



# Discussion Bulletin

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THE PARTY'S ADAPTATIONISM AND COMRADE KERRY'S REPLY

By David Fender

Before proceeding to a few brief criticisms of the present antiwar resolution, some observations are in order concerning Comrade Kerry's document, "Some Comments on Party Policy and Tactics in the Antiwar Movement" (Vol. 26, No. 12). This was written in response to my "remarkable virtuoso performance entitled: 'Remarks on the Antiwar Movement'," in which I criticize the party's antiwar policies.

Comrade Kerry spends the first three and one-half pages of his answer taking me to task for demanding that the comrades of Boston who broke party discipline by offering a counterline document in the YSA be firmly dealt with. On page one Comrade Kerry states, "He [Fender] takes the party to task for not having exercised the necessary firmness in calling to order a group of comrades who had introduced a counter-resolution prior to that of the last YSA convention embodying a line contrary to that of the party." I am then informed among other things that "the worst possible course" the party could take would be "to stand poised, like a harsh school-master, ready to rap over the knuckles any young comrade guilty of committing the 'error' of violating established party procedure." All in all Comrade Kerry casts himself in the role of the great defender of those "comrades whom Fender chides for violating party procedure."

All this sounds very convincing, except there is one slight detail which is not in harmony with the facts. Nowhere in my less than one and one-half page discussion on the organizational question concerning the 1967 YSA convention which Comrade Kerry himself raised in his report to the New York branch did I admonish the party for not having "exercised the necessary firmness in calling to order a group of comrades...." This slight detail is the fabrication of Comrade Kerry's own pen. My sole purpose for raising the organizational question was in no way to chide the Boston comrades, but as anybody can see from reading what I actually wrote, for educational purposes. If I admonished the party for anything concerning this question, it was its failure to have properly educated the comrades inasmuch as the party in three similar circumstances had failed to raise this very question. I state that "Should the party have done so, the error committed by the authors of the counter-resolution document might have been avoided." And it was for this reason -- education of the young party comrades -- that I proposed that the party should state in writing the correct procedure for party YSAers to follow, or any party member working in an outside or-

ganization."

Comrade Kerry interpreted my request for something in writing saying: "His [Fender's] solution? That the party promulgate a set of rules, 'in writing' setting forth 'the correct procedure for party YSAers....' The "set of rules" is again the sole work of Comrade Kerry's pen. And it is partly on the basis of this added little phrase by Comrade Kerry that my request is branded as "sterile schematism," but as can be seen the "sterile schematism" which is supposedly "characteristic of Fender's whole methodology" actually betrays Comrade Kerry's own "sterile schematism." If I had known that the party leadership was incapable of discussing the problem of party members working in the YSA and/or other outside organizations or drawing the lessons from the recent YSA experience without resorting to the promulgation of a set of rules, then I definitely would not have burdened myself with making the request.

There is one more point among the many which exist that I would like to draw to the attention of the comrades, before leaving this most imaginative first section of Comrade Kerry's reply. Comrade Kerry asks, "Does Fender suggest that party members in the YSA be organized into a fraction and operate under the direct control of the party?" What prompted Comrade Kerry to ask such a question only he can answer, since I didn't express any opinion or make any allusion to what I think the relationship between the party and the YSA should be. Should I have done that I would probably have stated quite clearly and in no uncertain terms that it is my opinion that the YSA should openly and formally be the youth group of the SWP. But this is another discussion in-and-of-itself -- perhaps a very interesting one -- and for the present I would like to deal with things as they are as I did in my previous document.

The above-quoted question is very interesting. By asking me this question Comrade Kerry implies that the party members in the YSA do not "operate as a 'fraction' under the direct supervision, direction and control of the appropriate party political unit." Does this mean that party members in the YSA leadership are not subject to "the direct supervision, direction and control of the appropriate party political unit," and are instead agents of their own free will -- "independent"? Does this mean, contrary to popular belief, that all the important political decisions taken by the YSA are not first discussed and decided on by

the party leadership? Does this mean that the party has no direct control over the party comrades in the YSA? Is it not a fact, Comrade Kerry, that the party members in the leadership of the YSA do "operate as a 'fraction' under the direct supervision, direction and control of the appropriate party political unit," in this case the P.C. of the party which you yourself belong to? Is it not true that all the important political and even organizational decisions "taken by the YSA" have first been discussed and decided on by the P.C. and that the party members in the leadership of the YSA are under the party's discipline to carry out the decisions of the P.C.? And "ergo?" is it not true that the rest of the YSA party comrades are under party discipline to defend and help carry out those decisions? And wasn't it on this very basis that Comrade Kerry himself informed the Boston comrades that they were in "error"? "As party members they were obligated to carry out the line adopted by the party [my emphasis, D.F.] in its antiwar activity. Correctly understood, the resolution they submitted to the last YSA convention embodied a line contrary to that adopted by the party. This was an error." (Any differences to be raised in the YSA by a party comrade must first be cleared through the party -- "any" inasmuch as what the comrade himself might consider to be only a tactical difference, the party might consider to be a principled political difference.)

As long as the party completely controls the YSA national leadership as well as the local leaderships, there is, of course, no necessity to tighten up the fraction, i.e., to hold frequent meetings at all levels in order to discuss important organizational and political questions raised in the struggle against other organized political tendencies. Under the present YSA-party setup, this tightening up is what I would consider the "music of the future." In spite of our complete control of the YSA, however, as long as we refuse to claim it as being our own and act as if it really is not our own, the YSA must be considered as an outside organization and the party comrades are "obligated" to operate as a fraction by carrying out the party line and following party discipline.

So in Comrade Kerry's first three and one-half pages he takes up the defense of the leadership and the party's position with the most incisive invective for my (1) having taken "the party to task for not having exercised the necessary firmness in calling to order a group of comrades..."; (2) having put forth the solution "that the party promulgate a set of rules..."; and (3) having possibly suggested "that party members in the YSA be organized into a fraction and operate under the direct control and

discipline of the party." But as we have seen, Comrade Kerry is in reality defending the party against himself. "What a dismal method...to laboriously set up spurious straw men to serve as a substitute target for the real thing..." But the above are not the only "substitute targets" which Comrade Kerry erects. Among others, one of the more notable examples begins on page nine. "A prime example of this type of sectarian approach is Gerry Healy, general secretary of the British Socialist Labour League." With this introductory sentence Comrade Kerry launches into a four-page attack on Healy and the SLL. But what this attack on Healy's politics has to do with me remains a mystery. Finally on page 13, Comrade Kerry returns to the subject at hand, "So much for Healyite historiography. To return for a moment to our young critic from afar." We would like to suggest to Comrade Kerry that in the future, if he should wish to criticize the politics of the SLL that he not limit himself to the secret confines of SWP discussion bulletins, that he do so openly in the pages of the ISR, which he edits, The Militant, or Intercontinental Press. We would also like to suggest that if he should ever in the future want to make an amalgam between a party comrade and some outside tendency that he do so explicitly and not resort to the subterfuge of an allusion, which we suspect was the motive in this particular case. Since we have no need of defending Healy and the SLL and since there is no direct amalgam made between the SLL's politics and those of my own, we will not bother to comment on the contents of this section.

So we see that well over half of Comrade Kerry's "reply" amounts to these "spurious straw men" which he "laboriously set up...to serve as a substitute target for the real thing." But this is not all of Comrade Kerry's evasion of the political issues. After leaving the first three straw men severely battered, on page four he takes up "yet another innovation" of mine which, he confesses, "is without precedent in our movement." I appreciate Comrade Kerry's willingness to "confess" my unprecedented "innovations," but if he doesn't mind, I will accept all the responsibility for my "innovations" and do my own confessing, and on this particular point I wish to confess nothing. Comrade Kerry seems to think that I have given the comrades a bad example in submitting my "differences with party policy," because "in the guise of 'criticisms'" he claims that I proceed "to attack the political line of the party, in toto, and in the process" I advance "a diametrically opposite line" (my emphasis, D.F.). I would agree with Comrade Kerry that my document contained within it a political alternative which was in opposition to

the line put forward in the P.C. resolution. But is this so terrible? Comrade Kerry seems to think it is. It seems, according to Comrade Kerry, that I should have submitted the document in resolution form. "Why didn't Fender and/or his cothinkers, if any, proceed to incorporate his line in the form of a resolution for discussion by the membership and action by the convention?" "But that is not his method." No, Comrade Kerry, that certainly was not my method, nor should it have been. If it had been my method, one can vividly imagine the heaping amount of abuse that would have rained down upon my head. "This 'self-proclaimed' minority faction of one, who without any previous criticisms or attempts to change the position of the present leadership, submits a counterresolution and in so doing, declares that the present leadership must be immediately voted out of office and replaced by him. This one-man-band and knower of all things..." etc. Comrade Kerry states, "Certainly Fender could never agree to permitting such a leadership to undertake the chore of beginning to draft another resolution." But I most certainly could. If the leadership agreed to draft a new resolution on the basis of my criticisms, that is, agreed with them, why should I object?

(Along this same line of reasoning Comrade Kerry accuses me of employing that dangerous weapon, the "loaded question." "And the 'one question' that remains to be answered, as he [Fender] phrases it is: 'How has a petty-bourgeois tendency been able to reflect itself in the party?' The 'question,' you will note, is no question at all, or, it is what is sometimes referred to as a loaded question. Not 'has' but 'how'." Comrade Kerry's own methodology is again showing through. I stated, "In so doing, there remains one question to be answered: How..." The phrase "in so doing" refers to the working out of a new resolution. That is, given the fact that the party had already accepted my criticisms, the proper way to state the question was: "Not 'has' but 'how'." "Can't you imagine how the members of a YMCA debating society would just swoon at so clever a display of forensic dexterity?")

But what should the party have done inasmuch as I called upon the party to "reject" the P.C. resolution but did not offer my own document as a counterresolution? "And what line is to be substituted for that of the P.C. draft resolution?" Is the party to "remain suspended in mid-air"? First of all, as Comrade Kerry himself acknowledges, my document contained an "opposite line," that is, a different program so the party would not have been politically "suspended in mid-air." But just think, the party might be "suspended in mid-air" for a few days in that it would not have a formal resolu-

tion based upon the criticisms and program found in my document. But if Comrade Kerry was concerned that the party not be left in "so awkward a posture," he could have raised the question in the P.C. of the party demanding that the Fender document be treated as a counter-resolution and therefore voted on -- a practice which is not unknown in our movement. But let us suppose that the leadership had accepted my criticisms as being valid and therefore had withdrawn the P.C. draft resolution. Would they then not begin to work out a new resolution themselves based upon the line already outlined in my document, or would this somehow be irresponsible on their part? Or let us suppose that the majority of the party comrades responding "to Fender's clarion" did reject the P.C.'s resolution despite the leadership's attempts to defend it. "Upon what basis," Comrade Kerry asks, "would the convention proceed to elect a party leadership?" Being a "procedural innovator," I would suggest that the party leadership be elected on the basis of the new majority, which would, of course, base itself politically on the line contained in the Fender document. And while "the party, as an entity, does not formulate, compose or draft, convention resolutions," I'm sure the party comrades would find no problem in appointing or electing any and all committees and commissions they felt were necessary.

But let us briefly see just how much of a "procedural innovator" I am in the light of a most recent example on the part of the SWP leadership itself. In the recent pre-world congress discussion, Comrade Joseph Hansen, on the part of the SWP leadership, submitted a criticism of the draft resolution on Latin America. This was a criticism and not a counterresolution which, nevertheless, expressed a fundamental difference. When the American comrades, who were at the congress in the capacity of observers, were asked for a consultative vote on the Latin-American document, they voted in the negative. That is, they demanded everybody who agreed with their criticism to vote no. I find no procedural innovations in this, but now that I have called it to Comrade Kerry's attention, perhaps he will want to bring it up in the P.C. So it seems that if my procedural innovations were "without precedent in our movement," they have now become the precedent for standard party procedure.

It would have been entirely irresponsible on my part to offer a counter-resolution without first offering my criticisms. And I will continue to offer my criticisms in the form of criticisms until such time that I consider it necessary to organize a faction which would challenge the party leadership for power

by offering a substitute resolution. And as long as Comrade Kerry remains on the other side in this political issue, I will kindly thank him to leave to me the tactical problems of just how I should struggle for my political position.

\* \* \*

"Our young critic's political lucubrations are no more enlightening than his procedural innovations." With this opening sentence Comrade Kerry finally takes up some of the political questions raised in my document -- but only some. His polemic is weakened by the very fact that he avoided taking up some of the more important questions, i.e., the nature of the present antiwar movement, the nature of the student movement in general, the way we characterize a movement or tendency, the importance of slogans, the question of the draft, etc. Comrade Kerry's "political lucubrations are no more enlightening than his procedural" remarks. We are merely served a rehash of what was in Comrade Lew's document and in almost the very same crocks.

"He [Fender] begins by summarily rejecting the basic premise upon which our entire policy in the antiwar movement is based." And what is this sacred "basic premise"? It is a "uniquity" -- "something new and different." "The basic premise upon which our antiwar policy is based rests upon the fact that for the first time in this country [!] an antiwar (pacifist) movement arose in opposition to war while the armed conflict was actually in progress. It is this fact that endows it with its unique quality. It is this that makes it something new and different from pacifist movements of the past, or what is commonly referred to as 'classical' pacifism." "Classical pacifism" has only been "commonly referred to as" such by the party leadership after their discovery of a "unique" form of pacifism "in this country."

So again and again we are told that pacifism in the USA is "unique," but again and again the leadership refuses to give any sociological analysis for such uniqueness. Is it "unique" because it violates the historical laws of society, because it flows from nothing, formed itself out of a vacuum and is without history and therefore cannot be analyzed? Or, is it "unique" merely in that it is the qualitative result of the natural evolution of historical laws? "He [Fender] rejects the fact that there has been any 'qualitative' change in the role played by the pacifist movement." But where is our analysis? Without such an analysis, it is impossible to confirm such a "uniquity," as well as to reconfirm the Marxian method and principles drawn in the past from that method. Until we analyze this "qualitative" change, we will not

be able to understand it, nor to see all the ramifications which will result from it, and events will empirically and pragmatically pull us along in their wake. "Both the NEC draft and Lew [and now Comrade Kerry] mark this qualitative change from classical pacifism, but they fail to analyze it or give us any reason for it. Such an analysis is definitely called for, in order that we might add it to the arsenal of Marxism and advance our struggle throughout the world movement." We are still awaiting such an analysis.

About the closest thing that we have gotten to any systematic analysis are several articles by Comrade Mandel explaining that students can no longer be considered as belonging to the petty bourgeoisie, that they are in the process of being proletarianized -- a social layer in transition! We should very much like to take up this thesis when time permits. We should also like to have a clarification from the SWP leadership on Comrade Mandel's thesis.

Even though we are not told why this petty-bourgeois pacifist movement is qualitatively different, we are, nonetheless told that it is, because of the "fact" that it is "the first time" such a movement has arisen "in opposition to war while the armed conflict was actually in progress." And it is this "basic premise upon which our antiwar policy is based" that makes the present antiwar movement "objectively anti-imperialist." Basing oneself on this "basic premise," the program (slogans) of the antiwar movement becomes completely secondary. Any slogan "in opposition to war while the armed conflict was actually in progress," must be "objectively anti-imperialist." Is this "basic premise" equally valid for a great section -- and perhaps now the greater section -- of the bourgeoisie and their political mouthpieces, such as McCarthy, Kennedy, etc.? Are they playing an "objectively anti-imperialist" role? After all, they too are "in opposition to war while the armed conflict [is] actually in progress." And what about all our "anti-imperialist pacifist" friends such as most of those in SMC; did they cease being "objectively anti-imperialist" when they found their bourgeois mentor as we had predicted they would? ("Should the ruling class in the U.S. decide...to negotiate their way out of the war..., the petty-bourgeois pacifists including most of the militant left-wing pacifists would not hesitate to fall in step and support to the hilt their bourgeois mentors.") In supporting McCarthy, our "anti-imperialist pacifist" friends did not cease being "in opposition to war while the armed conflict was actually in progress," that is, they did not violate our "basic premise upon which our antiwar policy is

based." And historically, what about Norman Thomas during WWI and those professional pacifists such as Grimm who attended the Zimmerwald conference? Perhaps we have been too hasty and have overlooked them as being the first "uniquities" of this kind. After all they too upheld our "basic premise" of "opposition to war while the armed conflict was actually in progress." All of a sudden it seems that everybody has become so progressive!

Comrade Kerry states, "In the past, Lenin and especially Trotsky, bitterly played organized pacifism as a delusion and a snare. They repeatedly underscored the role that it played as a betrayer of the wholly progressive pacifist (antiwar) sentiments of the masses. The professional pacifists, they taught, the pacifist leaders, fulminated and thundered against war and for peace prior to the outbreak of armed conflict, only then to utilize the prestige and authority acquired as 'fighters against war' to dragoon the masses into the slaughter." We thought that Comrade Kerry was aware that Lenin also "bitterly played organized pacifism as a delusion and a snare" "while the armed conflict was actually in progress," and taught that the professional pacifists and pacifist leaders "thundered against war and for peace" "while the armed conflict was actually in progress" only "to utilize the prestige and authority acquired as 'fighters against war' to dragoon the masses into" an imperialist peace. If my "uncompromising 'firmness' becomes downright frightening" to Comrade Kerry, what shudders he must get from Lenin's "ultraleftist, sectarian approach" and his demand to turn the imperialist war into a civil war. Horror of all horrors, perhaps Grimm and the others should be rehabilitated, yes Comrade Kerry? -- and we must hurry "while the armed conflict [is] actually in progress." And let Lenin and Trotsky rest in peace for they could not "be expected to anticipate the actual course of historical development in this century" with all its "uniquities."

Could we possibly be informed as to just what use we can put this most "unique" "basic premise upon which our antiwar policy is based"? As far as I can see, it is of no earthly use, and we have based nothing but errors and unprincipled compromises on it.

Comrade Kerry summarizes in his own way part of my analysis of the Vietnam war as I "avered," "instructed" and "lectured" it in my document. He then ends by saying, "Make sense of it those who can!" But then, he proceeds to do just that -- make sense out of it:

"Let us pursue the matter a little

further. Fender's caricature of Marxist sociology leaves out of consideration the cornerstone of his thesis, namely: that the war is the 'focal point of the international class struggle.' (my emphasis) Measured on that scale the relationship of class forces appears altogether different. The choice is not so narrow as our critic would have us believe. The question of an 'independent role' is not involved. And, most important of all, "scientific Marxist nomenclature" is preserved intact.

"Measured on the scale of international class struggle on what grounds does our critic exclude the American antiwar movement from engaging in the struggle as allies of the working-class camp? Leaving aside 'Marxist nomenclature' for the moment, which side -- the petty-bourgeois, pacifist antiwar movement -- is it on? The Vietnamese freedom fighters seem to think that the American antiwar movement is on their side -- are they wrong, have they been deceived, is it all an optical illusion?"

If our analysis is so nonsensical and such a "caricature of Marxist sociology," why does Comrade Kerry make sense of it? Why does he even consider it? Why doesn't he offer a different analysis and show how our analysis is such a "caricature"? Inasmuch as the party has never offered such an analysis, it would have been a very valuable contribution. Isn't it being politically irresponsible to oppose a political contribution without giving any political alternative?

While Comrade Kerry abstractly and mockingly objects to the analysis he, nevertheless, finds it more prudent to base himself upon it, and therefore tries to draw from the analysis a conclusion which would rationalize the party's present position. Comrade Kerry asks the question: "Measured on the scale of international class struggle on what grounds does our critic exclude the American antiwar movement from engaging in the struggle as allies of the working-class camp?" As one can see, this "is no real question but is designed to absolve the questioner of responsibility for an affirmative statement." Does Comrade Kerry "exclude the American antiwar movement from engaging in the struggle as allies of the working class"? If he does, then why should he ask me why I do? If he doesn't, then how is it he rejects the analysis on which the conclusion is based?

In spite of Comrade Kerry's political contortions and lack of analysis, we are very glad he has raised the above question. There are two major points we would like to make concerning the above two quoted paragraphs. First, we should

like to answer the question he poses. We did not just "exclude the American antiwar movement from engaging in the struggle as allies of the working-class camp," as black excludes white. We first of all determined the class nature of the present antiwar movement -- something that seems to be passé in the party -- and on the basis of that determined whether or to what extent the movement could be considered an ally of the world working class. Our analysis was that the present antiwar movement was 99.67% pure petty-bourgeois in composition, and on the basis of that analysis, we decided that program was of the utmost importance. On page six we clearly stated: "It is also evident that the movement as a whole is not anti-imperialist -- neither objectively nor subjectively -- and that program still remains the principle dividing line between reformism and anti-imperialism. Those forces in the antiwar movement who are struggling for reformist slogans and/or diversionary actions cannot be considered in any way as being anti-imperialist. Only those who project a program of struggling for both anti-imperialist actions and slogans can be considered anti-imperialist. The YSA [and SWP] should reaffirm the position taken by the 1966 YSA Political Resolution which stated, 'In its social composition the antiwar movement is petty bourgeois, and as such is dependent on one of the basic classes for its politics. Thus, the question of program becomes dominant, for there is no such thing as non-class "movement" politics. Whose interests it would be serving would be determined totally by its program.'"

To be absolutely clear, we shall repeat. We reject or accept the antiwar movement as being an ally of the working class on the basis of its program, because it is a petty-bourgeois movement. For us the struggle to impose upon the antiwar movement the programmatic character of immediate and complete withdrawal is of the utmost importance. For Comrade Kerry, basing himself upon the party's "basic premise," such people seek "to narrow and cripple the movement." For Comrade Kerry, "That cud ["the proper use of slogans"] has already been chewed to death." For us the program of the movement is not just a "subordinate tactical matter," but one of principle, the dominant question, and it is yet to be chewed for the first time, let alone digested once.

The second point is in regard to the last sentence of the two paragraphs. "The Vietnamese freedom fighters seem to think that the American antiwar movement is on their side -- are they wrong, have they been deceived, is it all an optical illusion?" Comrade Kerry raises here a very serious question which I did not broach in my first criticism. Is it not

only possible but most probable that the "Vietnamese freedom fighters" (masses) have been deceived? It would not be the first time that a Stalinist party had deceived the masses, now would it, Comrade Kerry? In fact, the record of the Stalinists is very consistent on this score. With Stalinists it is not a question of just being "wrong" or being confused by an "optical illusion." It is class collaborationist politics, be it with Chiang Kai-shek, Sukarno, Eugene McCarthy, etc., and that spells treachery for the masses. The NLF is one of the worst examples of class collaboration one could possibly hope to find in the whole history of the Stalinist movement. They hardly have a bourgeoisie to collaborate with in that it went over to the colonial and imperialist masters long ago. This, however, does not stop our ingenious Stalinists. They have invented their own bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties, program and all, in order to set up the class collaborationist front known as the NLF. It would be no contradiction for the Vietnamese Communist Party which knows no existence outside the class collaborationist front, to deceive the Vietnamese masses about the nature of the antiwar movement in the USA nor even a Eugene McCarthy for that matter. In fact, they just might invent them if they didn't already exist. How could Comrade Kerry overlook forty years of treachery on the part of the Stalinists to ask such a question? Or do Comrade Kerry and the leadership of the party think that the leadership in Vietnam are "Vietnamese freedom fighters" and not Stalinists? We will have a better opportunity to try and answer this question when we return to this subject in the third part of this document.

Comrade Kerry continues saying, "But, our critic plays his trump card, it is not an anti-imperialist pacifist antiwar movement, and unless we proceed forthwith to transform it into that we should wash our hands of the whole business...." We must correct Comrade Kerry. We don't think anybody could turn the "movement" into an "anti-imperialist pacifist antiwar movement." We claim no responsibility for this theoretical abortion. Simply: we want to turn the pacifist antiwar movement into an anti-imperialist antiwar movement.

It is at this point that Comrade Kerry "plays his trump card," but as we shall see, it comes out of a specially marked deck. Based on the following, the party delineates that "the whole movement is anti-imperialist" -- "objectively" of course.

"Is the antiwar movement 'anti-imperialist'? It all depends upon what yardstick is used in defining the term. Insofar as the antiwar movement engages



in struggle against the war in direct opposition to the policy of the capitalist government it is objectively anti-imperialist. Insofar as the movement is not subjectively anticapitalist it is not.

"Our young tutor obliterates the distinction...."

From the above we learn that it is enough to be against the policies of the government to be "objectively anti-imperialist." Comrade Kerry makes a serious error here. He mistakes the government for the state. Many people opposed the policies of the Democratic government headed by Lyndon Johnson, including people like McCarthy, Kennedy, etc. They were in direct opposition to the policies of Johnson's government and demanded a stop to the bombing, negotiations (with the NLF), etc. And the Johnson government did, to some degree, change its own policies -- they stopped the bombing and began to negotiate. The present Republican government headed by Nixon has begun to change this policy even more and appears to be looking for a way to disengage the U.S. from the war, of course, with the least amount of sacrifice to their own position. And it is entirely certain that the Nixon government or Democratic government headed by a Humphrey or a Kennedy, etc., will eventually end (stop) the war -- it definitely has to end sometime. Within the realm of the state, the capitalist government can adopt many different policies, and to label as being "objectively anti-imperialist" any and all direct opposition to the policies of only the government, is to provide certain tendencies among the bourgeoisie with a left cover in the eyes of the masses and to lay the groundwork for all kinds of unprincipled compromises and combinations. The marked deck Comrade Kerry is dealing from is that of reformism.

The word "government" was no slip of the pen. On page 14 Comrade Kerry states, "The cement that holds it /the antiwar formation or coalition/ together is common opposition to U.S. administration." (my emphasis) That is, the whole coalition is "objectively anti-imperialist," because it is in opposition to the "administration." Under the above rationalization, it is hard to see why we did not support the "objectively anti-imperialist" campaign of Eugene McCarthy inasmuch as he was against the war "while the armed conflict was actually in progress," and "in direct opposition to the policy" of the Johnson "administration."

Let us, nevertheless, substitute the word "state" for the word "government" in the above-quoted paragraph. The problem is immediately posed: How do we distinguish an "opposition to the policy

of the capitalist government" from an "opposition to the policy of the capitalist" state? Again we are confronted with the question of program (slogans). "You know," "that cud which has already been chewed to death," but, nevertheless, keeps on coming right back up.

Comrade Kerry says we "obliterate" the distinction between "objectively" and "subjectively" anti-imperialism. The following is how "the young tutor obliterates" it in the document to which Comrade Kerry is replying. "To prepare against such a treachery of the future, /was the party prepared for the treachery of our "friends" in SMC?/ it is necessary to organize and build immediately an anti-imperialist antiwar faction based on the principle of immediate withdrawal. It is through and only through such an organization that we can educate our friends as to why only the slogan for immediate withdrawal represents principled opposition to the war and recognizes the self-determination of the Vietnamese people. /Objectively anti-imperialist./ It is only with the withdrawal organization that we will win the best of the petty-bourgeois and semi-proletarian elements to revolutionary working class politics... -- /Subjectively anti-imperialist?."

Continuing to taunt the party's "young critic," Comrade Kerry himself "obliterates the distinction" between the subjective and the objective. Pulling things out of context he derides the description of the differences between the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat with regard to imperialism, exclaiming "What rubbish!" He then denies that anti-imperialism is a characteristic of the working class. "And is it true that 'anti-imperialism' is a proletarian trait? I sincerely wish it were so." We should like to ask Comrade Kerry: Isn't the working class in the U.S. objectively a revolutionary class; isn't it objectively anticapitalist, and therefore, anti-imperialist; and isn't this all true because it, as a class, has diametrically opposite interests to those of the bourgeoisie? Comrade Kerry refuses to recognize any trait of anti-imperialism in the working class, but as we have seen above, the petty-bourgeois antiwar movement is endowed with such a trait just because it is. The logic of the party's adaptation to the petty-bourgeois peace movement will lead it more and more to turn its back on the proletariat as the agent of change and as the necessary substance out of which to construct a revolutionary party and to fall prey to all the "gimmicks and solutions" to which the petty bourgeoisie are so susceptible finally becoming itself a part of the petty bourgeoisie.

In spite of the many other distortions and political contortions found in

Comrade Kerry's reply, we will confine ourselves to only one more. Comrade Kerry tells us that the tactic of the united front is not valid for our work in the antiwar movement. That is, since the movement is unique, the forms of our intervention are complex and unique, and he informs us that "the character of the formation that has arisen in the course of development of the antiwar movement" "is decidedly unique." It is so unique that nobody has yet been able to describe it nor even determine its class character. What is "our objective appraisal of the phenomenon"? Perhaps it is a non-class formation and is in social transition. At any rate, Comrade Kerry cannot find any "new word" "to adequately define this new phenomenon," not even, we trust, in "Webster, an acknowledged authority on such matters." Nevertheless, Comrade Kerry decides that the word "coalition" "is quite appropriate," and we shall agree. When the Ceylonese "Trotskyist" party, the LSSP, finally discovered the uniqueness in the Ceylonese situation and that it was possible to subordinate program to organizational unity with other classes, they too found coalition not unacceptable, in fact, "quite appropriate."

The "patchwork formation" "that the SWP-YSA can claim a large part of the credit for" holding together at the expense of arriving with their program in hand and returning with it in their pocket, is exactly that -- a coalition. The whole antiwar movement is not objectively anti-imperialist and the organizational formation which the SWP-YSA try to hold together is an unprincipled bloc in which the SWP-YSA cannot and will dare not -- for fear of it flying apart -- fight for its principled programmatic conceptions of complete and immediate withdrawal, that is, fighting to impose the programmatic character upon the movement as a whole. This may be the position of a "simon-pure sectarian" but it is also the position of "classical" Marxism as opposed to "unique" Marxism.

Comrade Kerry's document both in its tone -- as one can see from the abundant use of quotes that I have utilized above -- and in its content, is not meant as a serious document to discuss the issues or to correct and educate the party comrades. It is, on the contrary, a dishonest polemic designed to confuse the issues in order to nip in the bud, any serious initiative from the rank and file. That is, the leadership of the party feels it is "eminently adequate" to lead the party -- without making any mistakes, of course -- and therefore, all serious criticisms are "obviously intended for others." A leadership that cannot tolerate serious criticism cannot lead the working class. Comrade Kerry's methods cannot, however, stop serious criticism be it valid criticism or not. Such

methods will only bring him more criticism "from afar" and near.

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In turning to the "Antiwar Resolution" (Vol. 27, No. 2, June 1969) it is with relief that we can adopt a more serious tone; one it is hoped that can be maintained throughout the remainder of the discussion.

The position in the present resolution is essentially the same as that contained in the 1967 resolution, and since my criticisms of the 1967 resolution and the general political line of the party on the question of the antiwar movement remain as yet to be refuted, I will not bother to make a detailed analysis of the present resolution. Rather, I will confine myself to two important observations.

We noticed that Comrade Kerry's document raised some question as to our attitude to the Stalinists in Vietnam. The same question is raised in the present resolution, not only in the specific case of Vietnam but also Stalinism in general. On page three we find the following paragraph:

"Nixon, like Johnson, hopes to obtain the aid of the Soviet bureaucrats in bringing the Vietnamese revolutionaries ?? to terms. Although this possibility cannot be excluded, the Soviet bureaucrats are far less able now than in parallel situations in earlier years to force the Vietnamese revolutionaries to submit to a capitulating compromise. The struggle in Vietnam has developed independently ?? of Moscow and Peking; its leaders have learned bitter lessons from the experiences that followed 1954; and its militants are more determined than ever to reverse the colonial ?? puppet status of South Vietnam."

First of all a few comments on the specific case of Vietnam. What is meant by the statement that "the struggle in Vietnam has developed independently of Moscow and Peking"? Does this mean that we judge an organization as being Stalinist or not by its relationship to Moscow or Peking? Don't we consider the Yugoslavian and the Japanese CPs to be Stalinist in spite of their relationship with either Moscow or Peking? Then what is the significance of this so-called independent development? And is it true that the struggle has developed independently of both Moscow and Peking? A serious analysis of the situation would reveal that the only reason the Vietnamese have been able to continue their struggle to present is because of the aid provided by both Moscow and Peking, in spite of the original and courageous initiative taken by the Vietnamese masses --

1954-1960. From 1954 to 1960 the Vietnamese Stalinists opposed the struggle of the masses. By 1960 the revolt on the part of the masses was so vast that the Stalinists were forced to take the leadership of it or be thoroughly disgraced. Since that time, however, the struggle has been brought under their control and is today completely dominated by their leadership. With the escalation of the war by the Americans, by the massive introduction of troops and most modern means of warfare and especially by the bombing of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the complexion of the struggle began to change. In spite of the most courageous resistance on the part of the masses, primitive means of warfare cannot stand up to the technological might of an advanced country such as the United States. It was only the counter-escalation on the part of the workers states, insufficient as it might have been, that allowed the Vietnamese to continue to fight. The struggle, however, became transformed into an international war on a limited scale. With this change in complexion the Stalinist leaderships of both Peking and Moscow have increased their control over the situation up to the point of controlling the very existence of the struggle itself. The reality of the Vietnamese struggle of the last, but most important few years, is not that the struggle has developed or continued to develop independently, but rather the opposite. In a not too dissimilar way than what happened in the Spanish revolution where the initiative of the masses was soon replaced by the treacherous leadership of the Stalinists, the Vietnamese struggle has become more and more under the thumb of the Stalinists, from a local level right up to the top echelons of the Stalinist bureaucracies in Moscow and Peking.

The above-quoted paragraph also pretends to have knowledge that some kind of qualitative change has taken place in the Stalinist leadership in Vietnam, that the leadership has "learned bitter lessons" and "are more determined than ever to reverse the colonial /T/ puppet status of South Vietnam." Where is the factual evidence to back up such claims? Has the Stalinist leadership actually reformed itself? The factual evidence should first and foremost be evident in the Vietnamese program. But even a quick glance at the present program and recent maneuvers on the part of the NLF should be enough to convince anybody, especially a Trotskyist, that the Stalinist program is not only in full force but is being practiced in the crudest manner.

The embellishment of the Vietnamese leadership is not just confined to a few brief passages in the present resolution. Not only have we never taken up the problem of the Stalinist leadership in Viet-

nam and publicly exposed their class collaborationist program, but we have, on more than one occasion, even apologized for the Vietnamese leadership in our press. The most evident instance of this concerns not Vietnam itself, but Czechoslovakia. Immediately following the occupation of Czechoslovakia, both Intercontinental Press and The Militant carried an article explaining that the first response of Hanoi supporting the occupation was not their real position. The next week the two publications carried an article without comment and simply stating that Hanoi officially supported the occupation. (Hanoi wasn't showing too much "independence" on the Czechoslovakian events.)

We must warn the Vietnamese masses as well as the masses around the world that the Stalinist leadership in Vietnam will not possibly sell out the Vietnamese struggle, but that it already has, is, and will continue to sell out the interests of the Vietnamese masses and expose their program and history. In so doing, we must put the world working class on guard to the dangers of Stalinism, educate them as to just what Stalinism is and demonstrate to them what they must do in order to fight it. The Vietnamese revolution offers us not just the possibility of doing this but the obligation.

The above-quoted paragraph, however, does not limit itself to embellishing only the Vietnamese Stalinists, but the Stalinists in general -- "the Soviet bureaucrats are far less able now than in parallel situations in earlier years to force the Vietnamese revolutionaries /Stalinists?/ to submit to a capitulating compromise." And this is written after the events of May-June 1968 in France and the occupation of Czechoslovakia in August of that same year! What is it exactly that makes the Soviet bureaucrats so less able to sell out in Vietnam? Is it because "the basic relationship of class forces on a world scale is less and less favorable to imperialism," or as has been stated more precisely elsewhere, the balance of class forces on a world scale is now weighted in favor of socialism? This is not the first time that such ideas have been put forward in our movement, and the comrades should consider them carefully -- their historical origin -- especially in light of the present conciliationist attitude toward Stalinism. It would undoubtedly be a most fruitful project to take up this question, although impossible here.

Not only are the Soviet bureaucrats less able to sell out but there are even Stalinist parties maintaining a principled defense of Vietnam. "Only Cuba and, to a lesser extent, North Korea ...have maintained a principled interna-

tionalist line in defense of the Vietnamese revolution." What is the relationship of the leadership in these countries to the theory of permanent revolution? What is their attitude on the NLF's program? Inasmuch as we have designated at least the Korean leadership as being Stalinist, how is it possible that they are maintaining (to a lesser extent?) "a principled internationalist line in defense of the Vietnamese revolution"? It is criminal to spread illusions among the most advanced sectors of the working class movement as to the positions of these petty-bourgeois leaderships. Again we must warn the world working class not that the Stalinists might sell out (let alone, spread the illusion that they might not) but explain in detail to them how they are, have and will continue to sell out, that is, we must put our program on the line and carry out an unyielding fight for it.

The adaptation to petty-bourgeois currents in the antiwar movement cannot be limited in time and space. It must ultimately be a reflection of, or reflected in, an adaptation to petty-bourgeois currents in the international arena. The party's conciliationist attitude to Stalinism is evidence of this fact.

In our criticism of the 1967 Political Resolution, we took issue with the proposed slogan: "Abolish the capitalist draft." Although it was not justified, this position was a change from the party's traditional military policy. In the present antiwar resolution there is an attempt -- over two years after the fact -- to justify and explain this change. This proposed change is again based on a qualitative change that has supposedly taken place in the world situation.

"These postwar conditions created a world situation which was qualitatively different from that of the 1941-45 period." "These global developments have generated marked changes in the views of the American people toward the issues posed by Washington's armed interventions. U.S. involvement in World War II was almost unanimously accepted under the illusion that it was a progressive war waged against fascism."

It is on the above so-called change that the party justifies a revision of its traditional military policy. But the change outlined in no way justifies the change in our military policy. We did not demand that military conscription and military training be under trade-union control simply because the masses were under the illusion that World War II was a progressive war. The basis for our military policy is how best we can turn the army into a weapon in the hands of the ex-

ploited instead of it being a weapon in the hands of the exploiters. Even if the people hadn't had illusions about WWII, it would not have changed our military policy, but made it all the more relevant as a means to take the war-making powers away from the rulers.

The present situation and mood among the masses in no way justifies a change in our military policy, but on the contrary makes it more relevant than ever. The slogan to abolish the draft is essentially a pacifist slogan and gets us no closer to placing the army in the hands of the working class, or even raising the consciousness of the masses on the need for the people to take into their own hands the war-making powers. In fact, this slogan spreads the illusion that war can be stopped or limited by doing away with the draft -- the peacetime draft, inasmuch as the bourgeoisie will easily justify its re-introduction with the outbreak of new hostilities.

The document maintains that our "new" policy will place more emphasis "upon opposing capitalist conscription which is becoming increasingly unpopular." This means, of course, the putting forward with greater emphasis the slogan, abolish the capitalist draft. But why not, instead, the alternative of a conscription controlled by working class organizations? We are not opposed to conscription per se any more than we are opposed to the steel industry because it is a capitalist steel industry. Our point of contention with the capitalist is not that the draft exists, any more than we contest the existence of the steel industry. Our point of contention is around the question of who is to control these institutions and in whose interests. That we are against capitalist conscription is not quite correct. We are against capitalist-controlled conscription and oppose to it working-class-controlled conscription.

Even the slogan of abolish the capitalist draft, is that of the disgruntled petty bourgeoisie who refuse to accept the present day realities as being the necessary result of great historical change. Just as some of the petty bourgeoisie are lured by the utopian idea of going back in time to more of a laissez faire economy and small government, they too are lured by the utopian idea of going back to the era where armies were much smaller and the instruments of war much simpler. Do away with all these things, your monstrous war machines, government control, etc., declares the disgruntled petty bourgeoisie, and let me rest in peace.

If we may be allowed one quote from Trotsky:

"The poor Labor Action of August 12th writes: 'In his fight against conscription we are with Lewis 100 percent.' We are not with Lewis for even a single percent, because Lewis tries to defend the Capitalist Fatherland with completely outdated means. The great majority of the workers understand or feel that the means (professional voluntary armament) are outdated from a military point of view and extremely dangerous from a class point of view. That is why the workers are for conscription. It is a very confused and contradictory form of adhering to the 'arming of the proletariat.' We do not flatly reject this great historical change, as do the sectarians of all kinds. We say 'Conscription? Yes. But made by ourselves.' It is an excellent point of departure." (In Defense of Marxism, p. 186.)

Trotsky declares Lewis' fight against conscription to have been out of date in 1940. If we were to believe the party leadership, world history has gone backwards for the last 29 years and not forwards. Trotsky says "Conscription? Yes. But made by ourselves." We must maintain our original military policy and combine it with other slogans designed to raise the consciousness of the working masses and draw them into active politics in order to strengthen their control over the capitalists. We must raise

such demands as: voting age of 18 for both men and women; the right of all service personnel to vote -- anybody old enough to fight and in the position of having to risk his life must be allowed to vote; confiscation of all military profit; the nationalization of all war industries with workers control, etc.

Our complete adaptation to the pacifists on the question of the draft should raise questions in the minds of comrades as to our overall policy in the antiwar movement as should our conciliationist attitude toward Stalinism. The present antiwar resolution represents in writing only a further evolution in our adaptation to different petty-bourgeois currents. The more we continue to adapt, the more our basic program will have to be revised or simply just forgotten about. An examination of the party's policies and their practical application is of the utmost importance, not only for correcting our course in regard to the antiwar movement, but also in regard to correcting our course on the international questions which is a necessary prerequisite for the very important ideological struggle which has opened up in the world movement.

August 8, 1969  
Boston

ON PARTY-YOUTH RELATIONS: SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

By Charles Bolduc and Larry Seigle

David Fender's article, "The Party's Adaptationism and Comrade Kerry's Reply," (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 27, No. 13) reaches what must be an all-time high in at least one respect: Never before has one been so completely wrong on so many different questions within one single article. Fender is wrong on our supposed "adaptation" to Stalinism, his view of "Stalinist" Cuba, his denigration of our opposition to the capitalist draft, the mass antiwar actions, etc. We will not dignify Fender's cynical flailings of the party's record and politics here with a reply.

However, one section of his document is so dead wrong politically and factually that it could be damaging to our movement if left unanswered in print. That point is Fender's slanderous allegations about the relationship that exists between the YSA and the SWP.

Fender begins by stating his political disagreement with the party: "...it is my opinion that the YSA should openly and formally be the youth group of the SWP." The SWP and the YSA do not think that the YSA should be the youth group of the SWP -- formally or informally, openly or any other way. Our conception of what the relationship between the party and youth should be is contained in the resolution of the recent world congress of the Fourth International entitled "The Worldwide Radicalization of Youth and the Tasks of the Fourth International" (available in Intercontinental Press, Vol. 7, No. 26):

"The experience of the world Trotskyist movement during the past few years has shown that its work among the youth can most effectively be carried forward through revolutionary socialist youth organizations fraternally associated with the sections of the Fourth International but organizationally independent of them ....It is important to note that the social and political analysis of the student movement today and the world situation in which it is developing shows the objective basis for such independent revolutionary socialist youth organization.

"The independent youth organization can attract radicalizing young people who have not yet made up their minds about joining any political party of the left and who are not yet committed to the Bolshevik perspective of becoming lifetime revolutionists, but who are willing and ready to participate in a broad range of political actions together with the revolutionary party and its members. It can lead actions and take initiatives in the student movement in its own name. In can

serve as a valuable training and testing ground for candidates for party cadre status, and make it easier for them to acquire political and organizational experience and education required for serious revolutionary activity. Membership in the revolutionary socialist youth organization enables young radicals to decide their own policies, organize their own actions, make their own mistakes and learn their own lessons...."

Fender not only disagrees with this position, but believes that it is a lie; he apparently thinks that this is our position for the public, and what we tell YSAers, but that in reality we follow an entirely different policy. In other words, he believes that the relationship he thinks should exist is what does exist, but it is kept secret.

In reality, although Fender avoids drawing this conclusion, the formal status of the youth group of the SWP would entail a totally different mode of functioning for the YSA. The YSA would, for example, automatically support all decisions of the SWP. The YSA would have no choice. YSA conventions would not be political decision-making conventions; even the election of YSA leaders would be a fraud. The SWP would even have to take responsibility for all articles in all publications of the YSA. In short, what to Fender seems a minor question of public relations would actually involve a fundamental change in the nature of the YSA.

It is necessary to get the facts straight.

Fender asks "does this mean that party members in the YSA leadership are not subject to the 'direct supervision, direction and control' of the Political Committee of the SWP?" Yes, Fender, that is exactly what it means. Moreover, we think it would be a mistake for the PC to do so.

Fender asks, "Does this mean, contrary to popular belief [?] that all important political and even organizational decisions taken by the YSA are not first discussed and decided on by the party leadership?" Yes, it means exactly that, as any member of the YSA NEC or the PC of the SWP can tell you. The fact is that the section we quoted from the resolution of the Fourth International is not merely a statement of what we believe should be the case, it is also an accurate description of the relationship that does exist between the YSA and the SWP. To substitute Fender's ideal of "direct political control" would not only be wrong for the party, but it would

also be an obstacle to the healthy development of the YSA.

The relationship between the SWP and the YSA is a unique one for both organizations. The YSA National Office doesn't function as a department of the SWP any more than YSA locals across the country function as party branches. The independence of the YSA is not merely formal, Comrade Fender, it is real and it is one of the greatest strengths of the YSA.

On the other hand, the YSA is not an "outside organization" which requires SWP members to function as a fraction, under party discipline, within it. The YSA is a Trotskyist organization; it actively supports and helps build the SWP. There is no contradiction whatso-

ever between being a leader in the YSA and being a loyal builder of the SWP. Moreover, there is no reason to believe that at any time in the foreseeable future Trotskyism will be in a minority position in the YSA, thus requiring us to change our approach to it.

What does exist is a relationship of fraternal collaboration, both in the political center and between party branches and YSA locals in the field. This collaboration is of great benefit to the SWP as well as to the YSA; and we will do everything in our power to maintain that fraternal collaboration as both the SWP and the YSA continue to grow.

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