



# Discussion Bulletin

14 Charles Lane, New York, N. Y. 10014

Vol. 32, No. 2  
December 1973

Published by

**SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY**

## CONTENTS

Page

<b>THE TROTSKYIST VIEW OF VIETNAMESE STALINISM</b> , by George Johnson, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local	3
<b>SOME POLITICAL OBSERVATIONS</b> , by Wesley Weinhold, Seattle Branch	5
<b>THE CONSEQUENCES OF PABLOISM: THE 'UNITED' SECRETARIAT BREAKS UP</b> , by Al Greengold, Oakland-Berkeley Branch	7
<b>THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE CLASSICAL VARIANT</b> , by Tony Thomas, Lower Manhattan Branch, New York Local	18
<b>'OFF IN THE COSMOS' —OR WHY THE IMT WAVED 'BYE-BYE' TO THE PRT</b> , by George Johnson, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local	20
<b>QUESTIONS OF METHODOLOGY AND THE 1973 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IN FRANCE</b> , by Paul Adams, Upper West Side, New York Local	22
<b>ON THE QUESTION OF THE BOURGEOIS ARMY</b> , by Dianne Feeley, Lower Manhattan Branch, New York Local	26
<b>AN ERROR THAT SHOULD NOT GO WITHOUT NOTICE</b> , by George Johnson, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local	29
<b>ADDENDUM TO AN EXCHANGE</b> , by Les Evans, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local	30

Page 2:

was blank in the  
original bulletin

- Marty Jan 2014

## The Trotskyist View of Vietnamese Stalinism

by George Johnson, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local

[The following contribution is based on remarks made at the 1973 SWP convention during the discussion following the report on Vietnam.]

I want to discuss briefly how the Trotskyist movement has viewed the Vietnamese Communist Party from the time of the formation of the Vietnamese CP in 1930 up until now.

Comrades who have read the article on the nature of the Vietnamese CP in the July-August 1973 *International Socialist Review* will recall the references there to articles on the Vietnamese CP in 1931-32 by the Vietnamese Trotskyists. These were published in *La Lutte des Classes*, theoretical organ of the French Left Oppositionists.

These articles demonstrated that the Vietnamese CP had all the characteristics of Third-Period Stalinism, combining ultraleft adventures and the Menshevik theory of stages. The VCP was turning away from the urban proletariat.

Ta Thu Thau, the founder of the Vietnamese Trotskyist movement, wrote an article that appeared in the November-December 1938 issue of *Quatrieme Internationale*, as the theoretical organ of the French Trotskyists was then called.

In this article, Ta summed up the Vietnamese CPers very well. He wrote that they "did not hesitate even before a putsch (Nghe-An) [the Nghe-Tinh so-called soviets], all the while professing the bourgeois democratic revolution as the supreme objective. Opportunist international connections, petty-bourgeois program, but with a real will to struggle and leftist phraseology, such was the Stalinist party."

Ta went on to describe Stalin's designs for the Vietnamese CP: "to galvanize the leading forces, the most active, dynamic, and heroic elements, to get them to accept the next turn to the right by the master of the Kremlin, grave-digger of the world proletarian revolution."

That is just what happened next to the Vietnamese CP, when Stalin ordered the turn to the popular front policy. The French CP, in a government with bourgeois parties, supported the French bourgeois state and the French empire against Germany, as required by the Kremlin. The Vietnamese CP followed suit. It supported the French government, going so far as to call on the Vietnamese to fight for and support the war budget of French imperialism. In deference to the Stalinist line of popular frontism, the leadership of the Vietnamese CP abandoned the demands for land reform and independence in this period.

Ta Thu Thau wrote, in the 1938 *Quatrieme Internationale* article, that the Vietnamese CPers "no longer know how to do anything but to sing the praises of the democratic bourgeoisie, of imperialism, of the counter-revolutionary popular front, of recruiting for the [French] army ["sac au dos"], of the French war budget, of compulsory arbitration, and of the monstrous Moscow trials."

Against this, the Vietnamese Trotskyists stuck to the program and practice of revolutionary Marxism. There is no time here to detail the activities of the Union of Bolshevik-Leninists, as the Vietnamese Trotskyists were then called. They led strikes and demonstrations, and suffered severe repression. They opposed the class collaboration, reformism, and subservience to French imperialism of the Vietnamese Stalinists.

The elections in 1939 to the Cochinchina Colonial Council were one gauge of the influence of the Vietnamese Trotskyists, who put forward a revolutionary program. The Trotskyists got 80 percent of the vote, the Stalinists less than one percent.

Comrade Trotsky was keenly aware of the work of our Vietnamese comrades. He read *La Lutte*, the workers newspaper of wide influence published by the Trotskyists in Saigon. Trotsky was certainly familiar with *Quatrieme Internationale* and with *La Lutte Ouvriere*, newspaper of that time of the French Trotskyists, which carried much information about the Vietnamese section. Trotsky praised their work highly. He said: "Owing to their bold revolutionary politics, the Saigon proletarians, members of the Fourth International, scored a brilliant victory over the bloc of the ruling party and the Stalinists at the elections to the colonial council." (*Writings of Leon Trotsky*, 1938-39, p. 39).

Notice that Trotsky called the Vietnamese CP a Stalinist party. Those who now tell us that this party is not Stalinist have the duty to show why and how Trotsky was wrong about it in 1939, or else they must show us how it has changed since then. That is a contradiction they have not yet taken up.

The supporters of the IEC Majority haven't explicitly taken up Trotsky's views of the Vietnamese CP (or for that matter the Chinese CP), although Comrade Sterne's position does tend to reject this past position. We, however, share Trotsky's assessment that the VCP was a Stalinist party in 1939.

Has that party changed since? Its performance in 1945, when it beheaded the August revolution in the interests of the Kremlin, was certainly no break with Stalinism. Ho Chi Minh's party murdered the Trotskyists because his perspective then was to keep Vietnam in the French empire and to maintain capitalism in Vietnam and the Trotskyists opposed this. The VCP leaders did this in keeping with the perspectives of Stalinism, which was trying to snuggle up to the French government, to prevent an anti-Soviet military alliance.

So 1945 was no break with Stalinism. And our movement didn't think it was. *Quatrieme Internationale*, in late 1947, and *The Militant*, in early 1948, both published an eyewitness account of the August 1945 revolution by Lucien, a Vietnamese Trotskyist, that pegged this betrayal by the Vietnamese Stalinists in no uncertain terms.

What kind of a break with Stalinism was 1947, when the VCP finally fought back against the French? Our

movement understood that this was part of the international left turn by Stalinism, undertaken for diplomatic reasons as a result of the cold war offensive led by American imperialism. It was within this framework that uprisings were led by Stalinists in Burma, India, Malaya, Indonesia, Japan, and elsewhere. So the VCP wasn't breaking with the Stalinist line in 1947, either.

Our movement, at the Second World Congress in 1948, documented this 1947 left turn. It also characterized the VCP as Stalinist. So did the Third World Congress, in 1951.

The 1948 world congress resolution on the colonial countries said: "Continuing a quarter of a century of incessant betrayals, the Stalinist conduct and leadership of the struggles of the 'left' turn must inescapably reveal its limitations, its inability to complete the agrarian revolution in China and Indochina; its role as a brake (e.g., the acceptance of compromises with the Dutch in Java and the French in Vietnam); and its naked counter-revolutionary character (e.g., assassinations of Trotskyists and other militants . . . )."

The Third World Congress in 1951 described the tasks of the Vietnamese Trotskyists. In Vietnam, our reorganized forces will also attempt to work in the organizations influenced by the Stalinists, naturally including its armed formations. They will grant critical support to the Ho Chi Minh regime in its struggle against imperialism, while distinguishing themselves from it on the goal of this struggle and the best means to lead it to victory."

In 1952, the October issue of *Quatrieme Internationale* paid honor to our Vietnamese comrades Ta Thu Thau, Rene and Liu, calling them "recent victims of Stalinist terror," which they were.

So you can see from this that the characterization of the Vietnamese CP as Stalinist is hardly a new position for our movement.

Has this party changed its stripes since? Not in any way.

What about 1954, at the Geneva conference? The VCP not only settled for less of the country than they controlled, giving way to the wishes of the Moscow and Peking bureaucrats. They described this forced settlement as a great victory. They themselves made the proposal at Geneva to divide Vietnam. Was this against Stalinism? To the contrary.

What about 1956, when the VCP crushed a movement for socialist democracy, similar to such movements in Hungary and elsewhere? Was it other than Stalinist then, when it defended bureaucratic privileges?

Was it other than Stalinist from 1954 to 1960, when it refrained from the resistance put up in the south to Ngo Dinh Diem's repression, insisting instead on the need to build socialism in the north as the overriding task?

The VCP did not take *full* responsibility for leading the struggle in the south until 1965, after the U. S. had begun bombing North Vietnam and was threatening to invade the north. Does this, somehow, represent a break with Stalinism?

Finally, in 1973, the VCP is describing the compromise forced on them by U. S. imperialism and the Moscow and Peking strike-breakers as a "victory of epochal significance." This serves only the interests of imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracies. How, then, is it a departure from Stalinism?

The VCP retains its policy of trying to guarantee capitalism in South Vietnam. Nguyen Huu Tho, president of the PRG, recently said in the Hanoi weekly *Thong Nhat*: "The NLF and the PRG will protect the right to land ownership of owners of plantations, rich peasants and other lands that belong to churches and pagodas." He went on to say that "conflicts between employees and employers will be solved through negotiations in the spirit of reconciliation, with a view to promoting production and guaranteeing the life of the laboring peoples," and "the NLF and the PRG always respect the right to private ownership and freedom of investment."

We don't think there's any reason at all for us to consider the Vietnamese CP to be other than a Stalinist party, or to be an instrument adequate for the socialist revolution in Vietnam.

We agree with Trotsky's evaluation of that party, and we don't think that party has changed.

Those who disagree with this assessment have the duty to explain their revision of this Trotskyist position. We are alarmed when we see things like Pierre Rousset's book on the VCP in which the role of the Trotskyists is ignored, or when Comrade Bill Yaffee writes in SWP Discussion Bulletin No. 24 that "at critical times the VCP's understanding of the political situation was often better than that of the Vietnamese Trotskyists." Can we ask this comrade for something like evidence for this extremely serious and unwarranted charge?

It is a lie and a slander. These comrades are throwing our revolutionary heritage overboard. They contradict or ignore the history of the Vietnamese Trotskyists, including what is recorded in the pages of *La Lutte* and *La Lutte Ouvriere*, and *La Verite*, *The Militant*, and *International Socialist Review* and *Quatrieme Internationale*.

What is at stake here?

The theory of permanent revolution. Our understanding of the thoroughly counterrevolutionary nature of Stalinism, and more.

In their haste to embrace the Stalinist VCP, these comrades would do well to ponder the reply of Trotsky to a letter from the Vietnamese Trotskyists in 1939. They had written him:

"Today, more than ever, we understand the importance not only of the program of the Fourth International, but also of your struggle of 1925-28 against the theory and practice of socialism in one country, of your struggle against the peasants' international, the anti-imperialist league and other show committees, Amsterdam-Pleyel and others.

"In these days of hope engendered by our recent victory, we think of you." (*Socialist Appeal*, August 11, 1939.)

Trotsky said of this, "Especially precious and important is the declaration that the advanced Saigon workers understand the meaning of the struggle of the Left Opposition during the years from 1925 to 1928. Only continuity of ideas creates a revolutionary tradition, without which a political party sways like a reed in the wind." (*Writings of Leon Trotsky*, 1938-39, pp. 134-35.)

To this, it is only necessary to add that the supporters of Comrade Sterne's position on the Vietnamese CP seem to have forgotten the meaning of the struggles of the Left Opposition during the years from 1930 to 1945 in Viet-

nam. This can lead them to discard the continuity of ideas that is indeed our revolutionary tradition, and with-

out this they will indeed begin to sway like reeds in the wind.

December 3, 1973

## SOME POLITICAL OBSERVATIONS

by Wesley Weinhold, Seattle Branch

The situation in the International is becoming increasingly polarized. Because of the different analyses of the two sides, this was perhaps inevitable. It has left many comrades, however, with no opportunity to express their views clearly. And it has led to a hardening and sometimes exaggeration of positions. This is dangerous, since it commits national leaderships to inflexible tactics and limits their view of reality. I offer this document in the hope that some of my thoughts may help to point out areas which need more consideration.

However, I wish to make it clear that I support the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction in its efforts to gain a majority on the incoming IEC. Despite reservations I hold concerning the trend of the debate, I consider that events in the past 5 years have generally confirmed the IEC minority's analysis of the world situation and have shown them to have a firmer grasp of the real world.

The most conspicuous examples of this have been in Latin America and in Vietnam. The primary errors in Latin America in the last 5 years have been the result of the above limited viewpoint, especially on the part of supporters of the IEC Majority. While the perspective of "no prolonged period of bourgeois democracy in conditions of mass upsurge" seems to be generally correct and in this I generally agree with the IEC Majority, the tactics or strategy that follow from this are not obvious. Also, how long a period is a "prolonged period" is also open to question. Bolivia's period lasted about two years; Chile's, since the upsurge began, lasted 5 to 6 years, including 3 years of Allende; Uruguay's experience had also lasted for several years; both Peru and Argentina are in the midst of such a period, i.e., where relatively open organizing by revolutionary organizations is possible. But the danger of a severe repression (as opposed to normal bourgeois-democratic repression such as we suffer in Western Europe or North America) is much more immediate in any Latin American country. The strategic orientation of the parties must reflect this danger. For this reason, I have not been entirely reassured by the reports from the Argentine PST. They do not seem to be preparing for the inevitable attempt at severe armed repression. After all, insofar as they are successful in breaking the Peronist illusions of the workers, they will come closer to forcing the bourgeoisie to take other measures of rationalizing the Argentine economy.

Since, as an American, I have no experience in preparing for an immediate armed struggle and, because of security, I do not expect to be informed of all measures being taken, my judgment of their action is necessarily based on incomplete information and cannot be a basis for a political characterization of the PST. Certainly, the IEC Majority is absolutely blind and factional to refuse

to recognize the enormous success of the PST in recruiting militant workers and students to a Trotskyist program. Despite any illusions about the possibility of building a mass cadre by gradual accretion, the PST is and has been far closer to Trotskyist positions on international and national issues (even to those of the IEC Majority) than the PRT (Combatiente). Maoist and Castroist illusions, historically strong in this group of Argentine co-thinkers, were in the latest split fairly well isolated in the PRT (Combatiente) and have led that grouping out of the International while the PST has drawn closer. If, in fact, the PST is in danger of pursuing a reformist course (which I am by no means convinced of), the IEC Majority would be far wiser to treat them in the same fraternal fashion that they treated the grouping that has fled the International. The three criticisms the IEC Majority makes of the PST are irrelevant. The PST's leadership has had pro-Peronist leanings in the past? But today they are the only left grouping in Argentina to deliberately and consistently oppose Peronism, more so even than any of the PRTs. The PST's predecessor and itself polemicized against the policies of the PRT (Combatiente)? But, of course, when those policies were opposed to revolutionary sanity. The PST was formed by a fusion with a centrist organization? Comrades, where did most of the European sections come from?

To balance the coin, however, I do not think the SWP has been completely correct in its dealings with the Argentine groups. I do not refer to the Sallustro affair. Terrorism must be repudiated. While, from a formal standpoint, the SWP was premature in its criticism because the ERP leadership was still in the International, the SWP was completely correct in realizing that the action represented a fundamental break with revolutionary Marxist politics and, if continued, would lead the PRT (Combatiente) to abandon Trotskyism. However, the emphasis by the SWP leadership on those aspects of the Argentine experience that are directly paralleled to United States experience has led to a distorted appreciation of the Argentine situation in the United States and has educated neither the SWP leadership nor the PST leadership in the problems of developing a mass revolutionary party in the particular Argentine situation. I believe that many American comrades do not realize the immediacy of the question of armed struggle and murderous repression to our Argentine comrades. I can only hope that the PST comrades realize and are dealing with this problem of armed struggle. The reports from the SWP leadership are not encouraging.

Armed struggle is not an easy concept to implement properly. While abstractly necessary for the overthrow of capitalism, the question of when to apply it and, more crucially, how to apply it has been the downfall of many

revolutionaries, from Che Guevara to MIR. The IEC Majority has made the error of equating armed struggle with guerrilla action in practice. They have emphasized the military organization and this has, as in the case of the POR and the ERP, led to the neglect of the political. The POR, while it tried to correct its line during the time of the Torres regime, was unable to respond quickly enough. Its positions were not ultimately incorrect; they were merely uncoordinated and ill-timed. The ERP, as is known, politically degenerated. These dangers exist in any over-emphasis of a particular strategy.

I see a similar danger in the SWP's emphasis on organization and recruitment through mass legal campaigns. What has been missing from the polemic so far is an appreciation of the dialectical interaction of legal organization and armed struggle, an interaction which is vital to comprehend not only in Latin America, but also in advanced industrial countries where the long-term existence of democratic rights won by the workers will make the situation even more contradictory and even confusing than it has been in Latin America.

Terrorism was defended by Trotsky only in the context of the party in power and the necessity of terrorism to demoralize individual bourgeois elements, especially technicians and military officers. Regardless of what quotations can be extracted from Lenin or even Trotsky concerning guerrilla warfare during and after 1905, it must be remembered that guerrilla warfare in that period did not overthrow tsarism or even apparently weaken the regime. The tactics used in that period were never applied or recommended later and very few of the cadres involved were later assets to the revolutionary party. Stalin was the most prominent Bolshevik close to the guerrilla warfare and we know what an asset he turned out to be. If guerrilla tactics are relevant today, the Yugoslavian, Cuban and Indochinese experiences are more pertinent as successful examples. Against these may be set the French, Greek, Argentine, Malaysian and Bolivian experiences.

The IEC Majority must recognize that while armed struggle is certainly necessary and immediate in Latin America, legal organization and recruitment are also frequently possible and, in fact, Trotskyism's greatest current success in Latin America has been achieved in conditions of legality. There have, unfortunately, been no ultimate successes and the Argentine group has not yet been tested. All of those groups and sections which have taken the guerrilla road to armed struggle (POR, MIR, Tupamaros, PRT (Combatiente), etc.) have failed the test, have either been politically impotent in the face of government attacks or have lost both members and influence.

The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction must recognize the limits of legal organization in Latin America. Although Trotskyist groups have not passed beyond the stage of initial gathering of cadre and propaganda, we may be forced at any time to act in advance of our development. We may have to develop into a mass party in the midst of a revolutionary crisis, as the Bolsheviks did. We need more discussion of concrete tactics for situations where armed struggle is immediately necessary, as in Bolivia in 1971 or Chile in 1973. After-the-fact analysis does not help these comrades in the action. When do we take the initiative in forming armed groups? Do we suggest concrete tactics to the mass parties? Do we encourage armed insurrection

when workers are ready, but we do not have hegemony? These and more questions should be discussed.

The emphasis on defense of political prisoners, while necessary, must not blind us to the fact that this is a defensive tactic and, even when successful (e.g., Hugo Blanco), does not overthrow the regime. It is not sufficient as a strategy. I am sure the SWP leadership is as aware of this as I am, but it has not been apparent in *The Militant*. Let us not make virtues of necessities. We must also take up and examine critically the MIR's euphoric expectations of the coming civil war in Chile. Mere counterposition is not enough, especially when the IEC Majority seems to share these euphoric expectations.

Utopianism seems also characteristic of the IEC Majority attitude toward the Indochinese revolution. Ignoring the Stalinist history of the Vietnamese CP, their neglect of active support to the Pathet Lao and the Khmer Rouge, the IEC Majority eulogizes the supposed tactical flexibility and diplomatic acumen of the North Vietnamese and PRG leaderships. The actual case is quite different. As a Stalinist party in power in a workers state, the North Vietnamese leadership has national interests as well as its own survival to defend. However, it does so in a typically Stalinist fashion, repeatedly trying to create an alliance with one or another bourgeois element, even offering to form coalition governments with the bourgeoisie. They repeatedly make the distinction between friendly capitalists and hostile imperialist-dominated capitalists. This is a Stalinist distinction and has nothing to do with the permanent revolution or revolutionary strategy, selected quotations notwithstanding. The composition of both the PRG and the supposed coalition government in Laos are classic examples. Only the total bankruptcy of capitalism and the intransigence of the common peasant and worker in Indochina has prevented disastrous Shanghai-1927-style mistakes. The situation is reminiscent of 1946-1949 in China and I can only hope it will have so fortunate an outcome. Slavish parroting of the PRG line on strategy is not likely to improve the chances.

The European document is an example of another sort, an example of a muddled vague presentation which can take on almost any political coloration desired. Most adherents of this document have taken especially the recommendations for revolutionary initiative and turned them into a justification for small-group adventurism. However, other defenders of the European perspectives document, e.g., some German and American comrades, have interpreted it so that it seems almost identical to SWP strategy in the United States. Considering the politics of the authors, the first group above is probably more in tune with the intentions of the document. It remains a vague document, suitable for little except quotation.

The problem is not that it is a document for a continent-wide strategy. While the difficulty of developing a continental strategy for countries as diverse as Sweden and Spain may have contributed to the lack of clarity which permeates the document, it is not impossible to develop such a strategy. Undoubtedly, the capitalist countries of Europe possess certain common features, experiences which differentiate them from other advanced capitalist countries. It is not enough simply to criticize the European document. I would like to see the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction develop a clearer, more usable document. I would like to see the IEC Majority do the same, but I do not see them as capable of

it until they jettison their illusions concerning Maoism, entrism and the efficacy of exemplary actions.

Finally, the question of slanders and undemocratic actions which have occurred on both sides. The Barzman letter here was blown out of proportion. Anybody who has followed American tendency development in the last four years knows how much wishful thinking has colored the political judgment of those comrades who have been in the leaderships of the FAPO and the Internationalist tendencies. It was perhaps unwise to deny the Internationalist Tendency any representation on the SWP National Committee, although neither the magnitude of their contribution to the functioning of the SWP nor their stature as political theorists would normally justify this. To place such a comrade on the NC would have been no more than a gesture to placate the IEC Majority and thus hypocritical. However, comrades in the Internationalist Tendency should be given responsible assignments to allow them to help build the party.

The difficulties of building an authoritative world congress are large, and I can understand the weariness of comrades who have been working on it for many years. I think it is necessary to have the world congress soon, but I also think the discussion has only begun. World-wide transportation and communication and the resources of many sections are not yet adequate to the task of carrying out a truly democratic world discussion. It is, I believe, for this reason that the SWP opposes any further centralization of the International. Only when we can elect comrades from Japan, India and Argentina to a functioning Secretariat without depriving their sections of their experience nor themselves of the immediate experience of organizing for a revolution, only then can we truly become a World Party. The comrades who are selected by the sections to represent them at the world congress will have a difficult task. I wish them clear thinking and revolutionary decisiveness.

November 26, 1973

### THE CONSEQUENCES OF PABLOISM: THE "UNITED" SECRETARIAT BREAKS UP

by Al Greengold, Oakland-Berkeley Branch

It is now a full decade after the reunification of the Pabloist International Secretariat and the "anti-Pabloist" majority of the International Committee. Ten full years have gone by, ten years of discussions and resolutions on major political questions that are of key importance to ostensible Trotskyists. The most important among them have been: the role of the vanguard party (as opposed to entrism *sui generis*); the role of Stalinism (which broke down into the question of China, and more recently Vietnam, and which *should* have gone over into the nature of Cuba); the role of the "Fourth International"; and of course the role of the working class. Yet despite some ten years of "unification," these very same questions in all their forms, variants, and permutations now threaten to split the "United" Secretariat which calls itself the Fourth International. Had it been different questions involved in the upcoming split, one might be tempted to assign the paternity of this crisis to insurmountable objective factors and let it go at that. But given the fact that these questions separated the I.S. (Mandel-Pablo) from the I.C. Majority (SWP) and then seeming agreement on these questions brought them together again, and now these same questions threaten once again to split the "United" Secretariat, one must inquire a bit more into the general momentum that propels the siblings into internecine warfare.

Yet the most peculiar reticence hangs over this task like some obstinate fog. In all the pages of the Internal International Discussion Bulletins (IIDB) no history is brought forward, no continuum of facts adduced, no materialist exposition is forthcoming as to why this situation exists and its connections with the events a decade ago. Even the Son of God is assigned paternity and origins (mythological though they be); cannot the two camps in the current dispute match the (shall we say) imagination of the "civilized" pagans and assign the paternity of this

dispute (hopefully of a non-mythological type)? In fact they cannot and therein lies the root of the evil, or at least the seed which becomes the root at some point. For if either side would produce a full and genuine history of the conflict it would not merely show up the adversary's weakness, but its own as well. When you point your index finger at someone else's revisionism, three fingers point back at your own—not a very profitable venture to be sure.

To date in the current dispute there has been only one attempt to analyze historically the background of the threatened split, my own which appeared in SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 31, No. 30, July 1973. This is not meant as a self-serving statement. On the contrary, in an effort to shed some light on the impending split in the "United" Secretariat, it is most unfortunate that its history had to be condensed into a single article and written by a person who did not live through the events described there, while the very people who did live through them prefer to commit a literary and political suicide by remaining quiet about them. In order to proceed to some of the aspects of the present discussion I will briefly restate my thesis of the founding and degeneration of the FI.

A. The founding of the FI by Trotsky and the International Left Opposition was a necessary and important historical step.

B. Due to the murder of a large part of the original leadership of the FI in Europe and elsewhere, the spread of Stalinism post-World War II, the failure of any revolution in the advanced capitalist countries to materialize as well as the newness of the FI with its lack of any major working-class base (except in Ceylon), an incredible opportunist pressure was put upon the secondary leaders of the FI. They gave in to this pressure and therein lies the origin of the current revisionism in dispute in the

ported by the voting members of the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction. A faction's function is to capture the leadership of an organization by winning people to its politics and giving this organizational expression by means of a vote. Yet here we have the spectacle of a faction, which views itself as the only Trotskyists in a non-Trotskyist International, that doesn't want to vote on a *series* of questions, including China, which it considers to be principled questions! And furthermore this same faction aspires to lead this non-Trotskyist International and the working class of the world by having this same non-Trotskyist International on questions (China and Vietnam) that are at least 25 years old! This is metaphysics, not dialectics!

The American Pabloists known as the Internationalist (if you please!) Tendency fare no better on the China question. Among themselves there is a chasm of disagreement over China. The May Stark crew on the one hand is unabashedly pro-Mao, pro-NLF (SWP DB Vol. 31, No. 1, April 1973, pages 15-18). Comrade Mike Tormey on the other hand is vehemently anti-Maoist. Writing for the 1969 SWP convention (SWP DB Vol. 27, No. 8, August 1969), Tormey's article entitled "China—A Fundamental Difference" spelled it out with clarion precision.

"Unfortunately in the last analysis broad *principled politics* are the *only* real practical politics. Anyone who tackles partial problems without having previously settled general problems will *inevitably* and at *every* step come up against those general problems *whether they realize it or not*. To come up against them blindly in every individual case means to doom one's politics to the *worst vacillations and lack of principles*.

"I repeat," Tormey writes later in the article, "the differences on China today including the nature of the Chinese Communist Party, the Maoist regime and what constitutes Stalinism are the same differences that manifested themselves at the Third World Congress in 1951. These questions *have never seriously* been discussed in the International and the only reason a discussion is on the agenda today is that the United Secretariat majority wouldn't let us smuggle in our line and rewrote the SWP's document." (Ibid., page 11, all emphasis mine—A. G.)

Tormey further pointed out, and quite correctly, the lack of a struggle on the part of the SWP against the "United" Secretariat's Maoist adaptationism, and the disastrous and unprincipled character of this course. Further on in the article we read Tormey's conclusion:

"Reunification took place in 1963 with two *divergent* positions on China. It is now 1969 and the positions have not been clarified. The SWP has not fought for its line inside the world movement, and we have compromised our theoretical position on China. The leadership has not carried out its responsibility to the rank and file of either the party or the International, especially to the Chinese section.

"The majority of the membership of the old International Secretariat as well as the new cadres of the Fourth International are not aware of the SWP position on China. (sic!) For us to pretend that the differences on China are new, or for us to continue to ignore them and compromise our position is *dishonest*. The SWP should present its real position and carry out an ideological discussion and struggle for principled positions. *Theoretical sloppiness and theoretical compromise take cruel revenge in revolution-*

*ary politics*. The United Secretariat Majority's compromising attitude toward the Maoist brand of Stalinism *places the International's very existence in question*. They have revised one of the basic pillars on which our movement rests, namely our analysis of Stalinism. With so much at stake any continuation of our compromising position can not only mean *disaster for the International*, but also for our party. *We must now proceed to launch a struggle to restore the basic tenets of Trotskyism to our movement*" (Ibid., page 14, all emphasis mine—A. G.)

There is little if anything in the above quotes which does not apply with as much force today to the IMT, the SWP, and most of all to the *Internationalist Tendency of which Comrade Tormey is a charter member!* One wonders then how is it that he is in the I. T., how it is that he feels comfortable there, but moreover how the I. T.ers feel comfortable with him there. The answer is as simple as it is contradictory. Most of the leadership and some of the ranks of the I. T. feel the same way. That is why there are no uncomfortable sensations there. In their attempt to gather theoretical weapons against the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction from the arsenal of the IMT, the I. T.ers had to leave behind in the quiver some of the shafts they had been toting around for some time which bore the destination tag "Mandel & Co."

There is virtually assured no possibility that the "United" Secretariat will unite around a position on China and Maoism. That means that there is to be "free will" for each section and sympathizing group to explain to their own countrymen what is Maoism and whether to fight it or support it. Newer members of the various sections will therefore be drawn in on the most unprincipled and variegated basis possible on the China question. To all of this the I. T. can say nothing. They are paralyzed by unreconcilable internal contradictions on Maoism, and exigencies of their camp-follower politics *vis-a-vis* the IMT seal their lips on this question and their doom in general. Tormey's conveniently forgotten words will be their epitaph: "Theoretical sloppiness and theoretical compromise take cruel revenge in revolutionary politics."

#### *Vietnam: Pabloist Methodology at Work or The Case of the Missing Vietnamese Trotskyists*

Like China—like Vietnam. Revisionism is rarely confined to one question. The reason is that while revisionism is *manifested* in a particular question as a wrong position, it flows from a *method*. It is the method of compromise, the taking of the line of least resistance, and rationalizing it all with impressionism—the viewing of the superficiality of the here and now rather than the essence of the historical. Because of the vagaries and vacillations built into the method of revisionism itself it is impossible to keep confined to any one question or area. Once again Comrade Tormey's words ring true: "The wise politician keeps ahead of events; the unwise is led by them." (Ibid., page 12.) The IMT has over the years acted as a left cover for Maoism and now they are doing the same for the Vietnamese Stalinist leadership—they are being led by events.

The codification of this revisionist gambit appears in the Sterne-Walter resolution on Vietnam (IIDB Vol. X, No. 6). According to the editorial note appearing on the top of page 21 over this resolution, the Sterne-Walter resolution was passed by the "United" Secretariat by a



vote of 18 for, 11 against and one abstention—i.e. by a nearly 2-to-1 ratio. This resolution will surely stand out in the history of the "United" Secretariat as the most servile obeisance of ostensible Trotskyists before Stalinism. This brief, 2 1/2-page article manages to analyze the Vietnamese revolution and never (with one exception noted below) even to use the word Stalinism. There is no historical review of the multitudinous sell-outs and betrayals by the Vietnamese Stalinists. Not one word about the slaughter of some thousands of Vietnamese Trotskyists by the Stalinists in 1945. There is not one word, one hint, one whisper about Ta Thu Tau, Nguyen Thi Thach and all the other martyrs of the Fourth International.

Instead these "Trotskyists" (one wonders how they feel comfortable with the name or for that matter why they even apply it to themselves) inform us, ". . . Further, if the Stalinist *training* of the Vietnamese CP leaders *implies* the *possibility* of *opportunist maneuvers*—which are reflected in the *public written* program of the NLF—the balance of the last *fifteen years* clearly demonstrates this party's *tenacious commitment* to the overthrow of the bourgeois state in South Vietnam." And some lines down further we read: "On the scene, this will involve action to strengthen the *independent* proletarian organization in Saigon, in which our movement *has* a real tradition." (All emphasis mine—A. G.) There isn't a Trotskyist alive, worthy of the name who can read such lies, falsifications, and sychophancy such as this and keep his or her temper!! Look at the list!

(1) "Stalinist training"—as opposed to what—Stalinist practice?? The VCP has been educated in Stalinism, don't you see, but they don't practice it. We are now back to the idealist and highly metaphysical dualism of theory and practice and of being and consciousness being thoroughly independent of one another. (2) "implies the possibility of opportunist maneuvers"—Not for one metaphysical minute! Stalinist practice (not "training," if you please) *necessitates* the *inevitability* of essentially counter-revolutionary policies and strategies (as opposed to the mere peccadilloes of "maneuvers"). We use such terms as "maneuvers" to describe the vacillations of centrists of various stripes. Stalinism, while it shows us vacillations from time to time, is a current in the workers movement which like the Bonapartism *sui generis* that it is, can be *forced on very special occasions* to overturn capitalist property relationships. These few instances and occasions, however, are far outweighed by the myriad of times that Stalinists have actively or passively aided counterrevolution; e.g., China 1925-27, Germany in the early 1930s, Greece 1945, France post-WWII, Indonesia 1965, etc., etc. ad infinitum, ad nauseum.

(3) "public written program"—as opposed to what—a secret oral program? Comrades of the IMT, have not Marxists, Leninists, Trotskyists always judged an ostensibly revolutionary party first and foremost by its "public" program? How is it possible to organize workers and peasants around a "secret" and unwritten program—by mental telepathy? Furthermore assuming for a minute (and I don't make this assumption for a second) that the Stalinist-practicing VCP has in the bowels of their unconsciousness the crude makings of a Trotskyist program, would not the day-to-day practice of Stalinist policies cancel out and reverse such mental reservations?? Or is it, comrades of the IMT, that in addition to sub-

verting the politics of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky, you are going to joust with Feuerbach's contention that being *determines* consciousness?

(4) "the balance of the last fifteen years clearly demonstrates this party's tenacious commitment to the overthrow of the bourgeois state in South Vietnam." How? By the publicly written assurances that the PRG doesn't want to set up a workers state? Is that tenacity? (It is, but in the opposite direction from the dream-fantasies of the IMT.) Or is it tenacity toward overthrowing the bourgeois state in South Vietnam when the written public program (as opposed to the mystical oral and secret program) which invites "large industrialists" to *collaborate* with them in making Vietnam "independent" (from whom, the Ostrogoths?)?

(5) ". . . independent proletarian organizations in Saigon in which our movement has a real tradition." *Had* a real tradition, comrades of the IMT, *HAD*. The Vietnamese Trotskyists were wiped out by the Stalinist-"trained" (they learned well didn't they?) Viet Minh under the control of the VCP. Where is this tradition *now*? With the Vietnamese Trotskyists gone, *who* carries out this "tradition"? Or can ideas continue to exist without people to think of them? Where is it manifested? How do you know it still exists? What independent proletarian organizations? Name them!! What kind of organizations? Trade unions, mutual aid societies, chess clubs, or what exactly? How can a proletarian organization be free of any political ideology at all? They must gravitate toward someone or something. Or is this *yet another* departure from materialism?

The list of venal revisionist deviations in the Sterne-Walter resolution on Vietnam could be expanded *ad nauseum*. The above five points prove and expound to satisfaction to any political agnostic that Pabloism is hardly a "dead horse" in the "United" Secretariat. It is, as I showed in my contribution to the August 1973 SWP convention, as a live bacteria carrying a deadly plague.

Turning our attention to the I. T. we see that they succumb to the same revisionist disease. The codification of their line was put forward in SWP DB Vol. 31, No. 18, which contained their counterresolution for the 1973 SWP convention. There we read, for example, "The call for non-intervention of U. S. imperialism had a *democratic content* for the United States, where it appealed to the isolationism of the masses and the pacifism of some layers. In the case of Vietnam, however, it had a *revolutionary content*" (page 17, my emphasis—A. G.). According to these Pabloists, democracy has no class content. Does this passage refer to bourgeois democracy, workers democracy, or just abstract democracy? The concluding sentence further obscures the issue: "In the case of Vietnam it had a revolutionary content." Presumably then an SWPer calling for "Bring the troops home now" is advocating a [ ] democratic line (fill in the blank with "bourgeois" or "proletarian" or "abstractly" or anything you wish for that matter) while a VCPer who says that is putting forth a revolutionary line. Senator Vance Hartke was advocating a [ ] democratic line by calling for immediate withdrawal of U. S. troops from Vietnam, and if he had gone to Vietnam he would have been magically transformed into a revolutionary just by uttering those words. How quaint!

As I pointed out in my earlier document on Pabloism liquidationism and historical determinism go hand in hand while revisionism (or trimming) trots behind merrily. If one believes that a successful revolution must inevitably occur what need is there for a party to give it the correct leadership? The result, liquidate the party. If one believes that a successful revolution can never occur then of course liquidate the revolutionary party. Both these opposite causes and identical effects are to be found historically woven in and around the politics of Pabloism. During the late 1940s and early 1950s the Pabloists (with the open political support of the SWP) pushed the line that the CPs throughout the world would be forced into "outlining a revolutionary orientation." (International Information Bulletin, January 1951.) On that basis they felt that there was no need for independent Trotskyist parties and thus felt that the Trotskyists should evaporate into the CPs (entrism *sui generis*) and act as a left pressure group helping them along the road to revolution. This form of determinism was preceded by the Mandel-Pablo view that the only way revolution would take place was by the march of the Soviet Army, i.e., a variant on the theme of the impossibility of the success of revolution. Revisionist determinism on the one hand, and theoretical imprecision on the other hand have become the stock-in-trade of the Pabloists.

It is in this historical light that it is highly instructive to read the following from the same I. T. counterresolution: "The possibility of a peacefully received liquidation of revolutionary forces under a coalition government is ruled out by the *existence* of the armed units of the NLF-DRV." So the VCP and its creatures are "revolutionary forces"!! Comrade Tormey, is this not a case where they "have revised one of the basic pillars on which our movement rests, namely our analysis of Stalinism"? It is no doubt a close race in judging which is shorter, a political memory or a literary one! But an even more glaring (if this is possible) piece of revisionism floats to the surface in the above statement. What is directly implied—nay, actually propounded—is that military consideration stand above politics. That is the *only* meaning that can be ascribed to the concept of the sheer existence of armies guaranteeing the revolutionary dynamic (and Stalinist armies at that!!). Did the mere existence of the Soviet Army in northern Iran post-World War II assure that a revolution would take place? Did the existence and control by the Soviet Army of Austria during the same period assure that a revolution would be successful? Did the existence of CP-controlled armies in Spain during the Civil War (1936-1939) assure that a workers state would be set up? Did the mere existence of a 40,000-man workers militia under the control of the *left-centrist* P. O. U. M. (as opposed to the essentially counterrevolutionary CP) assure the success of the Spanish revolution? Two questions, comrades of the I. T.: Do military considerations control the political strategies of the Stalinists (or anyone else for that matter)? Or vice versa? And secondly: Are not Stalinist dominated armies liable to follow the essentially *counterrevolutionary* political line of Stalinism? (Perhaps Stalinism ceases to be an essentially counterrevolutionary movement the moment it controls an army? Another revision!)

The word "peaceful" in the above I. T. quote will offer them no escape from this trap. Stalinists have surrendered

many times in a peaceful (coexistence) way. Thus for example we have the twin tragedies of the 1925-1927 Chinese revolution, and Hitler's coming to power in 1933. These are both examples of a "peacefully received liquidation of revolutionary forces." And if these examples seem too archaic, how about the pacifist surrender of the CP in Chile that happened this year?? Or are all the examples and historical cases quoted in these last two paragraphs the "exceptions" with Vietnam being the rule?

The "theoretical compromise and theoretical sloppiness" (to borrow again from the eloquent and once astute Comrade Tormey) of the I. T. pave the way for swallowing the Sterne-Walter line on Vietnam in one gulp. Thus we read in that same I. T. counterresolution: "Finally it is obvious (sic!!) that the NLF and PRG are popular fronts only on paper." How devastatingly metaphysical! Pop-frontism is a form of class collaboration and class betrayal. But since the NLF and PRG are pop-fronts only on paper, they betray the workers only on paper, and they collaborate with American imperialism only on paper. Perhaps they are only Stalinists on paper?! Stalin himself once noted that "Paper will put up with anything that is written on it." He should know, and so should the Pabloists.

If this were not enough, the I. T. comrades continue in their counterresolution with, "The reality of the situation is that they (NLF-PRG—A. G.) represent working class forces and revolutionary peasantry whose continuity with the Viet Minh as it emerged out of the August 1945 revolution and whose relationship with the DRV need not be demonstrated." Just so, comrades of the I. T., just so! And furthermore it was precisely the Stalinist controlled Viet Minh which wiped out the Vietnamese Trotskyists because the latter opposed attempts by the former to peacefully liquidate the revolutionary forces in the face of British and French imperialism. The I. T. has just put the last revisionist nail in their liquidationist coffin. (All quotes from the I. T. are from the above quoted SWP DB on page 17. All emphasis mine—A. G.)

The leadership of the SWP have little to crow about in *their* position on the Vietnamese revolution. The SWP's ten-year participation in the U.S. antiwar movement proved (with one exception noted below) completely barren of even a quasi-Trotskyist analysis of the VCP, the DRV and the NLF. For the entire length of its participation in the antiwar movement, the SWP has refused on the one hand to label as Stalinist the leadership of the Vietnamese revolution, and on the other hand to call for the formation of a workers state in Vietnam. The sole content of the antiwar line was limited to "Bring The Boys Home Now!" which it was implied would give self-determination to Vietnam and which in the depths of the subterranean subconsciousness of a few SWPers (never expressed publicly) might even lead to a workers state. By failing to call the leadership of the VCP Stalinists, and therefore failing to draw the correction conclusions therefrom, the SWP could in no shape, manner or form counterpose the Trotskyist line on Vietnam to the Stalinist one, in particular the Maoist line. Thus most radicals, militants, and subjective revolutionaries who wanted to advance beyond pacifism, and even the vaguely social-pacifism of the SWP, were inexorably drawn into the camps of the various Maoist currents. This is precisely what the SWP leadership desired. It did not want to "recruit ultralefts." It preferred instead to orient toward the right

wing of the antiwar movement, from the semi-professional pacifists and fellow-travellers of the Ruth Gage-Colby stripe on upward (or downward, depending on one's perspective) to the out-and-out professional agents of the bourgeoisie such as Dellums and Hartke.

From conveniently overlooking the longstanding Stalinist practices of the VCP (as opposed to their "Stalinist training" no doubt), the leadership of the SWP took to directly apologizing for the failure of the Vietnamese revolution by placing *all* the blame on the Soviet Union and China. Thus we read for example: "We must also explain how the bureaucracies in *Moscow* and *Peking* betrayed the Vietnamese revolution, that *they* in no way represent the traditions of the Marxist movement in fighting for the interests of the oppressed and exploited. What conclusions do we draw from our general assessment of the world situation? The nine-point plan *presently* hanging over the heads of the Vietnamese represents an *obstacle* to the Vietnamese revolution. However *this betrayal by Moscow and Peking* is more than just another sellout. Vietnam has been the center of the world revolution, and as the effect of this sellout begins to register over the next few weeks and months, its magnitude will become apparent. It will have a demoralizing effect on the world revolution." ("Vietnam and World Politics Today," by Geoff Mirelowitz, *The Militant*, December 22, 1972 page 11. All emphasis mine—A. G.)

The line of the above article is simple enough. It is Moscow's and Peking's fault that the Vietnamese revolution failed. It is in no way even implied that the VCP has even one iota of responsibility for this sellout. In fact, it is not even implied, much less said, that the VCP is Stalinist. It is Moscow and Peking alone who no longer represent Marxist traditions. When put that way in an article on Vietnam without any qualifications, the meaning is clear: the VCP does represent the Marxist traditions!! Any Trotskyist conclusions from this article regarding the Stalinism and the Stalinist betrayals by *Hanoi* and the *NLF-PRG* (of which the VCP is the controlling factor bar none) could only be achieved by reading Mirelowitz's mind and that, assuming that he had some Trotskyist conclusions there in the first place.

The impressionistic method in analyzing Vietnam on the part of the SWP leadership runs along the same track as the IMT Pabloists, although as I pointed out in my earlier contribution the SWP is decidedly not Pabloist. Mirelowitz talks of the nine-point plan *presently* hanging over the heads of the Vietnamese. Sterne-Walter talk of the *last fifteen years* of the Vietnamese revolution. Just as the IMT conveniently forgets all that has preceded these magical fifteen years (and much that has happened within them as well) so too Mirelowitz treats the nine-point program as if it were something new. *The essence of the nine-point program has ALWAYS been the line of the Vietnamese Stalinists!* These strategies have been used by the Stalinists ever since Stalinism has emerged as the dominant trend in the workers movement. It is because they wanted the equivalent of the nine-point program back in 1945 that the Vietnamese Stalinists wiped out, slaughtered and butchered, and murdered some thousands of Vietnamese Trotskyists. By Mirelowitz pretending that the nine-point program is new, and by the IMT not looking back further than those magical fifteen years, both sides in the current dispute have in fact given a

left cover to Stalinism of the Vietnamese variety.

I have noted above that there has been one exception to the lack of an attempt at a Trotskyist analysis of the VCP by the SWP. That exception was the article that appeared in the July-August 1973 *ISR*. This article provides a service to those who are interested in the relatively unknown history of the Vietnamese Trotskyists. However, this one article written *after* the antiwar movement has folded up, in no way cancels out the salient omission of the SWP's lack of Trotskyist assessment of the Stalinist VCP during the many years of the antiwar movement. For the last ten years the SWP has hidden this history of the Vietnamese Trotskyists from its own ranks as well as the ranks of the antiwar movement. This was done by the SWP leadership in the most conscious way in order to facilitate the cozying up to the bourgeois politicians and reformists of various stripes from Hartke to the CP, from the professional pacifists and fellow-travellers to the pseudo-revolutionary Black Panthers. The SWP leadership could not publish such a history then because such elements would not be interested (to say the least) in finding out that in fact the VCP-NLF-PRG are far from being real revolutionaries. These martyrs of the Fourth International stayed buried in unmarked graves to facilitate the *realpolitik* of the SWP leadership. The publishing of this article *ex post facto* in no way can undo the immense harm that was done by the SWP leadership's refusal all these years to polemicize in a Trotskyist way against the Maoists who were using the various military successes of the VCP in order to bolster the politics of Maoism, guerrillaism, "Third Worldism," etc. The SWP which bragged about being the leadership of the left-wing of the antiwar movement must bear full responsibility for their miseducation of radicals, militants, and subjective revolutionaries over the nature of proletarian revolutionary politics in the "Third World." In short this article is much too little and far too late.

But even the political conclusions of this article are suspect, to say the least. Thus after the whole article sets out to prove that the VCP is Stalinist and therefore class collaborationist and essentially counterrevolutionary, we read the following: "Secondly, we must expose the role of *Moscow and Peking*, which have once again put maximum pressure on the Vietnamese leaders to give ground or face the danger of confronting U. S. imperialism alone." (*ISR*, July-August 1973, page 89, my emphasis—A. G.) This formulation directly suggests that it is the politics of Moscow and Peking *alone* which have sold out the Vietnamese revolution. Presumably, if Moscow and Peking left Hanoi alone, the latter would pursue a revolutionary line. No one denies that Moscow and Peking have pressured Hanoi in their own invidious ways and for their own nationalistic ends. The point is, however, what role do the politics of Hanoi, as expressed in their program, play in all of this? The authors of this article would deny of course that they were exonerating the Stalinism of Hanoi at the expense of Moscow and Peking's Stalinism, yet as neither is a political novice such protestations would mean little. And they would mean even less when one considers that this article was written on behalf of the SWP as a polemic against the IMT. This sentence which appears in the *conclusions* of this major polemical work gives the whole game away. Old politics die hard, especially when they are rotten.

"United" Secretariat. All these factors minus the murder of leadership apply to the SWP.

C. This opportunism manifested itself first in the FI's mechanical and tailist approach to Eastern Europe as a whole, then as uncritical panegyrics to Tito's maverick Stalinism which was thought to be either unconscious Trotskyism or left-centrism, and finally as unabashed kowtowing before Maoism as a Leninist current. (Mandel had held for example that it would be counterrevolutionary for Trotskyists to call for political revolution in China.)

D. This revisionist approach reached its high point in the liquidationist notion of entrism *sui generis* which in simple language meant that Trotskyists had no independent role to play. They simply existed to exert left-wing pressure on the Stalinist parties the world over to make revolutions. This was rationalized by the Pabloists holding that the CPs are "not exactly reformist parties." ("Thesis on International Perspectives and the Orientation of the FI," International Information Bulletin, January 1951.) The SWP went along with these notions and even supported the entrism *sui generis* resolutions of the Third World Congress of the FI in 1951. However when Pablo began establishing relations with the Cochran-Clarke grouping in the SWP which had taken Pabloism as good coin because the leadership of the SWP had done the same, then the leadership of the SWP reacted as though their political fiefdom had been trespassed upon. They promptly rediscovered Trotskyist orthodoxy, dusted it off, beat the Pabloists over the head with it, and split to form the stillborn International Committee.

E. The I.C. fared no better at spreading Trotskyism than did the International Secretariat. It held no international congresses and issued only six internal bulletins in its decade of dynamic stagnation. In short it was a miserable failure. The same forces that had caused the FI to politically disintegrate worked on the I.C. with an inexorable vengeance. By 1963 the I.C. was willing to be just as revisionist as the L.S. The victory of the Cuban revolution was the shotgun that wedded the two in an opportunist marriage. Agreeing not to discuss the differences that had caused and perpetuated the split, the new "United" Secretariat had, like the French Bourbons, learned nothing and forgotten nothing. They had learned nothing about the building of a truly revolutionary international, about applying Marxism to a new phenomenon creatively and in a principled manner; and they forgot nothing in the way of a thoroughly opportunist approach to political reality.

F. The rightward-moving momentum of the SWP which reunited it with the L.S. in 1963 has not ceased its nefarious course. The present conjuncture of events finds the SWP and its international factional-cliquist allies to the right of the "United" Secretariat Pabloist majority. Thus the contradictory attempts of the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction to attack the Pabloists verbally from the left ("orthodoxy") and in practices from the right (petty-bourgeois reformist political approach to major questions) tend on the one hand to fall on deaf ears among the rank-and-file Pabloist-led sections in Europe, and are certain at some point to cause internal difficulties for the "LT" F.

This in streamlined form was the analysis I put forward in my earlier article, "A Spectacle is Haunting the International; The Origins and Consequences of Pabloism."

In this article I will review and analyze some of the consequences of Pabloism as they have manifested themselves on three questions: China, Vietnam, and the call for a democratic-centralist International. Before doing that, however, it is necessary that we review in brief the development of the Internationalist Tendency.

#### *The P.O.T. Discovers Pabloism: The Long March Backward*

The politics of the International Majority Tendency (IMT) Pabloists are easier to study in practice since in the SWP there are available for inspection some home-grown Pabloists. While the ranks of this left-wing opposition have had an extremely large turnover from the time of the formation of its parent group the Proletarian Orientation Tendency (P.O.T.), the Internationalist Tendency (which by all criteria should have gone from being an unprincipled tendency to an unprincipled faction) leadership layer has survived nearly intact from its POT days.

The POT emerged for the 1971 SWP convention as the first left-wing opposition since the expulsion of the Revolutionary Tendency (which later became the Spartacist League) some eight years before. This eight-year period saw the rapid and extreme rightward movement of the SWP most notably in the antiwar movement and in the "Trotskyist" apologies for Cuban Stalinism, as well as the tailing of the Black nationalist movement, and the adoption of feminism which the Third Congress of the Communist International unceremoniously labelled as *bourgeois*. ("Theses on Ways and Means of Work Among Women of the Communist Party.") Since there was no organized left-wing opposition during those eight years, the POT had very little historically to build its opposition upon. Thus the POT found itself theoretically disarmed in the face of the SWP's version of Trotskyism, which if nothing else had the opportunity during those eight years to polish up its rationalizations for revising Marxism.

Be that as it may, the ranks and leadership of the POT instinctively knew that a working-class party had to have some connection with the working class. This position was without a doubt one step forward from the political level of the SWP at the time. However the lack of any other recent left-wing opposition in the SWP preceding it caused this development in what could have been a revolutionary direction to be stunted at the level of workerism. Boldly taking a giant step forward with its *left* foot, the POT looked timidly over its *right* shoulder at the leadership and ranks of the SWP and decided that a step to the rear was in order. Thus the tendency call for the POT stated: "In declaring ourselves a tendency we wish to make one thing *very clear*: our documents *clearly support* the positions taken by the SWP on the developing movements . . ." (SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 29, No. 16, July 1971, page 16, my emphasis—A.G.). Thus the POT found itself in an untenable position. It sought to attack the SWP from the left in the form of workerism yet attempted to keep pace with the right-wing positions of the SWP in the petty-bourgeois reformist movements. This contradiction combined with the Stalinist-like organizational practices of the SWP leadership in denying the POT its rightful share of delegates at the 1971 SWP convention, denying them their share of representatives on the National Com-

mittee, expelling ("graduating" as it was euphemistically called) them from the YSA by lowering the age limit, depriving them of major assignments and local posts of leadership, served to drive many POTers out of the SWP—the very thing that the SWP leadership wanted.

The majority of the leadership layer of the POT remained, however, intact with the notable exception of the Gregorichites who left the SWP with their tails between their legs to form the Class Struggle League which if their fairy-tale dreams come true will become the core of what in name will be the "Fifth International" and in deeds will be the Two-and-Three-Quarters International. The ensuing political and organizational isolation which descended upon the POT thanks to the maneuverings of the SWP leadership forced the POT to seek new paths to revolution. The lack of even a tangentially precursory left opposition in the SWP left the remnants of the POT with a lack of self-history (to this day the I. T. won't trace its origins to the POT), a paucity of theoretical weapons, and a plethora of collective self-doubt. Simple workerism had organized them, while lowest-common-denominator politics paved the way for their organizational decimation by the anti-Leninist leadership of the SWP. A new approach was called for.

About a year and a half after the 1971 SWP convention various members of the officially dissolved POT began to consider the idea of becoming supporters of what was to become the IMT. This idea gained a rapid foothold, although not without a modicum of opposition from the ranks of the dissolved POT. For years various members of the SWP who later became members of the POT, had been secretly grumbling over the revisionism of the then United Secretariat. Airy allusions were made to "Pabloism" although no analysis (with one exception noted below) was forthcoming. It was felt that Mandel & Co. were "soft" on Maoism, Vietnamese Stalinism, and of course guerrilla warfare. However all these archaic arthritic political pains were now (i.e., late 1972-early 1973) soothed with the salve of knowing that support for the IMT would result at least in a new theoretical arsenal with which to attack the SWP leadership from the left; and in the final analysis might even lead to the establishment of a section in the USA under I. T. leadership when the IMT would expel or force out the right-wing oriented SWP from the "United" Secretariat. (Neither the POT nor the I. T. has ever characterized the SWP in one of the three classic categories: centrist, reformist, or revolutionary. A careful reading of I. T. resolutions and articles from the Aug. 1973 SWP convention will prove this. The SWP is called "minimalist," "petty-bourgeois," "adaptationist," "tailist," etc., etc., but never centrist or reformist. The I. T. can in no way claim that it holds the SWP to be revolutionary as it aspires to counterpose the Pabloist positions of the IMT in their entirety to the whole SWP program. Anyone who challenges a party on every major issue cannot hold that such a party is revolutionary. Yet the I. T. won't label the SWP with one of the two remaining categories!! This metaphysical and anti-scientific approach is not limited to the I. T. It is practiced just as consistently by the SWP and its flea-circus which goes by the name "Leninist Trotskyist" Faction. The very name gives the game away. If one feels the need to have a Leninist-Trotskyist opposition in an International, we would assume that the mem-

bers of this opposition no longer regard the International as Leninist or Trotskyist. That being the case, the International in question must be either reformist or centrist—unless one can be a revolutionary and an anti-Trotskyist at the same time!! Yet the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction refuses to classify *its* adversaries in the "United" Secretariat as either reformist or centrist. Thus we see that the I. T. stands in the finest tradition of Menshevik obscurantism and petty-bourgeois vagaries!!)

### *China, A Fundamental Difference? China, A Fundamental Difference!!*

One of the key questions that had plagued the I.S. and has continued to afflict the "United" Secretariat is the question of China: Is it a healthy or an unhealthy workers state (the SWP did not officially call China a workers state until 1955); is Maoism a Stalinist or a left-centrist current; and flowing from this do we call for political revolution in China or put our faith in some type of "self-reform"?

Mao's armies marched into Peking on October 1, 1949, i.e., 24 years ago. Maoism as a distinct current in the Stalinist movement dates at least from the defeat of the Chinese Revolution in 1927, i.e., some 46 years ago. Yet in all this time of Maoism being a current in the Stalinist movement and a holder of state power to boot, the IMT cannot analyze Maoism and the Chinese state. As noted above, Mandel held the position in the early 1950s that to call for political revolution in China would be *counterrevolutionary*. Here we are some 46 years after Maoism shaped up as a current and nearly a quarter of a century after it has taken state power, yet the so-called Fourth International can't take a position on this phenomenon. This, of course, was one of the questions that the SWP and the I.S. agreed not to discuss when engaging in the "principled" reunification of 1963. But it is precisely because the two camps would not discuss China in 1963 that the China question has festered and reappeared as a cancerous wound in 1973.

One would think that it was about time that the "United" Secretariat which aspires to be the International and give leadership to the working class of the world could analyze Maoism (and concurrent phenomena), come to a unified and principled position, and operate in the workers movement on the basis of that position. Not at the upcoming world congress! Just as the SWP and the Pabloists agreed not to discuss China as a basis for reunification, so too they have agreed at this juncture not to come to a vote on the nature of Maoism in the hopes of keeping intact the opportunist glue that holds empirically "United" Secretariat together. Thus we read in "Recommendations to the Delegates of the Coming World Congress: Adopted unaminously by the United Secretariat September 19, 1973" (IIDB Vol. X, No. 13, page 15), the following: "7. That the following points be considered in commissions or panels at the coming world congress: (a) the 'cultural revolution' and China; (b) youth radicalization; (c) women's liberation; (d) Middle East; (e) Vietnam; (f) Eastern Europe. 8. That votes on these topics not be taken at the coming world congress."

Since we are told at the head of the "Recommendations . . ." that they were adopted *unanimously* by the "United" Secretariat, we are forced to assume that they were sup-

A few lines later we learn, ". . . we Trotskyists never strayed from the position that the antiwar movement must include everyone who is against the war." This categorical "everyone" included the conscious agents of American imperialism who spoke at the peace rallies, such jewels as Senator Hartke, Mayor Lindsay, Alard Lowenstein, Bella Abzug, Allan Cranston and other assorted riff-raff. Thus on the one hand while miseducating the militants, radicals, and would-be revolutionaries in the antiwar movement about the Stalinist nature of the VCP, the SWP also helped spread the myth that at least some sections of the bourgeoisie could be counted upon in the struggle against imperialism in Southeast Asia. Giving the bourgeoisie this left cover proved to be an invaluable gratuity for their efforts in diffusing the antiwar movement's vaguely anti-capitalist sentiments back into the "liberal" wing of the Democratic Party. This position has been codified and sanctified in this polemic against the IMT Pabloists. It is instructive, in this regard, to read the following from Trotsky. It was written in 1935 in his analysis of the S. A. P. It appears at the conclusion of the article where Trotsky lists 13 reasons why the S. A. P. was not revolutionary. "11. In the burning question of war it has completely substituted pacifism for Leninism." (*Writings 1934-1935*, page 285.) While analogies are dangerous, they are also instructive.

The third major error in this article is that there are no conclusions drawn as to the need or even desirability of political revolution in North Vietnam against the Stalinist regime. There is no point made that should the VCP ever assume state power in South Vietnam the first duty of Trotskyists would be to overthrow the Stalinist regimes in both halves of the country. This article, after making the list of the crimes of the Stalinists in Vietnam draws no conclusion on this score. We have the overture but no opera, the table of contents but no book. What should the role of Trotskyists be toward Vietnam? Do we call for political revolution? (This article does not.) Would the "United" Secretariat have a section in Vietnam if the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction were in the driver's seat? We must assume not. Perhaps the SWP has a more "realistic" goal in mind, the establishing of a section in Saigon where according to the overwhelming majority of the "United" Secretariat, as expressed so eloquently and assuredly by the Sterne-Walter resolution "where our movement *has* a real tradition"? Just what is the point of proving at the beginning of the article that the VCP is Stalinist, and then in the conclusion singing the old tune, "Moscow and Peking have sold it out"? And then to fortify this conclusion by expressly not calling for political revolution?

In this we see the real purpose of the article. It is not for good education but for bad polemics that this article was written. Once again the SWP has taken fake Trotskyist "orthodoxy" out of the closet, this time in order to line up its faction-clique friends against the IMT. And this time the "orthodoxy" has to be even more reduced and cut up than before as regards Vietnamese Stalinism. Evidently Moreno & Co. (the "ex"-Maoists, the "ex"-Castroites, the "ex"-guerrillaists and the *ex-Trotskyists*) do not wish to see a political revolution against the "revolutionary" VCP. Thus the big artillery that the SWP lined up against the IMT could do no better than fire a few blanks which will give the gunners not a few powder burns. It could

hardly have been otherwise. The SWP is on a very short leash when it comes to attacking the IMT. And the leash is made all the shorter by the non-Trotskyist politics of the SWP on the one hand and the non-Trotskyist politics of its factional-clique friends on the other.

### *The Fraud of "Democratic-Centralism" or The "Heads I Win, Tails You Lose" School of Politics*

Point nine of the platform of the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction states: "For observance of democratic centralism in the FI as provided by the statutes." (IIDB Vol. X, No. 15, page 11.) These seemingly innocuous fourteen words contain nothing less than a complete about-face for the SWP line toward the FI and the "United" Secretariat that spanned some three decades. In my earlier article I pointed out how Cannon and the SWP leadership in general were vehemently opposed to international democratic centralism. Cannon even numbered this as one of the major questions that had secretly divided the Pabloists (pro-democratic centralism) from the SWP (anti-democratic centralism). Cannon even referred to democratic centralism pejoratively by calling it "Cominternism." He held that "'Cominternism' . . . will only end up weakening. . . authority and creating disruption." Cannon built the thesis for a non-democratic-centralist FI on the lack of any leaders who were as prestigious and as morally authoritative as Lenin and Trotsky. ("Internationalism and the SWP," in *Speeches to the Party*.)

Now after some thirty years the SWP is calling for democratic centralism. One has the right, indeed the obligation, to look askance at this *volte-face*, because it comes from a party which has picked up the trappings and methodology of reformism, and because no *real* explanation is forthcoming as to why this 180 degree is taking place after so long a period. Indeed, the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction would have us think that it was always in the back of their minds. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The SWP never wanted a democratic centralist FI after Trotsky's death because it conceived that situation as one in which the SWP would be taking orders from "masters and popes." (Cannon, *ibid.*) The SWP has always wanted a free hand in international affairs. Thus for example it felt perfectly free to publicly attack another section of the "Sallustro Affair." Even as far back as 1953 the SWP had no regard for democratic centralism in the I. S. It simply announced its break with Pabloism by a public attack on it in *The Militant* and the *Fourth International* (predecessor to the *ISR*) with very little internal debate in the I. S. beforehand.

If the SWP were interested in becoming the disciplined member of a disciplined international body, it would have fought against the Voorhis Act with the same gusto it fought in the Kutcher case. But in fact during all these years right up to the present, the SWP has steadfastly refused to fight the Voorhis Act or even to consider the possibility. One wonders at this "inconsistency" in a party that glorifies, extols, lauds, worships, and apotheosizes the fight for bourgeois democratic rights as the road to socialism, and yet refuses to fight for this version of freedom of assembly.

It would be of no use to argue that all that has been noted above was true for years ago, while the times have

changed and with them the position of the SWP on international democratic centralism. This anti-democratic-centralist position was put forward by none less than Comrade Tom Kerry at the preconvention discussion for the August 1973 SWP convention. Thus did Kerry threaten the IMT by way of the I. T.: "I would suggest to Massey-Barzman and Company that they read the Cannon speech on internationalism, with special attention to that section dealing with Cominternism. There will be no Cominternism in the Fourth International, if we have anything to say about it—and I think we will! No unidentified 'higher bodies' are going to usurp the authority of the regularly elected leadership of the SWP. If Massey-Barzman have any delusions on that score, they are due for a rude awakening."

Later on we are treated to, "Others before Massey-Barzman thought there were 'higher bodies' than the regularly elected political units of the party to whom they could appeal to sanction their disruptive violations of established party rules as procedures as codified and set down in our documents on organizational principles and practices. They learned to their misfortune that they weremistaken."

And in case there are still any agnostics left in the audience, Kerry spelled it out clearly in the concluding paragraph. "After full and free discussion the ranks of the party will meet in convention and make their decisions. It is they who have the last word. *The convention of the party, that's our highest body.* And the Massey-Barzman-Levitt cliques had better heed its word!" (SWP DB Vol. 31, No. 27, July 1973, page 42, my emphasis—A. G.)

Could anything be clearer? If the highest body in the world is the convention of the SWP, how can this same SWP be part of a democratic-centralist world movement in which the highest body would have to be the world congress? But to be fair, this was written in July and now it is November. A party should certainly be able to change its mind over the period of a few months, even if it means changing an opinion of some thirty-years standing. Did not the I. T. change their position from anti-guerrillaism to pro-guerrillaism in the space of a few months, much to the guffaws of the SWP majority? (Comrade Kerry's included as we note on page 41 of his above-quoted contribution.) If then, the SWP has radically changed its mind, and the mind of the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction whom it leads around by the nose, we shall reserve judgment on Comrade Kerry's anti-internationalist ravings and wait for the "regularly elected leadership" to call him to order and have him publish either a retraction or an explanation for this splendiferous metamorphosis on the part of the SWP. I fear however that we shall wait forever for such a momentous event.

In fact, the present self-righteous protestations of the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction whose puppeteer is the SWP, are conscious hypocrisy. For the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction knows full well that democratic centralism presupposes basic agreement on the major political questions. But the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction has gone on record as opposing a vote on the major political questions facing the "United" Secretariat as outlined in the "Recommendations. . . ." Thus the concomitant demand for a democratic-centralist "United" Secretariat can only be regarded as the most crass cynicism. The two positions are mutually exclusive.

If the demand for democratic centralism on the part of

the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction is unserious then the question is why is it that they are making such a demand at this point? In point of fact it is a crude and transparently unprincipled factional maneuver. Like Vietnamese Stalinism—like democratic-centralist "United" Secretariat. The SWP is dragging in its fake Trotskyist "orthodoxy" out of the closet in order to have a better club to beat the IMT over the head with. It is posing as the most Leninist in order to bolster its weak and variegated allies on the one hand, and to lure support away from the IMT on the other.

The unprincipledness of this maneuver lies in the following. The SWP has not the slightest intention of bowing to "masters and popes" or "higher bodies" that democratic centralism would require it to do. If the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction would come out as the majority tendency after the next world congress (a total impossibility which the leadership of the SWP, Milt Alvin included, now understands), it would use its version of democratic centralism to drive out of the "United" Secretariat all left-wing oppositionists along the same route it has done among its own ranks in the USA. But the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction will not get a majority or anything like it at the next world congress. Thus it will argue, "We can't have democratic centralism even though we would like to. The ranks in the world movement are too divided to impose democratic centralism." The SWP then will use the call for democratic centralism to line up its sagging allies before the world congress, and abandon it after the world congress. That the SWP will use this argument is more than amply indicated in the "Recommendations . . ." in which, as was pointed out, a whole series of questions: China, Vietnam, Middle East, youth radicalization, etc., will not be voted upon because there is not now and not likely ever to be unity on these questions in the "United" Secretariat sections. The SWP and the IMT know that these questions can't be solved without a principled discussion, and this will not take place. The SWP is calling for democratic centralism in the "United" Secretariat knowing that democratic centralism is impossible without basic political agreement, and that the SWP in particular would not abide by it because of the pretext of the Voorhis Act. That is unprincipled politics. That is the road to split.

#### *Pabloism Unfolds and the "United" Secretariat Folds: The Logical Outcome of Unprincipled Politics*

The coming world congress will solve none of the old problems of the "United" Secretariat. On the contrary it will sharpen them, exacerbate them, and bring them into striking bas-relief against the background of the now more than ever crucial need for international revolutionary disciplined leadership of the proletariat. Contradictorily, while sharpening these old problems and disagreements, the world congress and the discussion preceding it will not impel the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction or the IMT onto the road of Trotskyism. The coming explosion will generate much heat and very little light—but just enough for some shadow boxing.

The leadership of the IMT feels that it has the requisite rhetoric to outflank the SWP to the left. Moreover it is banking on its having such an overwhelming number of supporters the world over as to give the SWP and its allies second thoughts before splitting. Rhetoric and numbers are the artillery and the infantry that the IMT will hurl

against the archipelago of SWP allies, not in order to crush it but to capture it. At the same time that it holds out the stick of shadow boxing polemics it will offer the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction the carrot of compromise. This is the meaning of the "Recommendations . . ."—to discuss China and Chinese Stalinism for yet another quarter of a century without coming to a vote—to discuss Vietnamese Stalinism and Vietnam for another decade or so without coming to a vote, etc., etc. Perhaps during the halcyon days of world communism and universal classless society, we will be able to count on Mandel and Co. for a position both firm and principled on these and other crushing questions, if the lack of answers in the meantime doesn't crush us first. I wrote in my other contribution on Pabloism: "For its part, the historical momentum of the United Secretariat majority will give it impetus to conclude one rotten deal after another with the 'Leninist-Trotskyist' Tendency in the vain hope of averting a split on the one hand and avoiding principled political discussion on the other." (SWP D.B. Vol. 31, No. 30, page 48, July 1973.) The assertion in the probably purloined Barzman Letter about Mandel having a "psychological block (sic!) against split" on the one hand, and the timid, perfidious, horsetrading and unprincipled "conciliations" outlined in the "Recommendations . . ." on the other, have not forced me to modify that projection in the least.

The "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction is not in an advantageous position *vis-a-vis* the IMT. Smaller in number by far than the IMT and saddled with the reformist politics of the SWP which clash with its superficial "orthodoxy," the allied clique-factionalists of the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction became dizzy with fear and remorse having gazed into the abyss of split. Their attempts at reversing themselves, at what appeared to them as the eleventh hour, has resulted in their greedily settling for the "Recommendations . . ." in order to cool the explosion on the one hand, and to allow them a breathing space for recruiting more cliquists on the other hand. In point of fact this is just a detour before the SWP of the USA and the SWP of Argentina, etc., free themselves from the encumbrance of an international centrist body which militates in the mildest way possible against the *pure* reformist electoralism (and associated ventures) that they would like to practice.

The two pro-IMT minorities in the SWP will mirror in their own unique way the coming split in the barely "United" Secretariat. The West Coast grouping (Levitt-Wald) will surrender to the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction those elements which do not drop out of politics all together. They are extremely conservative, and positively stodgy for a group that wants to play the role of left opposition. Their desertion of the centrist IMT will make Dave Keil's defection from the POT look like a case of flaming ultraleftism.

The Massey grouping which will not reveal its differences with the IMT for fear of giving the SWP some ammunition (this is principled politics, if you please!!) is in the most tenuous of situations. If they do not leave the SWP they will be expelled. Of this there can be no doubt. When a leadership figure like Barry Sheppard calls them "Thermidor" (SWP DB Vol. 31, No. 27, page 57), he gives away the SWP game plan for the I.T. The

leadership of the SWP (and therefore of the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction) regards the I.T. (and wrongly so) as political counterrevolutionaries. This is the *only* historical meaning of the term as it applied to the French revolution and as Trotsky used it to describe the degeneration of the Russian revolution. This can only mean expulsion. On the other hand, if the I.T. splits from the SWP they will face two additional problems. First their extreme heterogeneity will cause them to mini-explode in nearly all directions, from Maoism to state-capitalism. Secondly, their almost mystical belief in the idea that they will receive the Mandelian Mandate to become the new IMT section in the USA will be subject to a rude awakening when they discover that Mandel has more than a *psychological* block against split, upon which the Mandate would have to be based and which in turn would perpetuate the split. The two rivets which hold them together, their opposition to the SWP leadership, and their chiliastic yearning for the messianic Mandelian Mandate, will prove to be made of quicksilver. Their position is tenuous. If they stay in the SWP they will lose members from the war of organizational attrition that the SWP will wage against them prior to expulsion. If they split (or when they are expelled for that matter) they will be abandoned by Mandel as well as some of their closest European allies and their heterogeneity will explode in their faces. Like Mohammed they are suspended between heaven and hell. Unlike Mohammed they can't figure out which is which.

#### *For the Rebuilding and Rebirth of the Fourth International on Trotskyist Politics!*

The coming world congress will be the continuing saga of the death of the remnants of the corpse of the Fourth International. The "United" Secretariat does not deserve the name Fourth International. It is governed by Pabloist (revisionism, liquidationism and *centrism sui generis*) and not Trotskyist politics. It is not even an "International" in the abstract. The body as a whole (I use the term at this juncture in the most relative sense) has no position on whether Maoism is Stalinism, whether China is a healthy or deformed workers state, whether the VCP is Stalinist, whether Vietnam is a healthy workers state or a deformed one or not. It is irreconcilably divided on these and a legion of other questions that need firm principled answers in order to give leadership to the international proletariat. It has as much hope for becoming the democratic-centralist party of world revolution with this wishy-washy indecision, perfidiously unprincipled politics, adventurist appetites, and theoretical poverty as an alchemist does for changing lead into gold by means of incantations and magic potions.

#### *Return to the Road of Trotskyism!!*

This does not mean that various elements, layers, and groupings inside of the "United" Secretariat cannot come to Trotskyist conclusions on the major questions of our epoch. What is needed is a return in theory as well as practice, to a clear and *firm* understanding of the essentially counterrevolutionary nature of Stalinism in all its variants, in China, in Vietnam, in Cuba, etc. Flowing from this there must be a clean break with youth vanguardism (practiced by *both* the IMT and the "Leninist-



Trotskyist" Faction), guerrillaist adventurism, tailending of nationalist and Stalinist movements, pop-frontist politics, electoral (*Union de la Gauche*) or non-electoral (the American antiwar movement). In spite of any pretensions of Trotskyist "orthodoxy," neither the IMT nor the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction offers revolutionary leadership. The rhetoric is as hollow on both sides as the practices are wretched. For all of their differences the two sides are yet drawn together politically. The SWP cannot criticize the Ligue Communiste for pop-front electoral politics because it practices non-electoral pop-front politics. The SWP is in no position to attack the IMT for abandoning the Trotskyist road in Latin America because the SWP has done the same in the Middle East by calling for a "democratic secular state," i.e., for a bourgeois democratic state, thus abandoning permanent revolution. Because it does not call for the overthrow of capitalist property relations in the Middle East, the SWP is in no position to criticize the IMT for tailing the VCP Stalinists who want the equivalent of the Maoist "New Democracy" in Vietnam. The IMT can hardly attack the SWP for tailing the Black, Chicano, homosexual, feminist, and student movements, because the IMT does the same thing but gives it the left rhetoric of the "New Mass Vanguard" (as opposed to the old proletarian vanguard). In short the shards of "orthodoxy" that each side holds up in order to bolster its own allies as well as flay its opponent are not enough. It is not good enough to be on the IMT side because they have a better position on the Middle East than the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction, because while you get the advantage of having a better position on that score, you also must live with a rotten one on the VCP. By the same token you cannot support the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction because they have recently become a bit more "orthodox" on the VCP unless you want to live with the reconciliation of feminism and Marxism, which the Third Congress of the Comintern declared without any qualifications at

all, to be impossible and class collaborationist. To support either side on one "orthodox" position means to support that same side on many un-Trotskyist positions *simultaneously*. That is not Marxism. That is eclecticism.

It is time for the junking of all deviations, left or right, in the "United" Secretariat. In terms of a programmatic basis for discussion and rebuilding of the Fourth International the documents of the Revolutionary Internationalist Tendency (RIT), in spite of some gaps and some questions which are at most of strategic importance (not principled questions), represent by far the best Trotskyist assessment of the world and political situation in the USA. The documents are "The Only Road to Revolution is Through the Proletariat," by Gerald Clark (SWP DB Vol. 31, No. 1, April 1973) and "A Program for Building a Proletarian Party: In Opposition to the Centrism of the Party Majority," by Gerald Clark (SWP DB Vol. 31, No. 14, July 1973). This small tendency represented such a threat to the reformist and rotten politics of the SWP, that the SWP leadership stooped to the level of spying, frame-up, and the use of a political (as opposed to a police) agent-provocateur in order to expel these comrades from the SWP. Those in the "United" Secretariat who would return to the road of Trotskyism which is blocked by the rubble and pitfalls of both the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction and the International Majority Tendency, would do well to study these two documents as a beginning to revolutionary politics.

For a Repudiation of Revisionism of "Left" and Right Varieties!!

For a *Principled* Political Discussion Around the RIT Program!!

For a Return to the Road of Trotskyism!!

For the Rebuilding of the Fourth International as the Only World Party of Socialist Revolution!!

November 29, 1973

## THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE CLASSICAL VARIANT

by Tony Thomas, Lower Manhattan Branch, New York  
Local

The following contribution is based on a presentation I planned to give during the discussion on the world situation at the recent party convention. Since that point was not placed on the final agenda, I am submitting it for the preconvention discussion. I believe that it is relevant to the discussion taking place in regard to the world political situation and the orientation in Bolivia and Argentina.

A central question that has been expressed in the current discussion in the Fourth International is the question of the so-called classical variant. At the root of this is the question as to whether the exceptional situations following World War II in Cuba, Vietnam, China, Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe would become the rule in the revolutionary process, or the exception. The leadership of the Socialist Workers Party has always pointed out their exceptional character—although in some ways even these struggles have confirmed our view of the classical variant of proletarian revolution. We have noted that since the end of the 1950s, struggles have more and more tended in the direction of the classical variant in which mass working-class struggles, mass Trotskyist parties, would be essential prerequisites for working-class victories.

Many of those who support the IEC Majority Tendency do not understand this and have an unbalanced view toward guerrilla warfare and ultraleftism. This is very clearly seen in the adaptation to Castroist and other guerrillaist currents that resulted in the position adopted by the Fourth International on Latin America at the Ninth World Congress, which has in turn helped to spawn more deviations of that character on a worldwide scale.

One of the central conceptual errors they make is that they underestimate the fact that the capitalist system itself, especially as its own crises deepen, often leads itself to situations in which the capacity of the ruling class to smash the workers movement is weakened, while the objective power of the working class is strengthened. It is this development along these lines as well as political events that help to form class and political consciousness and lead to revolutionary confrontations and revolutions. However, the IEC Majority Tendency, in my opinion, tends to underestimate the degree to which this objective crisis of capitalism can lead to openings for the mass struggle of the working class along classical lines.

Instead, in a mechanical and voluntarist sense, they tend to project outside forces to play the exemplary roles in an objective sense—the new mass vanguard in the advanced capitalist countries, guerrillaists and other non-Trotskyist forces by and large in the colonial sphere.

As the imperialist crisis deepens, and the deals between Moscow and Washington and Peking and Washington deepen, we will be seeing more of the contradictions of the imperialist countries exported to the colonial world, including increased industrialization as competing imperialists search for low wages. We should expect that the deepening of this world crisis will make the social and political weight and power of the proletariat in colonial and semicolonial countries stronger. Mass struggles, open-

ings for them, class confrontations will become more permanently the order of the day.

This objective situation is recognized in a distorted way by the IEC Majority Tendency in its World Political Resolution. In fact, this confirms what the minority—at the Ninth World Congress—said. In particular, although we did not oppose the resolution, comrades of the minority at the last world congress strongly criticized the stress on guerrilla warfare as the solution in colonial countries outside of Latin America which was made in the World Political Resolution passed at the last world congress. We argued that the trend would be away from guerrilla warfare as the main axis—an exceptional detour in the unfolding of the class struggle—and toward classical norms with a deepening role for the working class as a class. All the more need to envisage the revolutionary party not as an adjunct to a guerrilla force or the striking force of a "new mass vanguard" but as a mass party based on the struggles of the working class in factories and the streets, also striving for leadership of the students, farmers, nationalist radicals, etc.

### *South Africa*

Nowhere has this process and the errors of the voluntarist errors of guerrilla-warfare-as-a-strategy or "armed struggle"-as-a-strategy been tested more firmly than in the republic of South Africa. In that country since a heightened level of repression developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, all of the oppositional groups from Black, white left liberals and the Stalinists of both Moscow and Peking varieties to the Trotskyists adopted a guerrilla orientation. They figured that given the imposing strength of the repression only guerrilla warfare would spark and involve the mass action that other forms of struggle could not.

Despite the great resources of all of these organizations, including some with the support of the Soviet Union, China and the independent African states, and given the great discontent within South Africa, none of these organizations and no one else has launched any significant guerrilla campaigns. (Significant in that they have sparked any major change in the class and national struggles in that country.)

At the Ninth World Congress, the Fourth International adopted a position concomitant with this guerrillaist schematism in regard to the South African revolution, rather than Lenin's materialist method of analyzing the course of political development. In one of the passages on guerrilla warfare in the "New Rise of the World Revolution," which the minority objected to, the development of the struggle in South Africa was analyzed in this way: "The historic role of all the armed struggles now in progress on the African continent, which are slowly moving southward, is to prepare, facilitate, and spur the outbreak of the South African revolution, beginning with guerrilla warfare."

In this passage, the author of the resolution states that

the unfolding deepening of the revolutionary crisis in South Africa is the "moving southward" of armed struggle from other countries. The revolution is to begin in this country "with guerrilla warfare." This is a military and voluntarist conception, not a dialectical materialist conception.

At the Ninth World Congress, Comrade Tom, an exiled member of what had once been a South African Trotskyist group, claimed that the perspective of guerrilla warfare was the only road in South Africa and used this as a justification as to why in his words the International should adopt what he termed the "same" orientation in Latin America. This comrade is currently one of the members of the IEC Majority Tendency which defends this guerrillaist and militarist deviation, despite their recent improvisations.

In addition, I might add, that Comrade Livio Maitan in his infamous "An Insufficient Document," points out that among the places where we "at present [have] possibilities for an important breakthrough" is "South Africa with a certain time."

The balance sheet of events in South Africa since that time has refuted these voluntarist deviations and confirmed our perspective that the classical variant is "the most likely variant"—to use a phrase very popular with the IEC Majority's document drafters—in South Africa and in regard to the colonial revolution.

The crisis of imperialism in South African capitalism and the mass struggles of South African Black workers and other non-white proletarians has led not in the direction of guerrilla warfare but in the direction of mass demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, and other forms of struggle. Actions around economic issues—closely linked to the national question—by Black and other non-whiteworkers beginning with the massive Ovambo strike several years ago have become more of a norm in that country. Struggles and organizations around the question of Black consciousness have marked the educational and cultural life of that country's African majority. Limited struggles around the questions of free speech and support to the Black struggles have also shaken English-speaking universities and have even penetrated into the Afrikaaner student youth. Much more militant actions have been taken by the small number of Black university and high school students.

The South African regime, especially in regard to the workers struggles, has been unable to launch a repression so total as to prevent the continuation of these strikes. In fact it has forced them to make concessions along the lines of giving gains in wages and even limited rights to strike and to organize working class organizations among Blacks.

What forced the South African regime to make concessions with the workers in wages and grant a limited right to strike—"the southward movement" of guerrillas?

No! The objective development and crisis of capitalism itself and the strengthening of the role and power of the Black workers. The deepening of the world economic crisis has led to a larger number of Blacks coming into industry. The deepening of inter-imperialist competition for investment in South Africa as well as a relative strengthening of South African imperialism has forced Blacks not only into industry but into more semiskilled and some skilled jobs.

It is this internal development of capitalism which weakened the ability of South African capitalism to prevent the struggles of Black workers and students. And, at the same time, it is this same development, represented by mounting inflation, that has sharpened class and national conflicts and led to these same struggles. The South Africans cannot go out and fire a couple thousand skilled or semiskilled workers and send them home or to jail the way they were able to do with unskilled laborers, farm workers, domestics or porters fifteen years ago.

Even the Bantustan operation has had the negative effect of centralizing a part of the Black population and placing reactionary Black puppet authorities under the gun, as well as its repressive aspect. Even the authorities at the Zulu Bantustan, KwaZulu, were forced to support Black strikers and threatened to withhold Black labor to prevent the government from using large-scale repression during a strike last spring.

It is our estimate of the contradictions of the capitalist system and the strength of the working class, especially as the crisis of imperialism deepens, that makes us believe that the so-called classical variant of class struggle, mass struggle and party building, is the road to power not only in advanced capitalist countries but in the colonial world. The perspective for building a revolutionary party in South Africa was not the error of capitulating to the pressure of guerrillaism as our comrades there apparently did. Rather it would have been to have maintained a perspective placing preparation for intervention in the type of struggles now taking place as a primary goal. Through this type of patient underground work in repressive regimes the Bolsheviks created the party that led the first socialist revolution. The experience in Latin America of similar work by the PRT-*La Verdad* yielded the fruit now known as the PST, while the schematism of the IEC Majority led to the Bolivian and Argentine disasters.

The platform of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction is oriented to correcting the deviations from our program that originated with the "turn" of the Ninth World Congress. It proposes that the International junk the voluntarist and militarist deviations that have led to these disasters, and return to the road charted by the founders of our movement. In no place will such a reorientation be more beneficial than the process of building the revolutionary party in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

December 8, 1973

## 'OFF IN COSMOS' — OR WHY THE IMT WAVED 'BYE-BYE' TO THE PRT

by George Johnson, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local

In his presentation and summary in the Brooklyn branch of the Internationalist Tendency's position on Latin America, which is that of the Mandel-Maitan-Frank grouping, Comrade John S. said some rather remarkable things about the Fraccion Roja, or Red Faction, which is a splitoff from the PRT (Combatiente) of Argentina. His remarks deserve to be brought to the attention of the movement.

Comrade John S. spoke of the militarist deviations that the PRT had made, and then said that the Red Faction "is having discussions on how to keep the armed wing of the party under the control of the party" and "not let the whole thing get out of hand" so "they don't go off in deviations like their parent group did."

Comrade John S. indicated that he had some doubts that the Red Faction could keep its bearings. He said it was "possible for them [the Red Faction] to go off in cosmos someplace—then goodbye," he said, waving his hand. Beyond question Comrade John S. was referring here to what happened to the Red Faction's parent group, the PRT, when *it* went off into cosmos and the MMF grouping waved *it* goodbye.

But what does it mean to say that the PRT went, and the Red Faction might go, "off into cosmos"? What this means is that it might be necessary for the MMF grouping, and their followers here, to disown the Red Faction, just as they have found it necessary to disown the PRT.

In fact, this act of disowning the PRT by the MMF grouping is how the Red Faction originated. The split in the PRT, from which the Red Faction emerged—there have been a number of splits in the PRT—came, not as Comrade John S. obliquely suggested, because of differences over the relative roles of the party and the party's armed wing, but rather because the international positions of the PRT leaders had become known throughout the International, much to the chagrin of the PRT's sponsors in the MMF group.

It will be recalled that the PRT leaders thought and think that Kim Il Sung, Vo Nguyen Giap, and other Stalinists, including Mao Tse-tung, are great revolutionary leaders. The MMF leaders knew this at the time of the Ninth World Congress, but didn't tell anyone about it. They kept silent out of their blind factional hatred of Moreno, now a leader of the PST in Argentina, one of the largest Trotskyist parties in the world. When the strange views of the PRT became known, the MMF leaders were forced to disown the PRT. They did *not* criticize the PRT at that time for its alleged militarist deviations. For instance in Livio Maitan's ill-starred "Domingo Letter," which he circulated "privately" in Latin America, they took up the PRT's wrong international positions. The militarist deviation charges have come only more recently.

The MMF leaders moved to handle this situation in a manner foreign to the norms of our movement. They set up a secret faction in the PRT, which *agreed* with the PRT on the need for an armed wing of the party, but which was supposedly in agreement with the Fourth Inter-

national—or at least would follow the MMF grouping—on the international questions with which the PRT disagreed. A body from the Ligue Communiste's Latin American Commission (!) went to Argentina, and shortly thereafter the Red Faction was formed in the PRT. Shortly after *that*, the Red Faction was expelled from the PRT, and the PRT quit the Fourth International.

*Thank You, Comrade John S.*

Comrade John S. knows all this about the Red Faction's origins. He did not mention it in his presentation because, I suppose, "the problems faced by the Red Faction are not simple," as he put it; "they don't have any immediate concrete answers." Beyond doubt he did not want to burden us with their problems.

In his summary Comrade John S. said the Red Faction "is still working out its program." He should be thanked for not bothering us with such trivia as the program of this group, which he indicated in his presentation was going to be proposed at the upcoming world congress as the Argentinian section of the Fourth International. (In his summary, he backed off from this, having been corrected by those who determine what is in and what is out of cosmos. Rather, the Red Faction is to be proposed as a sympathizing group, he said in his retraction.)

However, we already know a little about the Red Faction, an organization about one thirty-fifth the size of the Trotskyist PST. And what we know is hardly reassuring. For instance, they publish a paper for the ERP, the "armed wing of the party," called *Pueblo en Armas*. They have carried out actions in "solidarity" with Chile such as bombing the Dodge-Chrysler auto agency in Buenos Aires and the City Bank branch in La Plata. It must be admitted that they have reason to discuss militarist deviations!

We also know that they think the war in the Mideast is an interimperialist war. As far as Trotskyism is concerned, that puts them *already* into cosmos, even leaving aside their line of an "armed party" carrying its own "armed struggle."

Of course, there is much we don't know about the Red Faction, such as where they stand on the Fifth Congress of the PRT, or where they stand on Chile. We don't know how they would characterize the Unidad Popular, for instance—although in truth, we also don't know that about the so-called Internationalist "Tendency" either, from Comrade John S.'s report.

The Red Faction does seem to *have* a position on Chile, however. Besides the bombings of banks and auto showrooms, to show Pinochet they're tough, they also expropriated arms from 12 Argentine cops to send to the Chilean resistance.

*The Real Problem of the Red Faction*

The Red Faction's real problem is with its and the

MMF's very conception of an armed wing of the party, carrying out actions in the name of the masses and regardless of the state of consciousness of the masses. We are *not* for arming the party to fight the workers' battles for them, like Robin Hood or Superman. And that has always been our movement's position. Comrade John S. even cited Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* to show the existence of armed Bolshevik detachments, as an "armed wing of the party."

But it is not true, as Comrade John S. claims, that the Bolsheviks had armed detachments of the party in 1917, in the sense he means by this. What he and the other MMF supporters are talking about is not what the Bolshevik Military Organization was up to in 1917. That organization was formed for *fraction work* in the army and Red Guards, and that was its function. It did *not* engage in military operations of its own, and it was not organized into military combat units, although it *functioned* in several. Its *purpose* in this fraction work was to *win over* the army and Red Guards, a task at which it succeeded, and that was the force that the Bolsheviks led the October revolution with.

The work that the YSA and SWP have done with the military, in such cases as that of the Fort Jackson Eight, has been similar, although to be sure on a qualitatively more modest scale than that of the Bolsheviks. That is, in our antiwar work, we organized to *win over* supporters in the military, not to form our own military units. In this, we were following our teachers, the Bolsheviks.

Of course, it was necessary for the Bolsheviks, past as current, to defend such things as meetings, etc. But that also is *not* what the IT and MMF groupings mean by "armed detachments." What they mean is the PRT, regardless of how they try to avoid admitting this to us.

#### *How Not to Educate Cadres*

Comrade John S. also mentioned the Popular Assembly in Bolivia, although he indicated that he thinks there is little point in discussing such "historical" questions. We do not agree. The differences over Bolivia concern the question of determining what is happening in a revolutionary process, and are thus of vital importance.

He asked demagogically if the dead Bolivian comrades would be alive if they had followed what he called the "hindsight" of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. As an aside, this was hardly hindsight. The basic criticisms the LTF supporters have made about Bolivia were being made in 1970 and 1971, when the Popular Assembly was coming into being. At the time the criticisms were in fact ap-

peals to the Bolivian comrades to recognize the importance of this development, and to try to influence it. That is not hindsight.

No one, of course, can say whether any of the Bolivian comrades might be alive today if they had not followed the dead-end guerrilla line of the MMF grouping. But it is possible to say with assurance that if the line of the Ninth World Congress had not been persisted in by the sections of the Fourth International in Bolivia and Argentina, these two organizations would not have been totally destroyed, which is what happened. There would be a Bolivian section today, even if underground, and the PRT would not be "off in cosmos."

A further word about the Popular Assembly. Comrade John S. didn't explain how it has become a "clearly proletarian form of struggle," as it is now defined in the MMF Draft Political Resolution (*International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 10, No. 20, p. 9). That's quite a change, when members of the Brooklyn branch recall the scorn Comrade Hedda Garza poured on what she called with irony "this marvelous Popular Assembly." Ernest Germain, in his document miscalled "In Defence of Leninism," was also scornful of the Popular Assembly, writing that it "remained a purely consultative assembly, as Torres visualized it, without real power and without expression of the revolutionary will of the masses." (*IIDB*, Vol. 10, No. 4, p. 7.)

Just eight months after that was published, the Popular Assembly has become, instead of an object for derision, a "clearly proletarian form of struggle." All it had to do, apparently, was to disappear. How does the MMF grouping explain this turnabout? It is not to be found in their documents. How can they possibly pretend to educate a Trotskyist cadre, when their position can flip-flop like this, without explanation? This is light-mindedness.

No less important is how the decision to change this position was taken. I asked Comrade John S. to indicate in his summary how the change came about. He said merely that there was "discussion" within the IT. That is hardly sufficient. Was there a vote taken, perhaps? Were there disagreements over this change in line? Unless these questions are answered satisfactorily, the IT is wide open to the charge of being, rather than a "tendency" as they so piously claim, a pure-and-simple clique, taking orders from the top, no matter which way the wind shifts. And rest assured, there are going to be a lot more changes in the direction of the wind coming from the MMF group. You don't need a weatherman to know that.

December 8, 1973

## QUESTIONS OF METHODOLOGY AND THE 1973 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IN FRANCE

by Paul Adams, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

Last spring, shortly after the elections in France, the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party sent a letter to the Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste in regards to the Ligue's participation in the French elections. (See International Internal Discussion Bulletin Vol. 10, No. 14, pages 13-16.) This letter stated that in our opinion the decision of the Ligue to enter a large slate of candidates in the elections was an extremely positive event. The letter went on to say, however, that during a recent plenum several comrades had expressed opinions critical of the line adopted by the Ligue Communiste in the elections. Since a representative of the Ligue Communiste was not able to attend the plenum, the Political Committee had decided to send a letter to the Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste presenting our differences with the electoral policy of the Ligue in the hope that the comrades would reply in order to clear up any vague informational points or factual errors as well as in order to give an explanation of the manner in which they arrived at these policies.

The three major differences stated in the letter were the following: "(1) the decision to call for a vote on the first round for all the candidates of the 'far left,' i.e., those whom you defined as 'candidates who reject the electoral and peaceful roads to socialism' . . . (2) the decision to call for a vote on the second round for the candidates of the Union de la Gauche, as opposed to the candidates of the Communist Party and Socialist Party only; and (3) the ambiguity of your attitude towards the Socialist Party as expressed by the decision taken at your last convention against characterizing the Socialist Party as a working-class party with a bourgeois reformist program." (Ibid., p. 13.)

In their reply to the letter from the Political Committee of the SWP the comrades defended all three positions with the exception that they considered calling for a vote for the candidates of the Union of the Left including candidates of the Left Radicals in the second round to have been an error. The comrades explain that instead they should have called for a vote for the candidates of the Union of the Left excluding the candidates of the Left Radicals. The comrades' defense of these erroneous positions is not so startling as the explanations they give for their method of arriving at these policies. The comrades, in my opinion, very honestly explain how using the methodology of the European document they developed these incorrect positions. Most startling is the criteria applied in analyzing the nature of the Union of the Left which led to the call for a vote for the candidates of the Union of the Left in the second round, a very serious error involving a matter of principle. The methodology used by the comrades in determining the class nature of the Union of the Left as an electoral formation and our orientation to it contain serious misconceptions in regards to our analysis of what constitutes a class-collaborationist electoral formation or a popular front which in turn could have a detrimental effect upon our strategy and tactics not only in France, but throughout the world.

By no means do I intend to imply that the Ligue Communiste adopted a popular front strategy in the second round. Nevertheless, the nature of this error could eventually lead toward an adaptation to popular frontism.

The comrades quote the following from the letter sent by the Political Committee of the SWP: ". . . it would, in our opinion, probably be correct to designate the Union de la Gauche as an embryonic or incipient popular front. . . ."

"We are not interested in the semantics of the question. Whether we should put the label "incipient popular front" on the Union de la Gauche, or some other designation can be put aside as long as we agree on the essence that the Union de la Gauche was, *from its very inception, an electoral class-collaborationist project of the Stalinists.*" (My emphasis. "The Mote and the Beam," International Internal Discussion Bulletin Vol. 10, No. 3, page 12.)

After quoting from this letter, the comrades reply stating that not only do they disagree with the term "embryonic or incipient popular front," but that *they do not consider the Union de la Gauche to be a class-collaborationist electoral formation.* They go on to say, "Certainly if unforeseen circumstances led to the entry of formations characterized as bourgeois into the Union of the Left, we would rectify this estimation. But for the present, we take the Union of the Left for what it actually is, namely *an alliance of the two big reformist workers parties supported by the great mass of the workers, an alliance that proposes a perspective of a peaceful march toward socialism, a perspective that we know to be illusory.*" (My emphasis. Ibid., p. 13.)

It is interesting to note, however, that the comrades consider themselves to have committed an error in the second round in not explicitly excluding the bourgeois Left Radicals from their call for a vote for the candidates of the Union of the Left. Nevertheless, the comrades remind us, "Those candidates did not change our analysis of the Union of the Left, but it was necessary to oppose a vote for them because they were bourgeois candidates." (Ibid., p. 13.)

First of all, let's examine the criteria the comrades use to justify their claim that the union of the Left constitutes neither an "incipient popular front" nor a class-collaborationist electoral formation. The two central themes for this position are as follows:

(1) The Left Radicals represent no significant wing of French capitalism; consequently, ". . . for all practical purposes, there is no bourgeois party in the Union of the Left." (Ibid., p. 13.)

(2) That the Popular Front of the 1930s and the Union of the Left do not have similar programmatic goals. "The central difference is that these two electoral blocs do not formally have the same perspectives. . . . According to the leaders of that period, the goal of the Popular Front was to bar the door to fascism. . . . Today, the leaders of the Union of the Left present their alliance as the means for realizing, by a parliamentary and peaceful road, an intermediate democratic stage of short duration for the

transition to socialism." (Ibid., page 13.)

Just what is wrong with this analysis? First of all, whether or not there is a bourgeois party in the Union of the Left is of no major importance, but if one uses this criteria as a yardstick then one must explain how large a bourgeois party must be before it becomes unprincipled to engage in an electoral formation with it. The comrades state that if a major bourgeois party were to join the Union of the Left they would remove their support to it in the second round, so it would seem necessary to set up scientific guidelines to determine how quantitatively large a bourgeois party must be before it makes a qualitative change in our supporting an electoral coalition. However, it should be noted that the comrades try to use another method by trying to convince us that the Left Radicals are so miniscule and insignificant that they are really nonexistent—. . . for all practical purposes, there is no bourgeois party in the Union of the Left."

Previously, in various articles in *Rouge*, comrades in the Ligue Communiste have stated that the presence of the Left Radicals is of no importance at all. One example of this is the statement by Comrade Henry Weber: "It is the CP's hegemony in the alliance that determines the class nature of the Union of the Left with or without the Radicals." ("The Far Left and the Legislative Elections," reprinted from *Rouge* in the February 12, 1973, issue of *Intercontinental Press*.) So it would seem that on this count we both agree that the presence or absence of the Left Radicals should have no bearing on our analysis of the Union of the Left. Nevertheless, we draw different conclusions from this. In our opinion, the Union of the Left constitutes a class-collaborationist electoral formation since it is a programmatic, electoral coalition based on a reformist common program which has the perspective of soliciting the support of non-working-class parties. And by the way, comrades, we don't have to discuss the "intentions or motives" of the leaders of the CP or the SP since they already had involved a small bourgeois party in the electoral coalition. There can be no other reason for the presence of the Left Radicals other than the fact that they are a sign of bigger and better things to come. The relative political weight of the CP in the Union of the Left or the presence or absence of the Left Radicals in no way alters the fundamental purpose of the Union of the Left. If a major bourgeois party were to join the Union of the Left and the CP still held "hegemony," would the comrades still consider the Union of the Left not to be a class-collaborationist electoral coalition???

This brings us to the comrades' last line of defense, the so-called *central* difference between the Popular Front of the 1930s and the Union of the Left. After all, we are told, the aim of the Popular Front was to preserve bourgeois democracy and bar the door to fascism, while the Union of the Left's aim is a *peaceful and parliamentary road to socialism*. This is perhaps the most ridiculous criteria of all. According to this theory the *essence* of the Popular Front was the defense of bourgeois democracy against fascism stemming from the need of the French ruling class for an alliance with the Soviet Union against Germany. The major function of the Popular Front, you see, was to defend bourgeois democracy. The comrades go on to say that the major task of our comrades was to explain why this strategy wouldn't work.

But the task of our comrades was much more than that. The People's Front, by engaging in an electoral front containing a *common program* with working-class and bourgeois parties, meant a *loss of class independence* for the proletariat. Class collaboration was specifically what the People's Front proposed and as a result our comrades had the obligation not only to explain to the masses that fascism and war can only be defeated by the overthrow of capitalism, but also that under *no circumstances* was it principled for working-class organizations to engage in *programmatic coalitions with bourgeois parties* in order to fight fascism or for any other reason because in doing so they must give up their class independence. The *essence* of the Popular Front wasn't the fact that it was an alliance against fascism, but rather that it was a class-collaborationist electoral bloc.

Just think about it, comrades, apparently it is unprincipled to engage in an electoral coalition with a bourgeois party to defend bourgeois democracy; but, on the other hand, if you are advancing on the peaceful and electoral road to socialism with a bourgeois party, it's alright as long as the party isn't too big. Or perhaps, the size of the bourgeois party isn't too important if one of the working-class parties has hegemony in the coalition, or if socialism is an explicit "goal." But, how can a working-class party engage in a programmatic coalition with a bourgeois party, unless it's based on a reformist program? Obviously the bourgeois party has hegemony regardless of its size. The perspective of class collaboration—which means bourgeois hegemony—determines the program.

It seems rather ironic that these comrades who mechanically advance this sterile criteria accuse us of having turned Marxism into "dogmas that you determine mechanically, independent of conditions and circumstances." These comrades also accuse us of having turned our principles and criteria into "things in themselves."

Now let's take a look at the consequences of this analysis. Calling for a vote for the Union of the Left with or without the inclusion of the Left Radicals miseducates the masses and our own cadre in a very important sense. It leads people to believe that what is wrong with the Union of the Left is its *program*. The comrades of the Communist League patiently explain, ". . . to base a campaign around stating that the leaders of the CP and the SP are seeking an alliance with the bourgeois parties would miss the real problem that the creation of the Union of the Left pretends to resolve: How to make the transition to socialism? That is why we have placed at the center of our campaign the following question: "Electoral road or revolutionary road to socialism?" (Ibid., p. 13.)

This overlooks the fact that what is wrong with the Union of the Left is a betrayal of class independence; the comrades must admit, I assume, that the CP has no intention of advancing to socialism by a peaceful road or by any other means. Calling for a vote for the Union of the Left tends to give credence to the notion that if the Union of the Left only had a *better program* it would be alright. As the French comrades well know, the Union of the Left could never adopt a revolutionary program because that would undermine its very existence. The Union of the Left itself is nothing other than a *concretization of the CP's program and in fact their vehicle for leading the masses along the parliamentary road of bourgeois reforms*.

I should also point out that we never advocated that the comrades base their campaign "around stating that the leaders of the CP and SP are seeking an alliance with the bourgeois parties." That is simply an old debaters' trick. The comrades should have given critical support to the candidates of the CP and SP in the second round. Then they could have explained that although we consider their programs to be reformist, they nonetheless represented established tendencies in the workers movement with a mass base among the working class and therefore we call for a vote for the candidates of these parties as a class vote counterposing class against class. On the other hand, calling for a vote for the Union of the Left, the CP's vehicle on the electoral road, would not in any sense have represented a class vote, but a step away from a class vote. There is a lot of difference between calling for a vote for the CP and the SP and in calling for a vote for the Union of the Left. As was already pointed out, whether or not the CP has "hegemony" in the Union of the Left is of no importance whatsoever. In the long run, the only group that will ever have hegemony in such an electoral bloc is the bourgeoisie.

Now let's take another look at the conclusion the comrades have drawn from their method of analysis. They state that the Union of the Left is simply an alliance of two big reformist workers parties with a perspective of a peaceful march to socialism and nothing more. However, as we pointed out the Union of the Left is more than just an alliance of two reformist workers parties. It is an unprincipled class-collaborationist electoral bloc. To say that it is anything less would seem to imply that the comrades really believe the CP intends to achieve socialism in France, that the CP intends to use the Union of the Left as a means of breaking the masses away from bourgeois politics. Obviously, the comrades do not believe this to be true. But calling for a vote for the Union of the Left is an outright contradiction of the central theme of the comrades campaign—"electoral or revolutionary road to socialism?"—since it is a perfect example of how not to make the transition to socialism. So why is it that the comrades hold on to this insupportable position? The answer lies in the manner in which the comrades viewed their electoral strategy as a whole; it lies in the methodology of relating to the "concerns of the vanguard" instead of the objective needs of the working class as a whole.

The comrades were astounded by the following statement in the letter from the Political Committee of the SWP: "At this stage in our development the sections of the Fourth International have no other reason for participating in elections than to utilize the electoral arena for propaganda purposes. Our primary purpose is to take *our program* to the broadest layers of the working class." (Emphasis in original.) The comrades go on to say, "It is perhaps here that the fundamental point of our disagreement lies." The comrades are absolutely correct when they say this because the origin of the comrades' analysis of the Union of the Left, their errors in the first and second rounds, and I might add another error, their centering the major thrust of their propaganda campaign around the abstract question of "how to make the transition to socialism" stem from their starting point—"the concerns of the vanguard."

Here is the *real reason* for their orientation toward the legislative elections:

"A victory for the Union of the Left will be seen by the workers as a defeat for the bourgeoisie and a victory for the workers movement. . . . A victory (unlikely, but not out of the question either) of the Union of the Left would in time set off a major political crisis capable of leading to a generalized explosion of struggles and to a test of strength between the mass movement and the bourgeois state apparatus. . . . the fact nonetheless remains that the bulk of the class that has been brought up on electoral illusions will remain true to that perspective and that *the workers' vanguard itself, whatever reservations it may have, sees in a victory of the Union of the Left the only concrete way of flushing the UDR . . . mafia out of power and thereby unclogging the situation.*" (My emphasis. "Communist League's Position on the Coming Elections" reprinted from *Rouge* in the January 15, 1973, issue of *Intercontinental Press*.)

Sounds uncomfortably reminiscent of the old McGovern arguments we used to hear in the United States, doesn't it? There is quite a similarity, comrades, despite the "rudimentary existence of political life" in the U. S. All the reformists were yelling about how if McGovern got elected it would create a political crisis because of his "opposition to the war." Sure, he didn't necessarily want to end the war (just as the CP doesn't intend to make the transition to socialism), but it would create a crisis nonetheless because the people would be expecting an end to the war (just as the French masses would be expecting the transition to socialism)! And of course once the crisis is set in motion we would take it from there. Of course, the comrades will cry "but McGovern was a candidate of a bourgeois party!" and no one can deny that this is very true. But the similarities remain the same: just as the ruling class in the United States was compelled to run a McGovern in order to coopt the masses away from an independent road, to keep them tied to bourgeois politics, the ruling class in France had a Union of the Left instead of a McGovern. The question of the transition to socialism can't be posed until the masses break from bourgeois politics and that's why the SWP ran in the 1972 presidential elections. In order to take our program and counterpose it to that of the bourgeois parties; to try and break as many people as possible from bourgeois politics and recruit to our party on the basis of our program. We didn't base our election campaign on the concerns of the vanguard. We used the electoral arena in order to gain a hearing among the working class.

That was how Lenin viewed electoral strategy. Perhaps I should refresh the comrades' memories in regards to Lenin's views on electoral tactics. In reviewing the experiences of the Bolshevik Party in electoral work in "*Left Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, Lenin explained that he realized that many comrades felt that the Bolsheviks' tactics were correct for Russia, but that it didn't necessarily apply to other places such as Western Europe or the United States. Lenin stated that this was incorrect. Lenin pointed out that bourgeois elections provide us with a great opportunity to take our program to the masses and break them from bourgeois politics. He clearly stated, "The Communists in Western Europe and America must learn to create a new, unusual, non-opportunist, non-careerist parliamentarism: . . . they should not at all 'get seats' in parliament, but should everywhere strive



to rouse the minds of the masses and draw them into the struggle, to hold the bourgeoisie to its word and utilize the apparatus it has set up, the elections it has appointed, the appeals it has made to the whole people, and to tell the people what Bolshevism is in a way that has never been possible (under bourgeois rule) outside of election times. . . . It is very difficult . . . but it can and must be done, for the task of Communism cannot be fulfilled without effort; and our efforts must be devoted to fulfilling *practical* tasks, ever more varied, ever more closely connected with all branches of social life, *winning* branch after branch and sphere after sphere *from the bourgeoisie*. ("Left Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, p. 97.)

On the other hand, how did the comrades of the Communist League view the elections? The comrades proclaim their scorn for the SWP's view of the primary function of the electoral tactic to be taking "our program to the broadest layers of the working class." No, they adopted an orientation for becoming "real factors of influence in the class struggle going beyond being essentially propagandistic cadre organizations." They sought to gain political hegemony within the new mass vanguard in order to assemble the greatest force possible on the basis of posing an alternative to the Union of the Left by calling for a vote for the candidates of the "far left" on the first round. The comrades are aghast that we might imply that they intended to regroup the new mass vanguard with this tactic. No indeed, the comrades explain that what they intended to do was gain "political hegemony within this vanguard, to mobilize around *certain points* of our program . . ." in order to ". . . find a more receptive audience in the broad masses for the whole of our program and for our methods." (Emphasis in original.) In other words, they weren't trying to regroup the vanguard, but rather, gain political hegemony in it in order to create a "pole of attraction."

The comrades go on to point out that they were unable to assemble this electoral front. The reason they weren't able to form this electoral "pole", I might add, was because there was complete disagreement on what orientation to take in regard to the Union of the Left. Nevertheless, the comrades called for vote for the candidates of the "far left" anyway. This tactic could only result in confusing people on two important points: (1) in regards to what orientation revolutionaries should have taken in relation to the Union de la Gauche; and (2) give the impression that we are in much closer agreement with the programs of the various "far-left" groups than with those of the CP and the SP while at the same time obscuring the need for a Trotskyist party with the correct perspective for the socialist revolution. In a situation as near to revolution as the comrades believe in France to be (4 or 5 years) illusions about our far-left opponents would be especially dangerous.

Just how do the comrades believe they "went beyond being mere propagandistic cadre organizations and became real factors in the class struggle"? The fact of the matter is, whether one likes it or not, that the comrades' electoral campaign was essentially that of a propagandistic intervention. They didn't go beyond being a propagandistic organization by trying to form a "pole of attraction" in the first round or by their attempt to influence the class struggle in the second round by calling for a vote for the Union of the Left. And this brings us to

another error in the Ligue's electoral policy (an error not of as great importance as the error in the second round, but of importance nonetheless)—the centering of their propagandistic campaign around the abstract question of the "revolutionary or electoral road to socialism."

As I pointed out earlier this, coupled with the call for a vote for the Union of the Left in the second round, tended to give credence to the notion that the only problem with the Union of the Left was its program. But there is much more to it than that. The comrades, from what I have been able to read in our press, in bulletins, etc., centered the main thrust of their campaign on such aspects of the "revolutionary road" as the need for "preparing for dual power," the "need for revolutionary violence" and so on, which could only obscure the more concrete aspects of our program; slogans such as the sliding scale of wages, 30 for 40, equal pay for women, slogans in defense of the Irish revolution among others.

For instance, a very good example of this attitude is contained in an article by Comrade Henry Weber entitled "Lutte Ouvriere's Stand on the French CP" reprinted from *Rouge* in the February 19, 1973, issue of *Intercontinental Press*. In this article Comrade Weber notes that at several CP meetings members of Lutte Ouvriere had raised such demands as 30 hours work for 40 hours pay, a minimum wage demand, among others, in contrast to the CP's program. Comrade Weber criticizes this saying, "In reality this approach ends up glossing over the *fundamental question*, which the PCF program holds can be solved through peaceful methods."

Later on, Comrade Weber discusses differences which occurred between the Ligue Communiste and Lutte Ouvriere in relation to a rough draft of an open letter which was to be sent to members of the Communist Party. Comrade Weber sums up the major differences as follows: ". . . the version proposed by the Ligue stressed the moderate nature of the social measures, pointing out the suspicion to be held of 'socialists' like Mitterand, and then concentrated its fire on the army, the police, etc., and emphasized the need to prepare the workers to struggle against the bourgeois state." On the other hand, "In substance, L. O.'s version told the PCF the following: Promise us a 30 hour work-week, 1,500 francs for everybody, a sliding scale of wages, job security, and better working conditions. . . ." Comrade Weber points out the incorrect nature of some Lutte Ouvriere's demands in regards to the police. Although the Ligue is correct in noticing Lutte Ouvriere's opportunist tendency, the Ligue did so by wrongly counterposing the "need for the revolutionary road" to advancing the concrete transitional demands to meet the needs of the working class. The problem with the CP's program isn't merely on primarily that of the "electoral road versus the revolutionary road," but rather, the fact that it is a watered-down reformist bourgeois program designed to entice "progressive" bourgeois parties into the Union of the Left.

In concluding, once again it must be pointed out that the Ligue's running of a large number of candidates in the legislative elections is positive especially in view of abstentionist illusions that are still accepted in some of the European sections. Nevertheless, it is most unfortunate that the comrades of the Communist League continue in "The Mote and the Beam" to defend their call for a vote for the candidates of the Union of the Left in the second

round. Hopefully, "The Mote and the Beam" is only the beginning of a more thorough discussion during the process of which, through an exchange of ideas amongst our world cothinkers, these errors will be rectified.

The document "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," on the other hand, can only stand in the way of such a discussion since the document fails to deal with the question of electoral strategy and tactics. As is the case with many other questions where there are differences of opinions upon the European comrades such

as trade-union work, and defending the Irish revolution, to name a few, the document evades these questions and obscures the discussion. If for no other reason, the European perspectives document should be rejected because of its failure to give our comrades a perspective on questions such as electoral strategy which will be crucial for our comrades in "preparing the workers to struggle against the bourgeois state" by building mass revolutionary socialist parties in capitalist Europe.

December 8, 1973

## ON THE QUESTION OF THE BOURGEOIS ARMY

by Dianne Feeley, Lower Manhattan Branch,  
New York Local

The document "Building Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" by the International Executive Committee (IEC) Majority Tendency outlines two obstacles which stand in the way of developing revolutionary parties. On the one hand, they say, there is the development of the strong, bourgeois state with all its institutions, including the army. On the other is the workers movement dominated by the reformists of the Socialist and Communist parties. But instead of developing a *program* to expose these reformists and to win the working class to a revolutionary strategy, the International Majority Tendency tries to find a way around the question through its strategy of "initiatives in action." But the reformists will not be unmasked by this method, nor will these bourgeois institutions vanish.

I would like to take up the development of the IEC Majority Tendency's new, and incorrect, theory on the question of the bourgeois army. This theory confuses rather than clarifies the tasks of the revolutionary parties. Based on abstraction rather than concrete experience, it has served to disorient the work of the French comrades and was used to justify the English comrades' abstention from their central political task—the building of a Troops Out of Ireland movement. This position by the tendency is most clearly outlined in its "Draft Political Resolution," printed in the International Internal Discussion Bulletin No. 20. In the section on the fate of the Vietnamese revolution and the new counterrevolutionary strategy on imperialism they say:

"One must not underestimate the effectiveness of some of these counterrevolutionary instruments. The Brazilian army and the Israeli army, without any doubt, weighed heavily in stopping the development of revolutionary situations in their respective regions. The evolution toward professional armies that take the place of armies based on conscription is a step toward the creation of a more effective counterrevolutionary striking force in Western Europe, and should be vigorously fought by the workers movement. Nevertheless, in its totality, this counter-strategy depends on the fate of the rise of the mass movements now taking place. Without a very serious political and social defeat of the Japanese and European proletariats, one cannot see how imperialism would be able to create a stable and effective military force in these key regions of the world." (p. 5)

### *France*

Despite their acceptance of the theory that the student movement is dead, the Communist League was able to become a leading force in the struggle around the Debre law which erupted in France in the spring of 1973. Since 1789 the French Constitution has provided for a draft army. However, a series of deferments had been granted enabling students to complete their university curricula before being drafted. The Debre law was intended to cut back these deferments. The government tried to justify ending certain deferments by pointing to the fact that workers were not given deferments. The government hoped to pit the working class against the students over the issue of students having "special" privileges which the government was only taking away out of a sense of justice. Instead the students waged a campaign to show how these deferments particularly aided students from the working class.

In addition, many students raised the demand to abolish the French draft entirely. The Communist League took up this slogan and outlined their opposition to it in a polemic against Lutte Ouvriere. Entitled "Volunteer Army or Struggle Against Bourgeois Army?", it was reprinted in *Intercontinental Press*, May 21, 1973. The author, Felix Loursion, admitted that "Down with the army! End military service!" was a general slogan raised by masses of students:

"'Twelve months lost for nothing. Brainwashing, forced labor, humiliation. That's what's waiting for me in the service. I refuse to let myself be drafted.' That's what you hear most often.

"This spontaneous rejection of the army, perfectly understandable, has spread among a huge section of the youth—high-schoolers, students, workers." (p. 597)

However, the League opposed this slogan because: "Under the present conditions, if military service is eliminated, it will only be replaced by a volunteer army composed of military professionals devoted body and soul to the ruling class. With such an army, the bourgeoisie would have a formidable instrument, tailor-made to repress the workers. Already, part of the bourgeoisie, concerned about the 'spiritual state' of the ranks, is prepared to opt for this." (p. 597)

They also pointed to a second reason for opposing an end to military conscription, and that is because revolu-

tionary socialists are for working *inside* the army. However the polemic failed to explain *why* Trotskyists work inside the army, *what* can be accomplished, or even *why* winning over the army is a central task for revolutionaries.

For revolutionary socialists to discuss the question of the army, it is necessary first of all to clarify the function of the army in a capitalist state. The army is a weapon of the state—and this is true whether there is a draft or a "volunteer" army. But, one must ask, how do the masses perceive the army? Do they see it as their institution or not? Since World War II the French army has waged two colonial wars—in Vietnam and Algeria. It has also played the role as a strikebreaking force, and, as a matter of fact, part of the army is under the direct control of the Ministry of the Interior for "police" functions.

The anti-military sentiments which Lourson quoted indicate that at least a large section of the French youth do not perceive the army as worth so much as their humiliation, let alone their death. Now this consciousness, even if it has not reached the stage of articulating anti-imperialist and pro-working class reasons, is a healthy development.

#### *An example*

Let's recall the particular problem the Socialist Workers Party faced when we were working out our strategy toward the army on the eve of World War II. The most militant and conscious trade unionists perceived the war as a fight against fascism, and even a fight in defense of the USSR, the only workers state at that time. Under the specific conditions of this imperialist war, which also involved a question of the unconditional defense of the USSR, the SWP, in collaboration with Trotsky, propagandized for an army under *trade-union control*. At that point businessmen were preparing for the war by training workers under their leadership and at government expense. We illustrated how the real fight against fascism could be conducted—not by businessmen nor by the government which represented their interests, but under the leadership and control of the successful and militant trade-union movement of that period. In other words, our propaganda arose out of the concrete situation, and addressed the masses in slogans they could understand.

Today, to raise in a mechanical way those concepts in the U. S. would be a mockery of Marxism. There is no organized and militant trade-union movement that could provide such independent leadership. And, further, the masses of Americans do not equate World War II with the colonial wars the U. S. is waging.

That is why the Socialist Workers Party, in helping to lead the antiwar movement, raised the slogan of abolishing the draft *along* with our defense of GI rights. We regard the end to the draft as a *victory* of the antiwar movement, and would lead a fight against any effort to have the draft reimposed upon the American people. But whether the U. S. army is draft or volunteer, we have seen the continuing breakdown of army "discipline." We have seen stories recounting how GIs in Vietnam wanted to take *votes* on whether they should go into battle or not. We have heard of officers pleading with their troops to go into battle "just this once," and convincing them only by saying that other GIs were depending upon them. We have seen the development of GIs demanding their right to exer-

cise their full civil rights, to wear Black nationalist symbols, to participate in antiwar demonstrations, and to expose the government's secret raids and atrocities. And now that the ruling class in the U. S. has decided to "try" a volunteer army, we do not see that the soldiers and sailors have become "devoted body and soul" to the bourgeois state. The Black sailors on the Kitty Hawk who defended themselves against racist attacks are yet another illustration of the continuing radicalization of GIs.

#### *Ireland*

At the Socialist Workers Party convention in the summer of 1973 one of the IEC Majority reporters stated that even if the SWP had not worked to build an antiwar movement, a movement would have developed anyway, on the basis of the objective need. The test of that hypothesis is in England, where there was (and is) an objective need to build a Troops Out of Ireland movement.

As a matter of fact, polls have revealed that about 55 percent of the British population are opposed to sending British troops to Ireland. While the British workers do not yet support the right of the Irish to self-determination, there is a massive anti-intervention sentiment which could be mobilized. For instance, although the development of the antiwar movement began in 1964 with the SDS march on Washington, D. C., it was not until 1969 when public opinion polls and referenda on the war indicated that the majority of Americans opposed the war. How much greater is the potential of the anti-intervention movement if 55 percent already support an end to the British troops in Ireland. And yet no massive anti-intervention movement has arisen in Britain.

To explain this lack, one of the leaders of the Irish Commission wrote, in the document "The Central Orientation of Our Irish Work," that there is a fundamental difference between a professional army (Britain has not issued a draft call since the late 1950s) and a conscripted army, as the U. S. had during the height of the Vietnam War.

#### *Is a Professional Army Immune to The Radicalization?*

In a draft army, the author of the document continues, the army has close links with the population (while presumably a volunteer army has no such ties). Although no document has completely outlined the full theory of the IEC Majority on the question of the bourgeois army, it is clear to see that they view a volunteer army as immune to antiwar, pro-working class propaganda. And yet, who makes up the vast numbers of the army in either case? It is certainly not the ruling class who fills the army's ranks.

Those who serve in the army come from the poorest sections of the working class and peasantry. In the U. S., for instance, far more Blacks, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans end up in the army than should be the case on a strictly proportional basis. For many, the army is a chance to have a steady income—especially in a tight employment market. While the IEC Majority Tendency offers no evidence to back up its assertions about a volunteer army, there is some experience to indicate precisely the opposite: if the radicalization within the society as a whole continues, it will be reflected within the ranks of the army, whether it is draft or volunteer.

Perhaps it is for that reason that the IEC Majority Tendency offers no examples. Their political resolution *does* refer to the counterrevolutionary armies of Israel and Brazil—but both these nations have a draft army! Of more than a dozen nations of capitalist Europe, only Britain and Iceland do not enforce a compulsory draft system. Iceland is guarded by the presence of U. S. forces, while Britain has a draft but has not utilized it since the late 1950s. The U. S. government has assumed the role of imperialism's chief counterrevolutionary force, and Britain has abandoned many of its "outposts." For instance, it no longer has a force in the Arab-Persian Gulf. As Britain's direct colonies shrunk, and its imperialist responsibilities were shouldered by the U. S., Britain no longer needed such a large standing army, and took the appropriate economic measures.

As a matter of fact, after projecting its opposition to the volunteer army, the IEC Majority Tendency recognizes that a strong, counterrevolutionary striking force depends not so much on the maneuvers the ruling class of the various countries might pull, but on the continued radicalization within the industrialized world. Thus they conclude by backtracking on the very theory they develop. They state: "Without a very serious political and social defeat of the Japanese and European proletariats, one cannot see how imperialism would be able to create a stable and effective military force in these key regions of the world." Then why, one might ask is the question worth discussing? For two reasons: the theory is *foreign* to the Marxist method, and thus serves to hamper the revolutionary parties' ability to analyze, and, secondly, it has had practical consequences in disorienting at least two sections in the recent period.

The question has also come up under Latin America. While Hedda Garza, a leading member of the IEC Majority Tendency, has stated in branch discussion that people cannot "depend" on winning over the army, our movement has traditionally emphasized that the revolution will have need of the knowledge and arms of the army's ranks. Another IEC Majority supporter tried to explain how Latin American armies—and the Chilean army in particular—were fundamentally different than the kind of army existing in Russia during World War I. But for all the discussion about Latin America's professional armies, most countries, including Chile, have a draft army! As a matter of fact, many of the rank-and-file of the Chilean armed forces *were* willing to defend the social gains they had made under the Allende government. But the Valparaiso sailors who defied their officers and refused to rebel against the government found that Allende aided in their prosecution, not in their defense.

In their political resolution, the IEC Majority Tendency calls upon the workers movement to fight against an end to the draft. It is enough for them to know that such discussions are taking place within certain ruling circles—they need not analyze *why* it is being discussed. In contrast to the IEC Majority Tendency's supposition that the ruling class *prefers* a professional army, one could posit that the discussions themselves indicate a split in the ruling class over how to undercut the deepening radicali-

zation. If army discipline is eroding, then perhaps a significant section of the ruling class wants to opt for "upgrading" the army as a relatively cheap and efficient way of dealing with the problem. Loursion attempts to make fun of the ruling class' concern over the soldiers' "spiritual problems" without understanding that it is indeed very concerned that the old moral codes and old sense of army discipline are breaking down. This does represent a major problem for capitalism.

Given imperialism's greater emphasis on regional counterrevolutionary forces to keep a tight reign on the various areas (Iran and Israel in the Arab East, Brazil in Latin America, etc.), and given the general rise of anti-war sentiment, it may no longer be essential for the capitalists to keep up such a large standing national army. Also, one might ask how the detente affects this military strategy.

There is no doubt but that capitalists would like a strong and efficient army. However, given the number of struggles that have already broken out, and given the combativity of significant sections of the masses, it is difficult to see how the ruling class can win their goal by merely transforming the draft army into a volunteer army.

It is true that the capitalist countries of North America have had a different draft history than those of Europe. With the rise of the bourgeois states in Europe conscription was instituted as a bourgeois "right." These nations had need of a standing army to protect their borders and, later, as they became imperialist powers, to guard their interests and put down rebellions abroad. In contrast, neither Canada nor the U. S. have had a draft except in wartime. Then in 1948 the U. S. passed its first "peacetime" conscription act. This was the result of the government's new role as the dominant capitalist power. But these historical differences do not alter the dynamics of the current anti-military sentiment of the masses.

However, it is also important to discuss a point raised by the French comrades, that of the revolutionary parties' approach to winning the soldiers and sailors to the side of the working class. The Loursion article suggests that the army must remain a draft army because how else will revolutionaries be able to work to win over the army? But the fact of the matter is that few revolutionaries are ever *in* the army. Except in the case of a mobilization of the army, most revolutionaries are not inducted. Some are physically unfit, some are too young or too old. But by and large not even many of the "qualified" serve—because the government successfully screens us out! The army does not want revolutionary fighters in its ranks, and they control the apparatus.

But whether we are actually *in* the camps and *on* the bases where the GIs are or not, we have a revolutionary strategy for linking up with the soldiers. We educate the masses about the importance of winning over the GIs, we defend GI rights, we work with GIs as civilians or as fellow soldiers, and we continue to build the mass movements that will reflect themselves within the army—just as the Black nationalist, women's liberation, and antiwar movements have succeeded in doing.

December 7, 1973

## AN ERROR THAT SHOULD NOT GO WITHOUT NOTICE

by George Johnson, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local

In view of the many *large* errors that have been committed by the Mandel-Maitan-Frank group, I almost hesitate to point out what may be a minor error in their "Draft Political Resolution" (IIDB, Vol. X, No. 20).

However, in view of the gyrations this group has gone through because of earlier errors—from a strategy for the needs of the workers, to a strategy for the needs of the vanguard, to a strategy for the needs of the strategy—this error should be noted, before it too is taken to undreamed-of heights.

On page 7 in IIDB 20 we read that in Japan, "The winning of the principal municipalities by Socialist-Communist coalitions makes it possible to predict that the Socialist Party, no doubt allied with a liberal pacifist wing of the bourgeoisie, will take over the government . . . coinciding with a combative thrust of the Japanese proletariat and with an aggravation of the economic and social contradictions of capitalism in this country, this political change will stimulate the radicalization of not-negligible sectors of the Japanese working class, and will begin to undermine the reformist ideology and illusions."

First, on the factual errors. The winning of municipal elections referred to has *not* been by "Socialist-Communist coalitions," but rather by a combination of three, and at times four, of the "opposition" parties to the conservative Liberal Democratic Party: the Japan Communist Party, the Japan Socialist Party, the Democratic Socialist Party, and the Komeito, or Clean Government Party. The Democratic Socialists are not always in these local coalitions, as DS's anticommunism makes the JCP usually unwilling to accept coalition with them.

Of the four, three are working-class parties in the broad sense in which we use that term. The Komeito, however, has no base whatever in the working class, and is in fact strongly anti-Marxist. It grew out of the right-wing Buddhist sect Sokkagakai, whose members distribute its paper and provide its doorbell-ringers (to use an American phrase that does not apply in Japan, where there are few doorbells) in elections. Thus, any coalition that includes this party is class-collaborationist.

### *A Wild Prediction*

It is difficult to understand how the comrades who wrote this document came to believe that the current pattern of politics in Japan is going to bring the Socialist Party to power there in a coalition with part of the LDP. It is true that the Liberal Democrats are increasingly losing seats, and that party appears to be in a deepening crisis in its ability to govern Japan. This fact is noted by a large number of Japanese newspapers to the point that it is almost an article of faith. But a JSP-LDP coalition government seems most unlikely, and such a government has not been broached publicly in Japan to my knowledge.

What is, however, being regarded as a serious possibility in Japan to replace the LDP is a coalition government of the opposition parties, along the lines of the munic-

ipal election coalitions. A number of "responsible" bourgeois journals, such as the *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun*, are treating such a coalition government as a real possibility. And the JSP and the JCP themselves both want above all else to be part of such a coalition. Both parties' programs are for it, and both are currently propagandizing widely for it. Both the JCP and the JSP want to include the Komeito in the coalition—the Democratic Socialist Party, because it is small and because of its hostility to the JCP, is the only "problem" party.

While it is true that the JSP is the largest of these four parties in terms of votes and elected representatives, the JCP is far larger in membership and press circulation. In addition, in the last two years, the JCP has made large gains in elections. It is in fact the increasing electoral strength of the JCP that has brought a coalition government to be regarded seriously by the Japanese bourgeoisie.

Thus it seems unlikely, to say the least, that the JSP is going to come to power in Japan, as far ahead as anyone can see, except as part of a coalition with the JCP and the Komeito (which also has a large numerical base).

The MMF authors have written that the "objective function of the coming to power of such a [JSP] government will be to introduce the reforms necessary to try to stabilize Japanese capital, operating in an international economic and social climate different from that of the last two decades." And they add, "The entry of the SPD (Social Democratic Party) into the West German government had an analogous function." No doubt, in the unlikely event that the JSP agrees to a coalition government with some wing of the Liberal Democrats, the function of such a government would be as the MMF authors have described it. The much more likely variant, however, would seem to be the three-party or four-party coalition being pushed forward by the JSP and JCP, undoubtedly with some Liberal Democratic elements.

Why has this wildly improbable prediction been made? It is difficult to guess. If it is the result of some fantasy of the authors, then they should at the least be reproached for being rather frivolous about a not-unimportant matter.

Unfortunately, more serious errors cannot be automatically ruled out, in view of the error made by the Ligue Communiste in calling for a vote to the Union of the Left in France, and in view of the MMF group's hesitation to criticize the political support by the MIR in Chile to the Unidad Popular because the MIR is "for armed struggle."

To say this is not to accuse these comrades of having made yet another serious error. But until we find out the reason for such wild predictions being included in a document that is intended by its authors to be a guide for world Trotskyism, we will watch this space for further developments.

December 8, 1973

ADDENDUM TO AN EXCHANGE

by Les Evan, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local

I have received the following letter which completes the exchange of correspondence which appeared in SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 32, No. 1. I am submitting it for the information of the party.

December 8, 1973

\* \* \*

Les Evans  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Comrade Evans,

I recieved your letter of 4 December informing me that the letter from Paula and myself was going to pop up as a document in the SWP Internal Bulletins; while we would prefer ideally to have it in the YSA bulletin (where we would be able to respond to any attacks on us), we have no objection to it appearing as a document. I note in your cover note, however, the comment that "it is of some

interest in light of the positions put forth by the Internationalist Tendency on the nature of Stalinism." I am not entirely clear what you mean here, unless it is in reference to the idiotic charge that the IT has "capitulated to Stalinism." What really disturbs me, however, is the implication that Paula and myself were acting in some sense as spokespeople for the IT when we submitted our letter. Paula and I support the Internationalist Tendency, as we have from its inception; at no time, however, did we (or do we) claim to be speaking informally or formally for the IT; we wrote as two individuals and the letter is published as a document, this point must be made clearly, either through printing this additional letter or through a postscript of your own.

Comradely,  
s/John Hutton

cc: Bill Massey