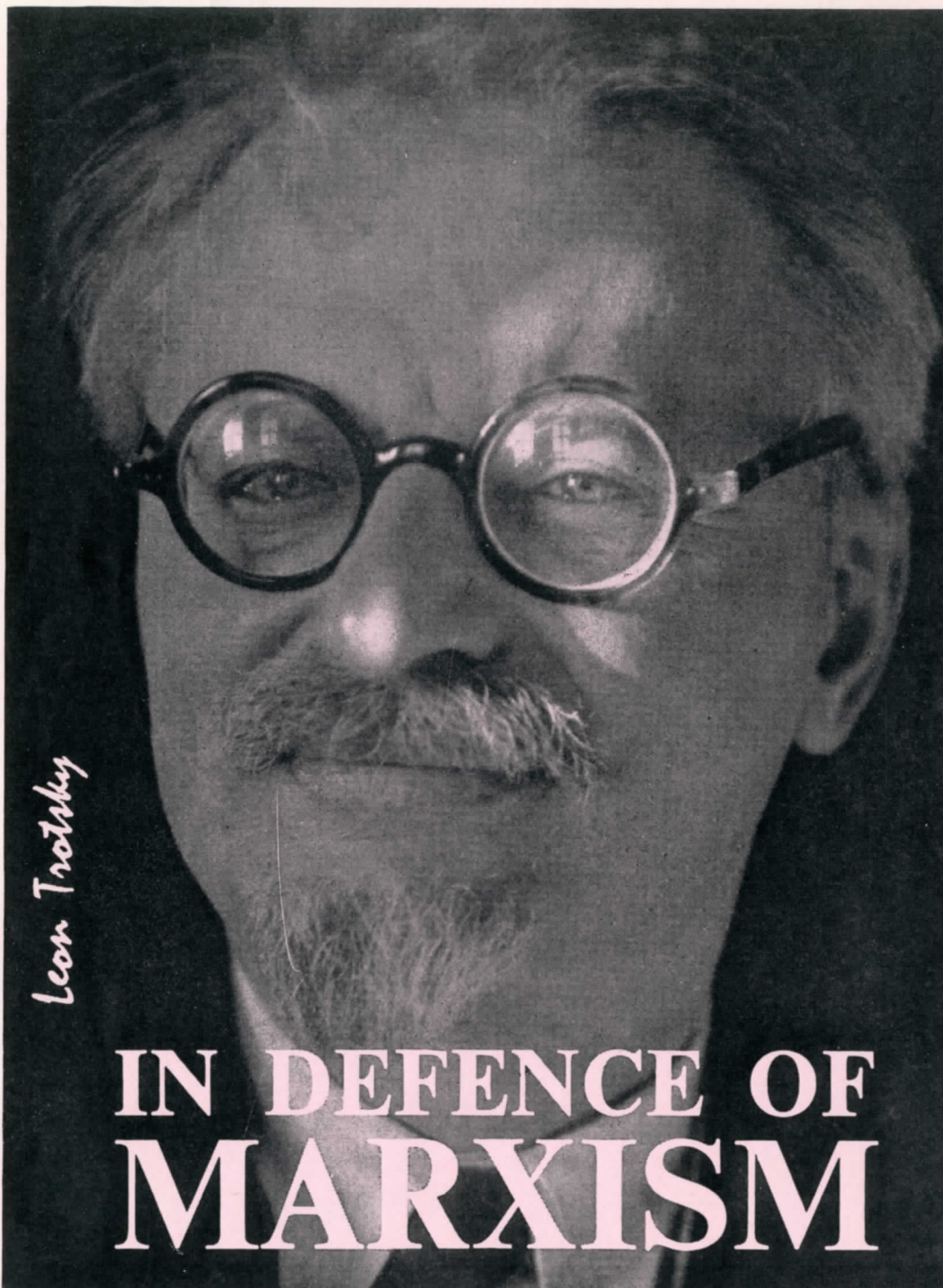
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