SPARTACIST

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SL Confronts USec Leader on U.S. Tour

Ernest Mandel: A Centrist For All Seasons

An abbreviated version of this article was distributed at a meeting in New York on May 4 where Mandel spoke on the world economic crisis. For an account of this meeting see "Mandel Weasels on Pop Front," Workers Vanguard No. 205, 12 May 1978.

Ernest Mandel is a world-class left-wing academic, jet-setting from continent to continent to give lectures and interviews, a prolific author of books and articles, a "star" whose views are eagerly sought by trendy publications and even the most stuffy bourgeois newspapers and journals of opinion. He is perhaps the best-known of the fraternity of economists who claim the Marxist tradition, and much closer to orthodox Leninism than a Sweezy or Bettelheim. He is, finally, the very image of an engagé intellectual, darting from classrooms at Louvain or Berlin's "Free University" to meetings of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" of which he is the principal spokesman, to conferences with planning officials in Havana. To the mass media and imperialist governments Ernest Mandel is the embodiment of the "Trotskyite menace," a bête noir to be stopped at borders by secret police or excluded by McCarthyite legislation.

Leaving aside the periodic reactionary hysteria about a "terrorist Fourth International," Mandel enjoys a positive reputation across an amazingly broad spectrum, ranging from out-and-out liberals to unblushing Stalinists. This contrasts so sharply with the opprobrium and persecution directed against Leon Trotsky and the Fourth Internationalist communists of his day that one is moved to ask why. If this man is the irreconcilable opponent of all existing regimes of class rule or bureaucratic oppression on the planet, the resolute defender of authentic Marxism and Leninism against every hue of revisionism, a fiery denouncer of those who betray the cause of the proletariat then why

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Ernest Mandel speaking in New York City on May 4.

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isn't he universally hated? *The answer is simple: Ernest Mandel is not a Trotskyist but an impostor. Anybody who came to hear a genuine Bolshevik-Leninist should ask for his money back.*

In reality, although he knows quite well what Bolshevik intransigence is and can write an orthodox polemic as facilely as he churns out opportunist apologetics, for the last quarter century Mandel has fought *against* a Trotskyist perspective and program at every crucial juncture. He has employed his agile mind and his impressive erudition to dream up revisionist "theoretical" cover for every petty-bourgeois radical opportunist craze: student power, peasant-guerrilla "armed struggle," popular frontism. In the 1960's when "student power" was in its heyday he joined right in the New Left fad. Rather than emphasizing that the proletariat was still the key, he wrote that the workers' struggles had been bought off under "neocapitalism," and his supporters advocated a program for "red universities." When "Che" Guevara was a cult hero on the campuses Mandel, far from insisting on the need for a Leninist proletarian vanguard party to lead the struggles of the working masses, became an armchair guerrillero and ordered his followers to join Castro's guerrillaist "International," the stillborn OLAS.

Today he is again chasing after the latest fashionable trends in Europe: popular frontism and Eurocommunism. Where Trotsky called proletarian opposition to the Popular Front the key to revolutionary strategy in this epoch and "the best criterion for the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism," Mandelites in France refused to label the Union of the Left a popular front and, fearful of "isolation," followed the masses in voting for its candidates. And while the Eurocommunists are caught up in Jimmy Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" campaign, Mandel says he has "hopes and confidence" that inveterate reformist traitors like Spanish CP leader Carrillo—who crossed a picket line at Yale to demonstrate his appreciation to the State Department for letting him visit America—"will return to the path of revolutionary Marxism"!

Even people who are relatively unacquainted with Trotskyism can easily see that such a man has nothing to do with the heroic Left Oppositionists whose leader was slain on Stalin's orders in 1940. For if student power spontaneists, Guevarist guerrillaists and the popular front can lead the revolutionary struggle, then who needs Trotskyist parties? In fact, if the Stalinist reformists of the Spanish CP can "return" to revolutionary Marxism, then Trotsky was dead wrong in writing off the Comintern as definitively gone over to the side of the bourgeoisie after Stalin allowed Hitler to march to power unhindered in 1933. Then the founding of the Fourth International five years later was, at best, a terrible mistake.

"The Many Faces and Long Waves of Ernest Mandel"

In New York Mandel will be speaking on the world economic crisis. It is on the subject of economics that he has gained renown as a popularizer and interpreter of Marx in the period of monopoly capitalism. His textbook, *Marxist Economic Theory*, is the most widely read volume of its kind, and Mandel has a certain aura of theoretical innovation, such as his rediscovery (elaborated in his book *Late Capitalism*) of the "long wave" theories of the Russian economist Kondratiev. He often appears to be orthodox compared to other pseudo-Marxist economists, such as Paul Sweezy who distorts the labor theory of value to justify his New Left theory of a crisis-free monopoly capitalism; or Charles Bettelheim, who has to redefine capitalism in order to justify the Maoist dogma that the USSR is "social-imperialist." But in reality, Mandel's economic writings are stepchildren to his political appetites, the purest impressionism dressed up in Marxoid jargon.

To take but one example, just *why* did our "theoretician" come up with Kondratiev "long waves"? (His contention is that the period between 1945 and 1966 was a "long post-war phase of rapid growth," during which supposedly effective countercyclical capitalist state policies made the recurrence of a 1929-style crash impossible. In contrast, we are—according to his view—currently in a long-term downturn in which the economic struggles of labor run up against the bosses' profit greed.) To begin with, Mandel has no economic data to back up his contentions: none are available in the 19th century, he deliberately ignores the mid- and late-1920's boom to show the entire interwar period as a down wave, and the "post-war boom" is a myth—being quite uneven internationally, with plenty of ups and downs.

No, the origin of Mandel's long wave theory is political, not economic. It is a dishonest, objectivist means of excusing the fact that during the 1960's he wrote off the working class of the imperialist countries as a revolutionary force. At that time he did not refer to "late capitalism" but "*neocapitalism*" based on the "third industrial revolution" of automation and nuclear power. In his brochure, *An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory*, Mandel states that: "The neo-capitalist phase which we are now witnessing, is that of a long term expansion of capitalism...." This directly contradicts the Leninist thesis that the imperialist epoch is that of the *decay* of productive

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forces—"the death agony of capitalism" as Trotsky put it in the title of the founding program of the Fourth International.

And what are the implications of this long-term expansion? Mandel writes:

> "The long term cycle which began with the Second World War, and in which we still remain...has, on the contrary, been characterized by expansion, and because of this expansion the margin for negotiation and discussion between the bourgeoisie and the working class has been enlarged. The possibility has been created for strengthening the system on the basis of granting concessions to the workers...close collaboration between an expansive bourgeoisie and the conservative forces of the labor movement and is fundamentally sustained by a rising trend in the standard of living of the workers."
>
> *An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory*

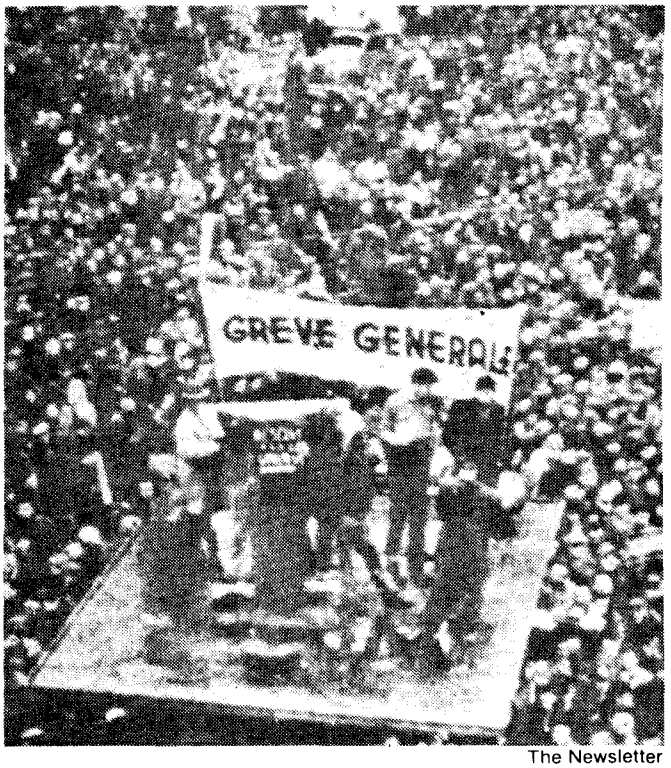
Try presenting that line to the petty-bourgeois radical milieu today! Mandel would be laughed off the stage. But at the time this was a popular theme of all the "new working class" theories and, as always, our "Marxist" economist picked up what was in vogue and elaborated a theory to fit the superficial impression.

As for the bosses' willingness to "buy off" the workers, it suffices to recall the brutality with which the American bourgeoisie beat down the 1959 steel strike to expose this claim.

But Mandel's theory is more than a distortion of the facts: it is an excuse for betrayal. The most concrete case is his own treacherous behavior in the 1960-61 Belgian general strike (an event which according to his schema of "neocapitalism" should never have occurred). Mandel was editor of a newspaper, *La Gauche*, which posed as the voice of a broad left wing in the Belgian Socialist Party (similar to the *Tribune* in England today) under the mantle of André Renard, a leading union bureaucrat. *La Gauche* was putting forward at the time a program of "structural reforms" including abolition of the "*loi unique*" (the Christian Democratic government's anti-labor austerity program), nationalization of the power industry, government economic planning, controls on the monopolies, halving the military budget, etc. In other words, an extremely modest social-democratic reform program.

As a general strike developed against the *loi unique*, when the workers were demanding in mass meetings "Down with the Eyskens government!" Mandel's *La Gauche* wrote on 24 December 1960 that "The workers fear that if the government falls in the present social crisis, the Belgian Socialist Party will enter a new coalition government...." This, he said, would only be acceptable if "1) the new government abandoned the *loi unique*, 2) if the essential points in the structural reforms be kept as government policy." So in the name of "structural reforms" Mandel announced his acceptance of a bourgeois coalition government!

But this was not all. The 1 January 1961 edition of *La Gauche* carried a red headline: "Organize the March on Brussels!" Unfortunately for Mandel he had jumped the gun on his mentor Renard, who was not about to provoke a showdown with the Eyskens government. The next week *La Gauche* argued against concentrating forces on a single time and place and instead called for guerrilla tactics, and



The Newsletter

Belgian general strike of 1960-61: Mandel withdrew call for march on Brussels when "left" bureaucrat Renard refused to support it.

by 14 January Mandel felt constrained to publish a cringing capitulation:

> "We have been reproached for having launched the slogan of a march on Brussels.... Since we find that the demand has not been taken up by the leaders, we submit; but we point out that at the moment our call appeared last week, no indications on this subject were yet known."

It's true, of course. Had Mandel known Renard was strongly opposed to a march he would never have issued a call.

Another of the topics Mandel is speaking on during his current tour is the Paris May events of 1968. What he will not mention, however, is how his theory of "neocapitalism" led him to put forward a program telling the working masses *not* to fight for state power! At the time there were ten million workers on strike, threatening to break through the bureaucratic control of the CP and the unions. However, since "there is not yet a sufficiently influential, organized, unified vanguard, to the left of the CP, that could lead the masses to victory immediately," Mandel wrote, "It is here that the strategy of anti-capitalist structural reforms, 'transitional demands,' assumes all its validity" (*Militant*, 14 June 1968). For Trotskyists transitional demands are part of a program "unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat." Mandel, however, proclaimed that "the masses cannot seize power" and therefore called for "structural reforms" (workers control of production, opening company books, end of bank secrecy) which were explicitly *not* seen as a challenge to capitalist rule but only as "guarantees."

By the 1970's Mandel was no longer talking of "neocapitalism" and he soon discovered that the long wave of

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the "post-war boom" had now headed downwards. What had changed, however, was not the economic situation. The economic conditions in France in 1968 and during Italy's "hot autumn" of 1969 were similar to the early 1960's. What happened was that in the French May events, the student vanguardists Mandel had been tailing discovered the working class. As the Maoist/syndicalist groups began to grow, the Mandelites, threatened with being outflanked on their left, shifted gears and began chasing after a "new mass [later, broad] vanguard" including radicalized workers. Mandel's current economic prognoses, while superficially more orthodox than his "neocapitalist" contortions, are in reality no closer to Trotskyism. They merely serve as an excuse for tailing after spontaneous working-class militancy and refusing to raise the full transitional program in the unions.

The Measure of the Man: How Mandel Became a Pabloist

Ernest Mandel broke with Trotskyism more than 25 years ago at a time of a great crisis in the Fourth International which led to a split in 1953 and the consequent destruction of the FI as the world party of socialist revolution. The cause of this terrible blow to world Trotskyism was Pabloist liquidationism, and after an initial hesitant step to oppose this revisionist current, Mandel soon broke and served as a lawyer, a cover for the liquidators. This capitulation revealed a key aspect of his character—*political cowardice*—which is incompatible with being a revolutionary leader. Ever since, Mandel has been essentially an intellectual prostitute, a pen for hire to whatever is the left cause of the moment. It is this which explains his wide popularity, for he takes up whatever is in style this season. But the price of this popularity is a constant refusal to provide revolutionary leadership—"to tell the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be."

In the late 1940's the Stalinist parties of West Europe, particularly France and Italy, were able to greatly extend and consolidate their influence as a result of their leading role in the resistance to Nazi occupation. The forces of the Fourth International, which had been greatly weakened through assassination by both the Stalinists and fascists during World War II, were largely on the margins of the workers movement. At the same time the onset of the Cold War led to a hardening of the Kremlin line, while the appearance of bureaucratically deformed workers states in East Europe and China led impressionists to conclude that perhaps the Stalinists could be forced to the left.

It was under these circumstances that the pressures of isolation took their toll on the Fourth International. The revisionist current which appeared was led by Michel Pablo, the head of the International Secretariat of the FI. In a January 1951 article entitled "Where Are We Going?" Pablo developed his "war/revolution" thesis according to which World War III between the U.S. and the USSR was imminent, and the West European workers movement would be subordinated to this dynamic. Moreover, under the pressure of the masses, wrote Pablo, "The Communist Parties retain the possibility in certain circumstances of roughly outlining a revolutionary orientation." Therefore,

Morel

Popular-Front French Union of the Left: handshake of class collaboration.

seeing the possibility of revolutionary situations developing before the Trotskyist vanguard could amass significant resources, Pablo called for a policy of "entrism *sui generis*," in which the sections of the FI would enter the mass Stalinist and social-democratic parties with the perspective of staying there for a long period to pressure the reformists to the left.

This program deprived the Fourth International of its reason for existence. Consequently resistance to Pablo's schema began to appear in many sections. When the leadership of the French section refused to go along with the recipe for "deep entrism" in the Communist Party, Pablo declared them suspended, in a bureaucratic move worthy of a petty Stalin. The first opposition to Pabloism, interestingly, came in the form of a document by Ernest Germain (the party name of Mandel), which became known as the "Ten Theses." On the face of it this was just a restatement of home truths about the counterrevolutionary policies of Stalinism. In actuality, though it bent over backwards not to attack Pablo by name, this was a veiled attack on the program put forward in "Where Are We Going?" Germain's tenth thesis stated:

> "...it is because the new revolutionary wave contains in embryo the destruction of the Stalinist parties as such that we ought to be much closer today to the Communist workers. This is only one phase of our fundamental task: to construct new revolutionary parties."

Mandel/Germain, however, was not able to get the Pablo-dominated International Secretariat to adopt his theses. Having no stomach for a hard factional struggle—even though the very existence of the Fourth International was at stake—he succumbed to Pablo's pressures. Subsequently he became the hatchetman for the dictatorial general secretary against the majority leadership of the French section (PCI), which had supported his now-

abandoned "Ten Theses." In response to this cowardly treachery, Favre-Bleibtreu, head of the French anti-Pabloists wrote to Germain in July 1951:

> "We always take the same pleasure in reading your documents, whose cultural level, richness of imagery, and style remind us that you remain the most brilliant writer of the International. But this reading confirms my belief that you lack one quality, the one most necessary to a leader: firmness of your political ideas.
>
> "Today you magnanimously offer the PCI leadership a peaceful haven 'within the ranks of the International majority' where you yourself ingloriously found refuge, after a few passing impulses of resistance to Pablo's revisionist impulses. Pardon us for not following you on this path because in our view the International will not be built by maneuvering and especially not by your pitiful maneuvers."
>
> "Comrade Ernest Germain, renounce diversionary maneuvers, renounce your puerile and irresponsible double-crossing game, put forward and defend your ideas as we ourselves defend them."
>
> translated from *Spartacist* (édition française) No. 7, autumn 1974

It is not hard to imagine the bitterness of these comrades, who were being read out of the International, when the erudite "leader" Mandel collapsed at the slightest pressure. But the harm which befell them because of his perfidy does not compare to the crime perpetrated against the Chinese Trotskyists then being held in the jails of Mao Tse-tung's Stalinist regime. This horror story is documented in a letter by Peng Shu-tse, head of the Chinese section of the FI, to American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon in December 1953. Peng was first shocked to learn, some time after arriving in Europe, that Pablo considered Mao's party centrist and claimed Mao had absorbed the central theses of the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution. Since Peng had been forced to flee China under the blows of Stalinist repression, this was a little hard to stomach.

So, too, was Pablo's resolution on China adopted by the International Executive Committee (IEC) in June 1952. "The worst thing is," wrote Peng, "that nobody can find a perspective for the Chinese Trotskyists in this resolution." Its supporters, he reported, called for dissolving the Chinese section in order to join the Communist Party. But the real shock came when he reported to a November 1952 IEC plenum on the brutal repression of the Chinese Trotskyists by Mao. Pablo replied that the massacre was not a deliberate action but a mistake and an exception. In May 1953 Peng submitted to the IEC an international appeal for aid from the Chinese Trotskyists and an open letter to the Mao regime protesting the killings and jailings. Pablo agreed to publish the former, but then suppressed it.

As to the open letter, Germain (by now Pablo's flunkey) informed Peng—who was a member of the IEC, and of the International Secretariat until Pablo purged him—that it should have expressed total support of the Maoist regime, praising its revolutionary achievements, and only then mentioned the facts of the persecution. Because Peng opposed the Peking regime as Stalinist, Mandel/Germain denounced him as a "hopeless sectarian" and refused to circulate the open letter to the International. The Chinese Trotskyists, said the revisionist Germain, were "refugees from a revolution"!

As if it were not enough to whitewash the Maoist repression—praising the Stalinist regime as revolutionary,

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C.F.D.T.

Sit down strike at Citroen auto plant during May 1968. While 10 million workers were out on strike, Mandel called for "anti-capitalist structural reforms."

"Radical Egalitarian" Stalinism: A Post Mortem

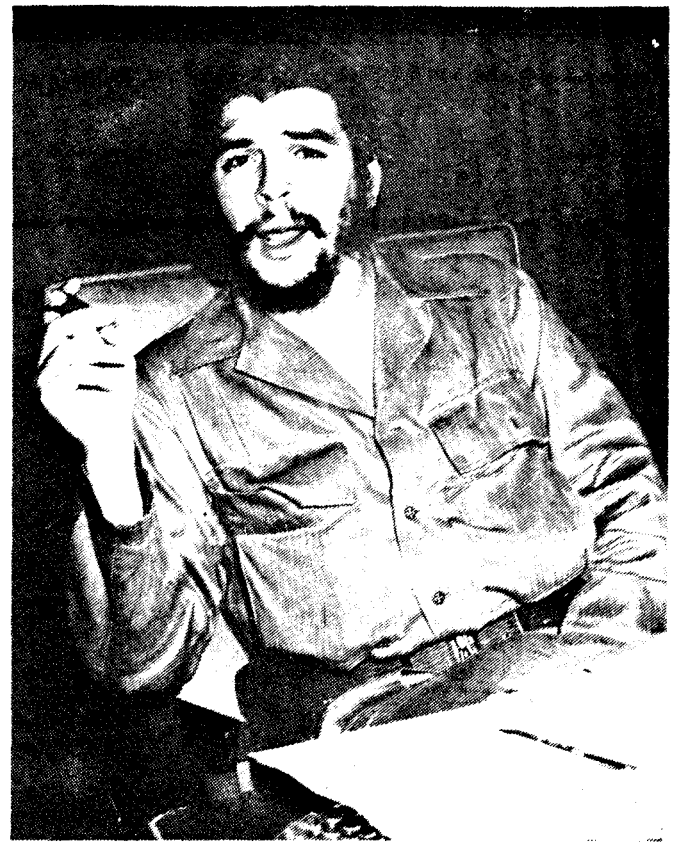
During the heyday of the New Left a generation of Western radicals came to politically embrace Stalinism in its "Third World" variants in large part because Cuba and China appeared to these impressionistic petty-bourgeois idealists to be egalitarian societies in struggle, unlike the seemingly complacent, stodgy, bureaucratized Soviet Union. For the last decade in the U.S. political identification with what could be called "Third World" Stalinist egalitarianism has been a dominant tendency in mainstream petty-bourgeois radicalism.

New Leftism first coalesced with "Third World" Stalinism over the Cuban revolution during the mid-1960's. In marked contrast to their Russian patrons the Cuban leadership appeared to be genuinely committed to humanistic and populist ideals, seemingly determined not to give up their old spartan guerrilla values or their vision of spreading the revolution throughout Latin America by fomenting "armed struggle." Contrary to the New Left illusions, the Cuban leaders were at bottom Khrushchevs in khaki. After their budding "détente" with Yankee imperialism was abruptly terminated by Washington and their cordial relations with the Kremlin estranged following what was regarded as a Soviet retreat over the 1962 missile crisis, the Cuban leaders had nothing to lose by adopting a militant posture.

What especially captivated the New Left was how Ernesto "Che" Guevara eloquently preached the need to combine "building socialism" with creating "socialist man." To New Leftists Guevara seemed to be speaking their language when he advocated a struggle to end alienated labor in Cuba that would start by replacing all material incentives with moral incentives. Guevara seemed to integrate two distinct New Left currents: regarding the "wretched of the earth" in the "Third World" as the sole revolutionary vanguard (Frantz Fanon), and viewing the question of "personal liberation" as a necessary but neglected goal of Marxist socialism (Herbert Marcuse).

Although the much-touted "radical" policies adopted by Castro produced a series of economic disasters instead of "socialist man" and were later scrapped in favor of a return to more orthodox Soviet-model methods, the New Left in the meantime had its attention diverted to China, then in the throes of the so-called "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." Starry-eyed radicals in the West took as good coin the Maoist demagogy about struggling to eliminate bureaucratism and privilege and to create in China a society modeled after the Paris Commune. In reality an intra-bureaucratic power struggle launched by Mao only to oust his principle rivals in the regime and to whip the apparatus into line, the Cultural Revolution was idealized by many Leftists as a titanic campaign to institute "participatory democracy" for one fourth of the human race.

Whereas Guevara's specific economic (as opposed to his high-falutin' social) ideas advocated during the Cuban "Great Debate" had relatively little impact on the New Left, the Chinese Cultural Revolution made questions of economic policy, such as moral versus material incentives, a real issue among vicarious "radical" Stalinists. While Guevara had regarded material incentives as perhaps legitimate for "building socialism" Soviet-style but a fetter on creating "socialist man," Mao claimed that material incentives and wage differentials were a mortal *threat* to the very existence of "socialism" in China. Not only those who joined Maoist cadre organizations after the demise of the New Left but also those soft "Third World" enthusiasts who remained organizationally unaffiliated accepted the incredibly idealist Maoist dogma that "revisionists" (defined as anyone in the Chinese bureaucracy who opposed Mao) could restore capitalism in China simply through gradually expanding "bourgeois right" (material incentives and the like), i.e., a peaceful and possibly even surreptitious counterrevolution.



Ernesto "Che" Guevara.

But history hasn't been kind to those who seek to glorify "Third World" Stalinist egalitarianism. If the economic policies of the Castro regime haven't caused significant disillusionment in the New Left radical milieu, the seemingly kaleidoscopic policy shifts associated with the revolving-door purges in People's China since the death of Mao certainly have. In October of 1976 the most prominent representatives of "radical" Maoism (Chiang

Ching, Yao Wen-yuan, Wang Hung-wen, Chang Chun-chiao) were suddenly purged and henceforth vilified as a high-living, double-dealing "Gang of Four" who spouted rhetoric about "restricting bourgeois right" only to conceal their allegedly nefarious schemes to restore a new bourgeoisie to power in China. Claiming the mantle of Maoism, the new regime headed by Hua Kuo-feng and Teng Hsiao-ping has promised to rectify the voluntarist idiocies attributed to the "Gang of Four" and to adopt more "pragmatic" economic policies, which include replacing moral incentives with material incentives and raising wages for the first time in 16 years. Thus, a recent issue of *Peking Review* (17 February) prominently featured on its front page a slogan which for years had been denounced by the "radical" Maoists as the epitome of Brezhnevite "revisionism": "To Each According to His Work: Socialist Principle of Distribution."

While Castro's abandonment of Guevarist-inspired economic policies produced no ripples among New Left circles, the purge of the most prominent self-proclaimed Maoist "egalitarians" proved to be a political bombshell in the camp of Maoists and pro-Peking "progressives" abroad. It was soon followed by an official campaign repudiating those policies and rhetoric that for a decade had been associated with "radical" Maoism. In the U.S. the question of material incentives versus "restricting bourgeois right" entered into the clique fight which recently ripped apart the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), once the largest pro-Peking organization in this country. To the extent that the RCP clique fight had a programmatic expression, the rival "headquarters"—the inveterate New Leftists around the "Chairman" Bob Avakian and the more orthodox Stalinists following Mickey Jarvis—clashed over the question of whether or not the new leadership in Peking was leading China down the "capitalist road." In his main "summing-up" of the fight Avakian directed his "main blow" at Teng's "Twenty Points," an economic policy platform that proposed granting wage increases and reinstituting material incentives.

Apart from those few dogged spirits who continue the search for "socialist man" among the peasantry of tiny Albania, New Left radicals have been left without any Stalinist-ruled state to idealize as an egalitarian society. Even Vietnam, that "socialist fatherland" for "Third World" enthusiasts who wanted to wish away the Sino-Soviet split, has been a "God That Failed" for many New Left leftovers. While Ho once was glorified as a gentle philosopher-poet concerned with instilling humanistic values in his people even under conditions of war and destruction, his heirs in Hanoi are today locked in a sordid nationalist war with their "comrades" in Phnom Penh, who are denounced as marauding rapists and cannibals. But "poor little Cambodia" isn't likely to become a New Left favorite. If wage differentials have been eliminated in "Democratic Kampuchea," it is only because the rabidly xenophobic and primitivist Cambodian Stalinist regime has actually abolished wages and even currency itself—which under conditions of material scarcity can only result in militarization of labor and enormous economic hardships for the toiling masses.

Thus, as a significant New Left-derived political tendency identification with "radical" Stalinist egalitarianism has had its day. But the issues which nurtured this tendency are very much alive. Especially now, considerable attention has been generated by the new so-called "pragmatic" policies of the Hua/Teng regime. But in denouncing how the "radical" Maoists misused moral incentives and in "rehabilitating" material incentives the present Peking regime by no means has repudiated moral incentives as such. Regardless of which clique rules in the Forbidden City, the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy, as long as it remains saddled by the enormous contradiction between its material backwardness and its Great Power aspirations, must continue to resort to utopian-voluntarist methods — and to rationalize their economic policies with phony egalitarian rhetoric. It is thus timely to consider how the questions of material incentives and wage differentials have been obfuscated and distorted by Stalinist ideologues, both of the orthodox Moscow school and the sundry self-styled "radical egalitarians," ranging from Guevara to Mao.

Stalinist Idealism à la "Che"

"Che" Guevara was lionized by the New Left as the most articulate of the Cuban leaders who were growing increasingly critical of the guidance provided by the "socialist beacon" in Moscow. A series of domestic economic failures in the early 1960's convinced Guevara that Soviet-model planning principles couldn't be successfully imposed upon the plantation monoculture of Cuba. Moreover, many of the top leaders in the Cuban regime regarded the Soviet role during the Missile Crisis of 1962 as a retreat which left Cuba even more isolated than before.

In the course of the so-called "Great Debate" over economic and developmental policies which took place in Cuba during 1963-66 Guevara stressed what he called "the two pillars of socialist construction: the formation of the new human being and the development of technology." If Cuba were to achieve genuine socialism, argued Guevara, then two interrelated tasks had to be simultaneously tackled at once. First, commodity production in Cuba had to be completely eliminated through full collectivization, super-centralized planning and financing and the eradication of material incentives. Second, creating a self-sacrificing, frugal and fully-socialized "New Man" required replacing material with moral incentives and instituting campaigns encouraging unpaid voluntary labor.

While Guevara was undoubtedly fervent in his egalitarian convictions, the fundamental concepts he formulated and defended during the "Great Debate" remained fully within the ideological domain of Stalinism. At no time did Guevara question the total political disenfranchisement of the Cuban masses or the commitment of the Castro clique to the reactionary-utopian Stalinist dogma of "building socialism in one country"—in this case a tiny island only ninety miles from the shores of the foremost imperialist colossus. Guevara's political worldview was fundamentally defined by his identification with the rule of a Stalinist bureaucratic caste that views as a hostile act demands by the workers for a higher living standard or for some say in decision making. If he sounded more militant and egalitarian than the Kremlin bureaucrats (and their loyal lackeys in Cuba), it was mainly because Guevara, perhaps even more so than Fidel Castro, identified with the military—i.e., the guerrillas in power. Unlike the party and administrative apparatuses, the military

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Egalitarianism...

command was that part of the Cuban Stalinist bureaucracy least directly involved with implementing economic policies. Guevara was guided by a conception that "socialist" society should be built not through appealing to supposedly base material interests but by exhorting the masses to sacrifice, just as the guerrillas had only been victorious through enormous self-sacrifice and revolutionary idealism.

What defined Guevara as fundamentally an *idealist* Stalinist is the fact that he sought to surmount the insurmountable obstacles to "building socialism" in economically backward Cuba through utopian-voluntarist means. In his well-known 1965 essay, "Man and Socialism in Cuba," Guevara explicitly links the primacy of moral over material incentives to the problems of how to rapidly industrialize underdeveloped Cuba in a capitalist international environment:

> "Underdevelopment and the customary flight of capital to 'civilized' countries make impossible a rapid change without sacrifices. There still remains a long stretch to be covered in the building of the economic base, and the temptation to follow the beaten paths of material interest as the lever of speedy development is very great....
>
> "Pursuing the chimera of achieving socialism with the aid of the blunted weapons left to us by capitalism (the commodity as the economic cell, profitability, and individual material interest as levers, etc.), it is possible to come to a blind alley.... Meanwhile, the adapted economic base has undermined the development of consciousness. To build communism, a new man must be created simultaneously with the material base."
>
> —reproduced in Bertram Silverman, *Man and Socialism in Cuba: The Great Debate* (1971)

Thus, consciously rejecting an internationalist (i.e., Leninist-Trotskyist) perspective of revolution, Guevara advocated "sacrifices" by the laboring masses as the only viable alternative to Soviet-style technocratic methods.

It is thus quite logical that for Guevara the principal obstacle to "building socialism" in Cuba was the continuation of individualistic attitudes and values among the masses, in particular material interest as the prime motivation for labor. For example, in an interview held in 1963 Guevara declared:

> "I am not interested in dry economic socialism. We are fighting against poverty, but we are also fighting against alienation. One of the fundamental objectives of Marxism is to remove interest, the factor of individual interest, and gain from men's psychological motivations. Marx was preoccupied both with economic factors and with their repercussions on the spirit. If communism isn't interested in this, too, it may be a method of distributing goods, but it will never be a revolutionary way of life."
>
> —quoted in Silverman, introduction to *Man and Socialism in Cuba.*

While attractive to the radical iconoclasm of the early New Left, this political worldview is profoundly *anti*-Marxist. The counterposition of individual material interest to an abstract concept of social collectivity is a bourgeois ideological prejudice. In one of his earliest writings as a socialist Marx explicitly attacked setting the interests of society above the well-being of its individual members:

> "Above all we must avoid postulating 'society' again as an abstraction *vis-à-vis* the individual. The individual *is the social being*. His manifestations of life—even if they may not appear in the direct form of *communal* manifestations of life carried out in association with others—*are* therefore an expression and confirmation of *social life*." [emphasis in original]
>
> —"Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (1975) Vol. III, p. 299

Engels was even more explicit about the individualist values of communist society. In what became the first draft of the *Communist Manifesto* he wrote:

> "Question 2: *What is the aim of the Communists?*
> "Answer: To organise society in such a way that every member of it can develop and use all his capabilities and powers in complete freedom and without thereby infringing the basic conditions of this society."
>
> —"Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith," in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works* (1976) Vol. VI, p. 96

Needless to say, Marxists understand that in the course of the epochal struggle to overthrow world capitalism the cadres of the revolutionary vanguard must be prepared to sacrifice their individual interests and sometimes even their lives. In a period of revolutionary crises the working masses will also make great sacrifices. But in mass struggles such sacrifices are made for the purpose of securing better material conditions in the near future. It is profoundly anti-Marxist to transform the need for the vanguard and the masses to make sacrifices in the struggle to overthrow capitalism into a doctrinal rejection of the materialist and individualist aims that are a component part of the communist worldview.

Just as Guevara counterposed individual interest to the ideal of an egalitarian-collectivist society, so he also tended to simply identify individual selfishness with bourgeois ideology. But Marxists understand that bourgeois ideology is not and never has been the cult of unbridled selfishness. Only the most vulgar bourgeois ideologists of the ilk of Ayn Rand would venture to make such a claim.

Nationalism and religion, often in concert, have played an enormous role in conditioning the laboring masses to submit to bourgeois authority in the factory and society in general. For example, Methodism was the main ideological force in the transformation of the independent English artisan class of the eighteenth century into a disciplined factory proletariat. Early nineteenth century British mill owners were very much aware of the importance of moral (i.e., religious) incentives in exploiting "their" laborers. One leading ideologue of the British industrial revolution, Andrew Ure, made the following typical observation in his 1835 work, *Philosophy of Manufactures*:

> "It is, therefore, excessively the interest of every millowner to organize his moral machinery on equally sound principles with his mechanical, for otherwise he will never command the steady hands, watchful eyes, and prompt co-operation, essential to the excellence of product.... There is, in fact, no case to which the Gospel truth, 'Godliness is great gain,' is more applicable than to the administration of an extensive factory."
>
> —quoted in E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963)

It was Guevara's Stalinist political outlook which limited him to his superficial and false view of bourgeois ideology as simply pure individualism. Guevara cannot consider nationalism as a *bourgeois* ideology precisely because of his own central ideological commitment to "socialist nation building." And Guevara's subjectivist concept of

how to liberate the "socialist man" within every Cuban citizen has a certain ideological resemblance to the Christian doctrine that "the Kingdom of Heaven is within."

Subjectivist Re-Definition of Alienation

What most attracted the New Left to Guevara's egalitarian concepts was his exhortation about ending alienated labor as a vital part of the struggle to "build socialism" in Cuba. Eliminating alienated labor would, in turn, contribute to the interrelated task of creating the new "socialist man." In "Man and Socialism in Cuba" Guevara defined unalienated labor in the following terms:

> "In order for it to develop in culture, work must acquire a new condition; man as commodity ceases to exist, and a system is established that grants a quota for the fulfillment of social duty. The means of production belong to society, and the machine is only the front line where duty is performed. Man begins to free his thought from the bothersome fact that presupposed the need to satisfy his animal needs by working. He begins to see himself portrayed in his work and to understand its human magnitude through the created object, through the work carried out. This no longer involves leaving a part of his being in the form of labor power sold, which no longer belongs to him; rather it signifies an emanation from himself, a contribution to the life of society in which he is reflected, the fulfillment of his social duty."

In other words, through institutionalized measures that would encourage and reward performing "social duty" (e.g., voluntary unpaid labor) the individual Cuban worker would begin to identify his work with the larger socialist cause and, to that extent, his labor would cease to be alienated. Thus, for Guevara alienated labor is a *subjective* phenomenon, like individual interest, that can be transformed through successfully instilling new collectivist values among the working masses.

Such a concept of alienated labor, however, has nothing in common with Marxism. As understood in the Marxist sense, alienated labor is not fundamentally determined by the subjective attitude of the worker towards his work—whether he hates or likes his job, or whether he begins to get satisfaction from working to "build socialism" regardless of how he feels about his particular job. For Marxists alienated labor is not subjectively but rather *objectively and historically determined.*

Marx defined unalienated labor in the following precise terms in the *Grundrisse*:

> "The labor concerned with material production can only have this [unalienated] character if (1) it is of a social nature, (2) it has a scientific character and at the same time is general work, i.e., if it ceases to be human effort as a definite, trained natural force, gives up its purely natural, primitive aspects and becomes *the activity of a subject controlling all the forces of nature in the production process.*" [emphasis added]

Thus, for Marx alienated labor is bound up with an historically evolved division of labor in society wherein the individual workers who are involved in material production are denied mastery over the production process. This given division of labor in turn derives from the inadequate development of productivity and particularly the low cultural level of the masses. Labor ceases to be alienated only when "general work" has a thoroughly scientific character, i.e., when objective conditions enable the producer to fully control "all the forces of nature in the production process." Social production will continue to be marked by alienated labor as long as the low level of productivity imposes a division of labor upon the individual producers.

In contrast to Guevarist idealism, Marxists understand that there are definite and manifold material preconditions which must be socially achieved before *all* producers in society are able to control "all the forces of nature in the production process." Cutting sugar cane or manning an assembly line in Stalinist-ruled Cuba can *never* be unalienated labor, no matter how socialist-minded and self-sacrificing the workers might be. Ending alienated labor for the mass of producers is possible only in a genuinely socialist society, the product of the transition period (the dictatorship of the proletariat) which has achieved a multiple increase in labor productivity, an enormous raising of the general cultural level of the population and the continual expansion of individual free time. In contrast, Guevara adopted the classically Stalinist position that falsely identifies the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, the transitional epoch between capitalism and socialism when "classes still *remain* and *will remain*" (Lenin), with *socialism*, the lower phase of communist society which presupposes "an end to all class differences and class antagonisms" (Engels). Thus, in arguing that "building socialism" in Cuba required the elimination of material incentives Guevara explicitly rejected those sections of Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program* which unambiguously stated that during the transitional epoch (the dictatorship of the proletariat) "bourgeois right" manifested in income differentials would continue to exist.

Idealizing the Cuban Bureaucracy

Although New Left radicals were mainly enamoured of Guevara's visions of the "New Man" freed from alienated labor, the "Great Debate" in Cuba actually centered on far more pragmatic issues. Guevara linked his abstract exhortations for raising mass consciousness and ending alienated labor with a series of proposals aiming at total industrial/financial centralization in Cuba (an economic

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Prensa Latina

New Leftist volunteers from the U.S. "build socialism" by cutting sugar cane in Castro's Cuba, 1970.

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scheme that ran counter to the New Left fetish of decentralization). During the "Great Debate" Guevara advocated administering Cuba as if the country were a single extensive factory.

Underlying Guevara's ultra-centralism was his evident belief that at every level the Cuban administrative personnel would carry out their production quotas in the most cost-efficient, conscientious manner, i.e., that the Cuban bureaucracy had sufficient socialist consciousness so as not to require strict financial controls. His Soviet-model opponents, principally the veteran Moscow-line Stalinist Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, argued that unless enterprises were financially self-sufficient (i.e., expected to normally make a bookkeeping "profit"), managers would tend to squander resources. Thus, the "Great Debate" represented an intrabureaucratic tug-of-war between Guevara the idealizer of the Cuban guerrillas in power and the more "pragmatic" Stalinists around Rodríguez, who argued for a more "realistic" accommodation to managerial parasitism.

In such intrabureaucratic conflicts over plannings methods revolutionary Marxists cannot take sides, since a rational and egalitarian economic policy is not possible as long as political power is monopolized by a privileged bureaucratic caste. However, among the prominent contributors to the "Great Debate" was none other than Ernest Mandel, erudite Pabloist revisionist and today prominent leader of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec). While Cuba did present the unique phenomenon of a bureaucratically deformed workers state issuing out of the victory of a non-Stalinist petty-bourgeois nationalist guerrilla formation (the July 26 Movement), Mandel & Co. claimed that "Fidel" and "Che" were genuine Marxist-Leninists and that the supposedly insignificant bureaucratic deformations which existed in the Havana regime did not require a political revolution led by a Trotskyist party but could be rectified through oh-so-comradely criticism and suggestions.

While the USec aggressively assumed the role of publicity agents for the Cuban regime under the rubric of "defending the Cuban revolution," Mandel traveled to Havana to intervene in the "Great Debate." His article, "Mercantile Categories in the Period of Transition," appeared in the January 1964 issue of *Nuestra Industria*, the journal of Guevara's Ministry of Industry. Mandel sought to become a theoretical braintruster for what he viewed as the left-leaning wing of the Cuban "leadership" around Guevara. Needless to say, in this article (as well as all his other pro-Castro accolades then and since) Mandel was mum about his "Trotskyist" affiliation and formal espousal of the program of the Fourth International; he was well aware of the fact that one of the first acts of the Castro regime was the suppression of the ostensibly Trotskyist movement in Cuba (the Posadista organization), which included the destruction of the printing plates for a Spanish translation of Trotsky's *Permanent Revolution*.

Disingenuously presenting himself as merely an academic fellow traveler of world Stalinism commenting on the problems faced by the "workers states" in the transition to "socialism," Mandel in this article throws his support behind Guevara in the issues in dispute. On the question of enterprise autonomy, for instance, Mandel backs Guevara's supercentralism:

> "The more underdeveloped a country's economy, the fewer able, experienced, and truly socialist technical cadres it will have, and the wiser it is, in our opinion, to reserve decision-making power over the more important investments and financial matters to the central authorities."
>
> reproduced in Silverman, *Man and Socialism in Cuba*

Having thus given the Cuban Stalinist "central authorities" a *carte blanche*, Mandel must take political responsibility for the disastrous results of Castro's economic policies. What Guevara's super-"centralist" schemes actually involved was the dismantling of the system of charges between state-owned enterprises and between enterprises and the ministries as the means of financial control and accountability. Thus, the Cuban economic system was stripped of any mechanism for determining rational resource allocation and utilization. In 1966 Castro drastically reduced the power and functions of the Central Planning Board and personally assumed decision-making formerly handled by the planners. Completely neglecting the gathering of statistical data, Castro discarded the medium-range plan, launching in its place a series of unrelated "mini" and "special" plans. As a result capital and human resources were grossly misused and squandered.

Years later, after Castro returned to orthodox Soviet-model planning systems, the Guevarist schemes were criticized as idealist. At the first-ever congress of the Cuban Communist Party held in 1976 Castro made the following very dry criticism of Guevara's policies:

> "The fact is that a single management system of the entire economy did not exist and, under the circumstances, we took the less correct decision—to invent a new procedure....
>
> "By the end of 1965, the Ministry of Finance had already been dissolved and the National Bank restructured. The last budget adopted was that of 1967, but its implementation was not controlled because, since the second quarter of that year, charges and payments were no longer being made....
>
> "In 1968, the connection between salaries and output sales was severed. Work-hour schedules on the basis of consciousness and renunciation of pay for extra hours worked were stimulated. In 1967 interest on loans and taxes collected from farmers was abolished....
>
> "When it might have seemed as though we were drawing nearer to communist forms of production and distribution, we were actually pulling away from the correct methods for the previous construction of socialism."
>
> —*Granma*, 4 July 1976

While his philosophical contributions were definitively idealist and his economic schemes proved disastrous, Guevara at the same time was a rare figure in the history of world Stalinism inasmuch as he evidently believed in the egalitarian principles that he articulated. Guevara was manifestly a man of considerable political integrity and personal courage who lived and was prepared to die for his beliefs. It has been claimed—and it may indeed be true—that Guevara left Cuba to undertake guerrilla war in Latin America at least in part because he was repelled by the small-mindedness, philistinism and venality of the new bureaucratic caste under Castro.

Maoist Mystification of Bourgeois Right

While ideologically an inveterate Stalinist to the end, Guevara was different in this respect from the Chinese

"radical egalitarians" who rose to power and prominence during the Cultural Revolution. In contrast to Guevara, the Maoist sycophants, like their mentor, were totally cynical and demagogic in their professions of egalitarian policies. Mao was a bonapartist maneuverer whose endlessly quoted, quasi-delphic utterances could be (and have been) used to justify the most contradictory and even counterposed policies. For her part Chiang Ching preached puritanism and austerity to the Chinese masses, while enjoying to the full a luxuriant lifestyle that would be fitting for a Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis or a Princess Grace of Monaco. From all evidence the Maoist "radicals" were exceptionally corrupt and vicious cliquists, even by the Byzantine standards of the Forbidden City.

All the "radical" Maoist rhetoric about "restricting bourgeois right" and "putting politics in command" that captured the imagination of the New Left was nothing more than demagogy which the Chinese leaders cynically used to rationalize what in reality were intrabureaucratic and internecine dogfights. It all originated with the rupture between the USSR and China in 1960, when the Chinese Stalinist leadership felt compelled to concoct an incredibly idealist and vulgar "theory" to explain how "socialist" Russia had suddenly become "revisionist." According to

Der Spiegel

Big-Character poster vilifies "Gang of Four" as two-faced "capitalist roaders" bent on spreading anarchy and economic chaos.

Mao and his then "comrade-in-arms" Liu Shao-chi (the head of state and number two man in the party hierarchy), under "socialism" a "two-line struggle" continues between the genuine revolutionaries and the "revisionists" whose policies, if implemented, would lead inevitably to the restoration of capitalism. Thus, with the passing of Stalin, the "revisionist" Khrushchev seized power in a palace coup and proceeded over the next several years to open the floodgates to all the crypto-"capitalist roaders" who had been secretly harboring restorationist ideas but were afraid to come out into the open. Needless to say, this "theory" neglected to explain why Mao only got Khrushchev's number after the Sino-Soviet rupture.

It was during the Cultural Revolution, however, that this fairy tale was elaborated into the doctrine of "capitalist roadism." Whereas Stalin claimed that all his real or potential enemies in the bureaucracy were agents of Wall Street or Hitler, Mao "deepened" this method, accusing his rivals within the Chinese bureaucracy of having *bourgeois ideas*, i.e. of being "capitalist roaders." In a bid to restore his authority that had been damaged after the fiasco of the "Great Leap Forward" Mao launched the Cultural Revolution by branding Liu Shao-chi "China's Khrushchev" and calling for the purge of his followers who were allegedly leading China down the "capitalist road."

Maoist rhetoric about "restricting bourgeois right" derived from the need to explain just how the economic policies pursued by Liu Shao-chi, Teng Hsiao-ping and Peng Chen—restoration of private peasant plots and return to a free market in agricultural produce, both designed to regain the peasants' confidence that had been lost through the "Great Leap" disaster—could lead to the restoration of capitalism. Thus, Mao and his "closest-comrade-in-arms" Marshal Lin Piao charged Liu and Teng with advocating the primacy of material incentives and forgetting about the "class struggle." By "putting production in command" Liu and Teng were said to have been conspiring to put a new bourgeoisie in power.

That such charges were sheer demagogy was revealed most starkly when Lin Piao, named in the Chinese constitution as Mao's heir designate, fell out of favor in the Forbidden City in 1971. After Lin's plane reportedly fell out of the sky over Mongolia the deceased former "closest-comrade-in-arms" of the Chairman was denounced as "a fanatical advocate of 'material incentives'." On the contrary, Lin in fact had been a champion of Maoist voluntarism. During the Lin Piao period (1969-71) Chinese economic policies resembled those of the "Great Leap," although not on the same scale. Private peasant plots were curtailed and labor was mobilized not through use of material incentives but through direct state coercion.

The major Maoist tract branding support for material incentives as "capitalist roadism" is the article, "On the Social Basis of the Lin Piao Anti-Party Clique," penned by Yao Wen-yuan, Mao's principal literary hatchet man (until he got axed after the death of the Chairman). Here is the nub of his argument:

> "If we do not follow this course [restricting bourgeois right], but call instead for the consolidation, extension and strengthening of bourgeois right and that part of inequality it entails, the inevitable result will be polarization, i.e., a small number of people will in the course of distribution acquire increasing amounts of commodities and money through

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certain legal channels and numerous illegal ones; capitalist ideas of amassing fortunes and craving for personal fame and gain, stimulated by such 'material incentives,' will spread unchecked; such phenomena as turning public property into private property, speculation, graft and corruption, theft and bribery will rise; the capitalist principle of the exchange of commodities will make its way into political life and even into Party life, undermine the socialist planned economy and give rise to such acts of capitalist exploitation as the conversion of commodities and money into capital and labor power into a commodity; and there will be a change in the nature of the system of ownership in certain departments and units which follow the revisionist line; and instances of oppression and exploitation of the labouring people will once again occur."

—*Peking Review*, 7 March 1975

What Yao does here is a causal sleight-of-hand. For Marx and Lenin "bourgeois right" had a precise and delimited meaning in terms of the transitional epoch. It signified the continuation of differences in wages and income during the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But under the rubric of "bourgeois right" Yao identifies widening wage differentials with the illicit accumulation of capital, arguing that the first necessarily and inexorably leads to the second. This is a specious argument.

In a non-capitalist state such as the USSR or People's Republic of China wage differentials result in different levels of *individual consumption*, but not in personal accumulation of the means of production. Even the often extravagant incomes (legal and otherwise) received by the Stalinist bigwigs are expended mainly on high living (e.g., Brezhnev's collection of foreign cars, Chiang Ching's collection of foreign films). To be sure, in the USSR and China instances occur when state administrators are caught selling state property on the black market. But such cases of individual officials going into business for themselves are a marginal economic phenomenon (even in Yugoslavia, where "market socialism" is most extensive); stiff penalties (including capital punishment) serve to discourage such "capitalist roadism."

Contrary to the scenario given by Yao, quantitative changes in income distribution, important as they might be in many ways, cannot affect the class character of the state as long as the main means of production remain nationalized. It would take a counterrevolution that *smashed the state apparatus* and subsequently converted the collectivized property back into privately owned commodities to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union, China or any of the other deformed workers states. Such a fundamental overturn in property relations could not be produced simply through the molecular economic processes precipitated by widening income differentials.

However, what Yao and Mao were really concerned about was not bureaucratic parasitism but workers' demands for higher wages. Wages had remained frozen in China since 1962, even though the 1956 wage code stipulated that general raises were to be implemented every other year. In his article Yao attributed all demands for higher wages to the nefarious influence of Lin Piao:

"A principal member of the Lin Piao anti-Party clique also wrote that 'the principle of to each according to his work and of material benefit' was the 'decisive motive force' in promoting production. On the face of it, they advocated using money to 'stimulate' the workers, but actually they wanted to widen without limit the differences in grade among the workers in order to foster and buy over a small section of the working class, turn it into a privileged stratum which betrays the proletarian dictatorship and the interests of the proletariat, and split the unity of the working class.... Lin Piao and company attached 'particular importance' to using 'wages' to lure 'young workers,' and their 'inducements—official post, emolument, favour' were a sinister scheme. This shows us by negative example that young workers, particularly those who have become cadres, must consciously reject the material inducements of the bourgeoisie and the flattery offered them in various forms by the idea of bourgeois right."

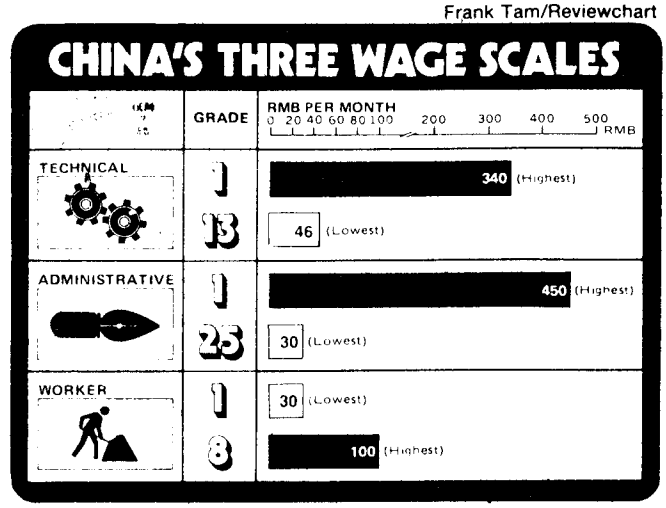
Thus, while claiming to stand for the "unity of the working class," Yao actually sought to justify the suppression of all wage demands by the Chinese workers.

A few months after Yao wrote this article the Maoist regime demonstrated in practice its hostility to legitimate wage demands by the workers. In the summer of 1975 a citywide strike erupted in the major textile-producing center of Hangchow, near Shanghai. At first the regime sent Wang Hung-wen, one of Yao's "radical" cronies and later one of the hapless "Gang," to Hangchow to try to talk the strikers back to work. When this failed, Teng Hsiao-ping personally led a 10,000-strong PLA force into Hangchow and smashed the strike. When confronted by the long-denied economic demands and struggles of the Chinese workers, all wings of the bureaucracy, from the phony "egalitarians" to the "rehabilitated revisionists," proved to be united in their commitment to preserving their complete political stranglehold over the atomized proletariat.

Unlike New Left radicals, the Chinese working class was far from satisfied with a steady diet of egalitarian rhetoric. If anything, the Cultural Revolution left the mass of Chinese workers in an even worse economic situation than before. In the name of combatting "capitalist roadism" the Maoist regime has kept wages frozen; in 1973 the Chiang Ching clique evidently put a stop to a move to advance workers in the bottom five wage grades one rung higher. Under this system the first grade provides a wage of 30 yuan a month and the top grade 100 yuan a month, a wage ratio comparable to that in the USSR (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 January 1978).

However, the fundamentally inegalitarian nature of income distribution in Mao's China is revealed not so much

Frank Tam/Reviewchart



by wage differences among the workers as by the income differentials between the working class and the administrative/technical elite. In the wage system copied from the USSR by Mao in 1956 (and retained to this day) the highest technical grade receives 340 yuan a month and the top administrative grade 450 yuan a month. In Canton in 1974 the lowest grade clerical worker received only 35 yuan a month while the head of his or her bureau received an official salary of between 200 and 210 yuan a month—a ratio of about six-to-one (*Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv*, No. 4, 1976).

Furthermore, the material privileges which the Chinese administrative elite enjoys also include various "fringe benefits." For manual workers sick leave up to one month is given with a ten percent reduction in pay; for longer periods pay is docked at a rate up to 50 percent. But administrators are granted up to three months sick leave with no loss in pay, while longer absences are given with only a 10-30 percent reduction in pay (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 28 January 1978). And these are only the official wage and benefit scales. Since the Chinese proletariat has no institutionalized control over the government apparatus, Chinese enterprise managers, heads of bureaus, military commanders and a whole host of other well-placed bureaucrats can supplement their official incomes by all kinds of petty corruption and parasitism, for example using state vehicles for personal errands. Such inegalitarian wage scales and bureaucratic parasitism and mismanagement are inevitable as long as the governmental administration is not responsible to the democratic organizations of the working class, i.e., until genuine soviet democracy is established through a proletarian political revolution that topples the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy.

"Great Disorder Under Heaven..."?

To rationalize the proposed re-introduction of material incentives the new Hua/Teng leadership has made much ado about the supposed breakdown in labor discipline in China's factories. This situation, like every other evil (real or fabricated) that has befallen China, has been attributed to the misdeeds of the nefarious "Gang of Four," who allegedly were out to wreck the economy. Typical of the tirades against the voluntarist idiocies supposedly promoted by the "Gang" is the article, "The 'Gang of Four' Pushed Anarchism," which reads in part:

> "The 'gang of four' was not just opposing '*kuan, chia, ya*' [controlling anarchist tendencies, curbing capitalist tendencies, suppressing the class enemies' sabotage] but was opposing all rules and regulations. Chang Chun-chiao made this clear when he said: 'It is necessary to set up enterprises that have no rules and regulations'.... How can production go on in a large enterprise without rules and regulations? This is common knowledge. Was the 'gang of four' really ignorant of this? Of course not. In spreading such nonsense as they did, they aimed at throwing the national economy into chaos so that they could blame others for it and seize power by taking advantage of the ensuing chaotic state of affairs."
> *Peking Review*, 1 April 1977

The Western bourgeois press has generally bought the official Peking line that labor morale and discipline in China has gone to the dogs as a result of the policies of the "Gang." For example, the *Washington Post* of 15 May 1977 ran an article entitled "Post-Mao Leaders Battle 'WPA Atmosphere' in Factories." Similarly, one of the editors of the prestigious London *Economist* who recently returned from a tour in China described a typical Chinese factory in the following terms:

> "Half the work force was not there at all, being better occupied in the town burying the winter cabbages dumped in already frost-nipped piles along the city's pavements. The other half was gently ambling on with its job, English-style, but was not adverse to stopping for a cigarette and a peer at the inscrutable occidentals come to visit them. Work discipline everywhere in our industrial plants was, to put it kindly, relaxed..."
> —*Economist*, 31 December 1977

A widespread and serious deterioration in labor discipline is always a sign of political disaffection with, if not opposition to, the state authorities. After the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, for example, the normally industrious Prague factory workers began to take very long coffee and lunch breaks, and productivity plummeted as a result. It is certainly possible that in China industrial workers have responded to the years of frozen wages and feverish "ideological campaigns" that consumed much of what little free time they had by deliberately slacking off on their productivity. Over the past several years at least, China has been plagued by labor unrest; so volatile and violent have been the reported strikes and protests since the death of Mao and the purge of the "Gang of Four" that the army had to be sent to occupy several provinces.

However, the accounts of the Hua regime and bourgeois "China watchers" about how lackadaisical Chinese workers have become cannot be taken at face value. It is important to keep in mind that in their campaign to vilify the "Gang of Four" the present Chinese rulers have a real interest in exaggerating all the "crimes" supposedly committed by the purged four. Moreover, Peking is no doubt exaggerating the problem of labor discipline in order to justify the proposed widening of pay differentials and restoration of piece rates and bonuses—anti-egalitarian measures that are sure to be unpopular with the Chinese workers. For their part bourgeois journalists, who have no interest in seeing labor productivity increased in China, are predisposed to accepting the contention that the Maoist "radicals" destroyed labor discipline, since they seek to discredit the very idea that socialist consciousness can ever be a positive factor in production.

It isn't now possible to ascertain the true state of labor morale presently prevailing in China's factories. Even if the official reports of high absenteeism and low labor productivity were accurate, these examples are selected for a tendentious purpose. It is also necessary to bear in mind that in order to minimize unemployment, factories in China (like those in the USSR) are kept *overmanned* by capitalist standards. Thus, the impressionistic comparisons with West European or Japanese enterprises which are frequently made by foreigners who visit China are not very meaningful.

In any case, changes in labor productivity on a national scale are very difficult to measure. Even more so than the Soviet Union, China is a closed society in which the detailed, comprehensive statistics required to compute labor productivity are not public information and may not even exist at all. However, one can derive a rough indirect index of labor productivity from statistics about industrial

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output. On the basis of statistics compiled by the Peking regime the well-respected *Far Eastern Economic Review* calculated that between 1969 (the end of the Cultural Revolution) and 1973 industrial output in China increased by 58 percent (*Asia Yearbook*, 1975). Such a significant increase in output does not jibe with the scenarios of widespread anarchy in factories across China that have been promoted by the regime.

Differential Wages During the Transitional Epoch

In their writings on moral versus material incentives and "restricting bourgeois right" both the ideological spokesmen of the current so-called "pragmatic" regime in Peking and the "radical" Maoists confuse, in large part deliberately, three separate questions. One is the question of wage differentials as a mechanism for allocating labor between different occupations, industries and geographical regions. A second and related question is differential wage payments—piece rates and bonuses—as a means of securing labor discipline and morale. And the third is the relation between the incomes of the administrative hierarchy and those of the mass of the workers.

Stalinist "egalitarians" like Guevara and Yao attempt to simply identify differential wages with capitalist market relations. All their talk about "restricting bourgeois right" and "moral not material incentives" is a demagogic cover for *state coercion* in the allocation of labor. It is an elementary proposition of Marxism—explicitly stated in such key works as Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Engel's *Anti-Dühring* and Lenin's *State and Revolution*—that during the transitional epoch (the dictatorship of the proletariat) differential wages will continue to exist. Income differentials continue to be needed to allocate labor between different occupations, industries and regions without having to resort to administrative coercion. Given that material scarcity and cultural attitudes inherited from bourgeois society do not immediately disappear under the dictatorship of the proletariat, many workers will not take the time and effort required to acquire new skills without receiving a higher income for doing so. Similarly, many workers will not take particularly dangerous, arduous or unpleasant jobs without receiving significantly higher than average wages.

In addition to such material incentives, a workers state would also have recourse to moral incentives during the transition period. A revolutionary regime, elected on the basis of workers councils (soviets), would have the moral authority to reduce in general wage differentials. For example, many urban youth could be induced to take jobs in remote or backward rural areas on the basis of socialist idealism rather than higher wages. In a workers state the optimum wage structure, including the best mix of material and moral incentives, would be determined through the institutionalized mechanisms of workers democracy, in particular, negotiations between the central labor ministry and the trade unions.

In contrast to this socialist norm, in China, despite all the "radical" Maoist demagogy about "restricting bourgeois right," industrial workers *cannot change jobs* without official approval—a degree of state coercion in the allocation of labor that is reactionary even by the norms of capitalism. Likewise, in the period since the Red Guards were smashed in 1968 millions of urban youth in China have been dispersed throughout the countryside to perform back-breaking agricultural labor. Exhorted by the regime to "learn from the peasantry," these youth went to the countryside not on the basis of Maoist "moral incentives" but as a result of (or under the threat of) state coercion, which for the Red Guards who resisted the liquidation of what they mistakenly believed were the egalitarian goals of the Cultural Revolution meant brutal military force.

Der Spiegel

Commune in Kwangsi province: Maoist utopian voluntarism is rooted in the contradiction between the great material backwardness of the country and the Great Power ambitions of its ruling bureaucratic caste.

If the smashing of the disillusioned Red Guards and the subsequent suppression of proposed wage increases for the Chinese workers are considered victories in "restricting bourgeois right," then pro-"Gang" Maoists like the Avakianite RCP should love the methods of so-called "socialist construction" imposed by the Pol Pot regime in "Democratic Kampuchea." Why, the Maoist "mass campaigns" to exorcise the evil Confucian spirit that was embodied in Lin Piao pale in comparison with how the ruling clique in Phnom Penh (whoever they are) cleaned

out "bourgeois right" in Cambodia.

After consolidating power in the spring of 1975 the Cambodian Stalinists emptied the capital city of Phnom Penh at gunpoint (other cities and towns were depopulated in a similar fashion as they fell to the Khmer Rouge). The urban population—not just the war refugees but long-time city dwellers, including the elderly and sick—were force-marched into the countryside, where they were put to work in rice production regardless of their previous occupation. According to several Yugoslav journalists who toured Cambodia last March (the first foreigners allowed to do so since the Khmer Rouge came to power three years ago), Cambodian workers are not permitted to leave their assigned farming commune or even their production team, and youths by the thousands have been impressed into so-called "voluntary" mobile labor brigades (*New York Times*, 24 March 1978).

Rather than using material incentives for particularly back-breaking and noxious work the Cambodian regime resorts to extensive child labor. In a recent very revealing statement Cambodian President Khieu Samphan declared:

> "Our children do not need toys which were formerly imported at considerable cost. They are happy with driving sparrows away from the crops, tending cattle and buffalo, collecting natural fertilizer and helping to build dams and digging ditches."
>
> —quoted in *London Times*, 7 February 1978

As for the second question—differential wage payments to impose labor discipline—Stalinist "pragmatists" like Hua and Teng attempt to identify differential wages as a means to allocate labor with differential wage payments as a means of securing labor discipline and goading the workers into greater productivity. Communists have a fundamentally different attitude toward piece rates and bonuses than toward occupational or sectoral wage differences. Piece rate wages and bonuses for productivity pit one worker against another and consequently have always been fought by the labor movement under capitalism. As Trotsky remarked about the retrogressive character of the Russian Stakhanovite movement launched in 1935, "Relations of this kind are farther from socialist morals than the relations of the workers of a capitalist factory, joined together as they are in a struggle against exploitation" (*Revolution Betrayed*).

Stalinist "pragmatists" like Teng seek to justify their anti-egalitarian economic policies by pointing out that Lenin regarded piece rates as legitimate. It is true that during the catastrophic economic collapse which accompanied the horribly destructive civil war in Russia, at a time when most of the class-conscious workers had been mobilized to the military fronts and their places in the factories were taken by raw peasants drawn from the backward countryside, Lenin advocated the introduction of piece rates as a capitalist production technique which, while odious, nevertheless was superior to the primitive methods of "War Communism." However, with the civil war behind, the Soviet Labor Code of 1922 provided for wages to be negotiated between the trade unions and the enterprise management. By 1928 piece rates covered only 34 percent of the industrial labor force (Margaret Dewar, *Labour Policy in the USSR, 1917-1928*). It was during Stalin's break-neck forced industrialization drive of the 1930's that piece rates were made nearly universal in the USSR and with differentials far steeper than ever before. Stakhanovism served to enormously *widen* income differences within the Russian proletariat, crystallizing a labor "aristocracy" that was despised by the mass of the workers.

In a workers state socialist consciousness, integrally bound up with soviet democracy, would act to ensure that work is performed conscientiously. To be sure, even in a healthy workers state there will be some loiterers and shirkers. But such errant individuals who are willfully negligent can best be dealt with through the organized social pressure of their fellow workers; the few incorrigibly ill-disciplined workers could be economically penalized and, perhaps as a last resort, fired.

If the Stalinist "egalitarians" and "pragmatists" each manipulate for their own purposes the separate but related questions of wage differentials among the workers, they are united in their common attempt to obfuscate the question of income differences between the mass of workers and the administrative hierarchy. All Stalinist ideologues discuss the question of incentives in terms of the population in general, making no distinction between the mass of workers and the so-called "socialist intelligentsia" (the bureaucrats). Orthodox Stalinist ideologues in the service of Teng and Hua use the general principle, "From each according to his work," to rationalize the relatively extravagant incomes and "fringe benefits" enjoyed by the administrative elite. Contrariwise, the Stalinist "egalitarians" like Guevara and Yao seek to *divert* attention from the bureaucracy's material privileges by belaboring the lack of full socialist consciousness among the masses.

Neither the Stalinist "egalitarians" nor the "pragmatists" have ever advocated the genuinely egalitarian principle that, as a norm, the income of a socialist administrator should not exceed the income of an average skilled worker. In his seminal work *State and Revolution* Lenin presents this as one of the basic economic principles of the transitional society:

> "To organize the *whole* economy on the lines of the postal service so that the technicians, foremen and accountants, as well as *all* officials, shall receive salaries no higher than 'a workman's wage,' all under the control and leadership of the armed proletariat—this is our immediate aim." [emphasis in original]

Of course, such a programmatic norm is not always immediately realizable. If a workers state remains isolated and backward (as was the USSR in Lenin's time), then bourgeois experts can be expected to try to flee to the advanced capitalist countries, and all the more so if their salaries were to be cut to correspond to the earnings of a skilled manual worker. Thus in the USSR under Lenin and Trotsky bourgeois specialists desperately needed by the beleaguered regime, including foreigners, were paid

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Egalitarianism...

relatively high salaries. But for Lenin and Trotsky such income differentials were an unfortunate necessity, dictated by the delay of the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries. Furthermore, at that time bourgeois specialists in the employ of the Bolsheviks were not given posts as responsible administrators but instead only had advisory and purely technical roles.

In a workers state during the transitional epoch income differentials between the mass of workers and the technical specialists will persist for a period as a result of the lack of uniform socialist consciousness conditioned by the continuation of conditions of material scarcity. However, in a workers state the responsible central administrative hierarchy would be selected precisely on the basis of *demonstrated socialist consciousness*; i.e., from among those who offer their services to the regime out of demonstrably unselfish motives. Thus, in a workers state the income of a factory manager or head of an industrial ministry would not be determined in the same way as the salary of a coal miner or a doctor working in a remote rural area, i.e. by the labor market.

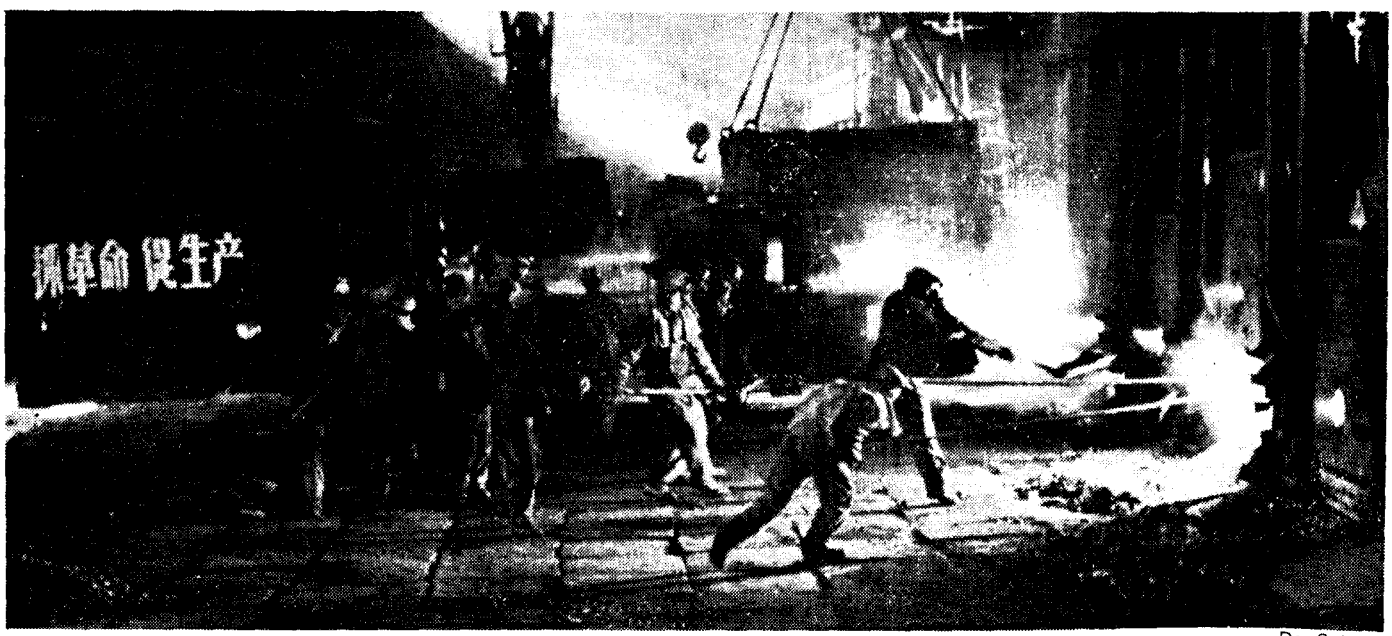
Material incentives as a means to keep the administrative personnel honest would be regarded as fundamentally inappropriate in a workers state. Managers or other specialists who are corrupt, incorrigibly negligent or abusive would simply be removed from positions of responsibility. In the institutional context of soviet democracy the most effective mechanism for keeping socialist administrators honest is workers control: the authoritative consultative voice of workers at the point of production. It is the workers under a particular administrator who are best able to ensure that his work is performed conscientiously.

In contrast, in the Sino-Soviet degenerated/deformed workers states the economic parasitism of the administrators has become institutionalized. Bureaucratic parasitism has been at the heart of the seemingly interminable debates over economic and financial decentralization, from the "Great Debate" in Cuba to the rigidly controlled discussion of "Libermanism" in the USSR.

But the continual shifts in the level of centralization in the collectivized economies of the degenerated/deformed workers states can never solve the problem of managerial corruption and parasitism. Rational economic planning and administration are fundamentally incompatible with the monopolization of political power by a bureaucratic caste. Soviet attempts to curb managerial parasitism and inefficiency provide the most graphic case in point.

With the institution of the first Five Year Plan in 1928 managerial incomes were geared to over-fulfilling the planned output. However, this single, crude index left a lot of room for cheating on the part of the administrative authorities. Thus, Soviet managers routinely understated the real productive capacity of their plants so as to be given a plan that could be easily fulfilled (and hopefully over-fulfilled), while hoarding labor and raw materials and willfully sacrificing assortment and quality so as to maximize output. In 1965 the Brezhnev/Kosygin regime instituted an economic reform that was motivated by the "principle": if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. A complex system was instituted in the USSR which directly linked managerial incomes to enterprise "profitability." But instead of eliminating the bureaucratic evils of the old system, the "Liberman" reforms simply perpetuated them, while generating others. (For a detailed analysis of the 1965 Soviet economic reforms see: "How Maoists 'Restore Capitalism' in the Soviet Union," in the Spartacus Youth League pamphlet *Why the USSR Is Not Capitalist.*)

A revolutionary workers government would be able to suppress administrative parasitism as a significant economic phenomenon. It thus would be able to eliminate those forms of financial decentralization now employed in the Soviet bloc in a vain attempt to counter managerial



Der Spiegel

Steel mill in Anshan: producing 23 million tons of steel, as much as England. Official claim that labor discipline collapsed under "Gang of Four" flies in the face of rise in China's industrial output.

corruption and inefficiency. In a non-capitalist state centralized economic planning takes on an unequivocably socialist character only when the governing authorities represent the rational, democratically determined interests of the working people. Under a Stalinist regime greater economic centralization does not necessarily possess any such socialist virtues and may be largely formal. As demonstrated by Mao's "Great Leap" debacle and Castro's 10 million ton sugar harvest fiasco, the megalomania of the Stalinist rulers can be far more economically disruptive and wasteful than increased competition between state enterprises.

Not much remains of the aura of radical egalitarianism surrounding the "Third World" Stalinist regimes. It has been getting increasingly difficult for the New Left apologists for the Chinese and Cuban regimes to claim that these societies are somehow profoundly egalitarian. When Castro's Cuba and Mao's China have experimented with making a leap out of commodity production, the result has been increased state coercion of labor and rationing for the masses—followed by costly fiascos which fall hardest on the shoulders of the workers and peasants. In this respect the truly brutal primitivism of Pol Pot's "Democratic Kampuchea" is simply the most extreme expression of Stalinist economic "egalitarianism."

Genuine economic egalitarianism is not possible as long as political power is monopolized by a Stalinist ruling oligarchy. The genuinely egalitarian use of moral incentives requires a government with the moral authority derived from the democratic participation of the working masses expressed through soviet institutions. Wage labor and the commodity nature of consumer goods will be overcome through the appropriation of the economic wealth of the advanced capitalist world—the fruit of the transitional period inaugurated by the victory of the international proletarian revolution. ■

Statement of the Trotskyist Faction

With the following statement, members of the Trotskyist Faction of the British Workers Socialist League (WSL) resigned from the WSL at its February 18-19 Conference. The Trotskyist Faction's programmatic statements on Ireland, Turkey and the general document "In Defence of a Revolutionary Programme" had indicated a large measure of agreement with the Trotskyist politics of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt). After several weeks of intensive political discussions, the Trotskyist Faction fused with the London Spartacist Group of the iSt to form a new sympathizing section of the iSt, the Spartacist League/Britain (SL/B).

This fusion represented a major confirmation of the iSt's policy of revolutionary regroupment and enabled the SL/B to launch a regular newspaper, Spartacist Britain, *which reprinted the major documents of the ex-Trotskyist Faction in its first issue.*

The debate at this conference has exposed in the clearest light the majority's hostility to the highest task of Marxists today: the construction of an international cadre hardened in the fight for a communist programme.

The counterposition of the Bolshevik position of the Trotskyist Faction to the hardened right centrism of the central leadership has brought forth another shameless defence of the majority's Pabloite attachment to the Labour Party, their capitulationist attitude to nationalism, and in particular Irish nationalism, their all-pervading economism and minimalism and their parochialism.

It is apparent that the fight for the re-creation of the Fourth International can only take place in implacable *opposition* to this parody of Trotskyism. Recognising the fundamental divergence between our faction and all other tendencies within the Workers' Socialist League that has been confirmed this weekend we resign from the WSL.

We intend to immediately open discussions with the international Spartacist tendency, with the aim of moving toward a fused organisation. Forward to the British section of the reforged Fourth International!

Signers:

1. Eunice Aktar, WSL 1978, Liverpool Branch.
2. Richard Brookes, I.S. 1973-75, WSL 1975-78, Oxford General Branch.
3. Carolyn Dixon, WSL 1977-78, Birmingham Branch.
4. E., WSL 1976-78, London Area Committee, Turkish Group, Hackney Branch.
5. F., WSL 1976-78, Turkish Group, Hackney Branch.
6. Alastair Green, I.S. 1973-74; Left Opposition (ex-I.S.); RCG 1975; founder member WSL, 1975-78, West Midlands Area Committee, Birmingham Branch chairman, convenor student fraction, editorial board *Socialist Press*.
7. Clive Hills, WRP 1973-76, editorial board *Keep Left* (paper of the Young Socialists, youth group of the WRP); WSL 1976-78, Oxford Student/Trent Branch.
8. Alan Holford, I.S. 1971-73 (expelled); Revolutionary Opposition (ex-I.S.) 1972-74; founder member RCG 1974-75, Political Committee; founder member WSL 1975-78, National Committee, West Midlands Area chairman, Birmingham Branch secretary, convenor of Women's Commission.
9. Dewi Jones, WSL 1976-78, Liverpool Branch.
10. Mark Kinker, WSL 1977-78.
11. Leena, Maoist organisations (Asia) 1972-74; WSL 1977-78.
12. Paul Lannigan, SLL 1968-72, Derry Branch, Northern Ireland, Irish National Committee (1968-70), full-time

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Trotskyist Faction Statement...

organiser Liverpool SLL/YS (1970-72); WSL 1977-78, Irish Commission, West London Branch.

13. Cath McMillan, WSL 1977-78, Coventry Branch.

14. Joe Quigley, Communist Party of Great Britain, 1969-70; I.S. 1970-74 (expelled); Left Faction, Left Opposition (both of I.S.); RCG 1975; founder member WSL 1975-78, National Committee, North West Area secretary, Manchester Branch secretary, Irish Commission.

15. Jim Saunders, I.S. 1974-76; WSL 1976-78, London Area Committee, West London Branch secretary, Irish Commission, editorial board *Socialist Press*, Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement, organising committee.

16. Mike Shortland, Young Communist League 1970-73; IMG 1975-76; WSL 1977-78, London Area Committee.

17. Robert Styles, WSL 1976-78.

18. Caroline Walton, WSL 1977-78, Central London Branch.

19. Jo Woodward, I.S. 1972-74 (expelled); Left Opposition (ex-I.S.); WSL 1976-78, Coventry Branch.

20. Tim Woodward, I.S. 1972-74 (expelled); Left Opposition (ex-I.S.); WSL 1976-78, West Midlands Area Committee, Coventry Branch chairman, convenor NALGO union fraction.

21. John Zucker, WSL 1976-78, Birmingham Branch.

Another comrade, not a member of the Trotskyist Faction, resigned together with the faction and submitted the appended statement:

Although not a member of the Trotskyist Faction, and with some reservations, I supported their main perspectives document, and I stand by that. The discussion and voting at this conference have confirmed for me that the WSL is not to be budged from what I regard as its fundamentally wrong positions, and I therefore also resign.

Signed:

T., WRP 1974-75, expelled as part of the Thornett opposition; WSL 1975-78, editorial board *Socialist Press*, London Area Committee.

WSL: Workers Socialist League
WRP: Workers Revolutionary Party, formerly the SLL: Socialist Labour League
YS: Young Socialists, youth group of the WRP
RCG: Revolutionary Communist Group
I.S.: International Socialists, now the SWP: Socialist Workers Party

Workers Vanguard

The founding conference of the Spartacist League/Britain.

Mandel...

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slandering their own comrades and refusing to publicize their persecution and even assassination—Pablo & Co. also instructed Peng not to give information concerning this witchhunt to a group of Vietnamese Trotskyists who were returning to their country to enter the party of Ho Chi Minh. Yet Ho was himself responsible for the assassination of Vietnamese Trotskyist leader Ta Thu Thau and scores of Fourth Internationalists who led the August 1945 uprising against the reimposition of Western colonial rule! The group of Vietnamese emigrés returned innocent of any knowledge of the Stalinist repression being carried out in China—which would no doubt have dampened their enthusiasm for Pablo's tactic of "deep entrism"—and were never heard from again.

Quatrieme Internationale

Ta Thu Thau

Peng wrote in his letter that he had considered Mandel/Germain "one of the most promising new leaders of our movement," although "I had also noticed his lack of penetrating analysis in observing various problems, his impressionist temperament, wavering and conciliationist spirit manifested very often on important problems, and his facility in modifying his own positions." It was the latter characteristics—impressionism and cowardice—which drove Mandel into the arms of Pablo and ruined him as a revolutionary leader. But this was more than a personal tragedy. It was a major factor in allowing Pablo to tighten his bureaucratic grip on the FI apparatus and ultimately to destroy it. Mandel's craven political capitulation facilitated the victory of Pabloist revisionism over the weak, disoriented Fourth International—the political destruction of the world revolutionary instrument founded by Trotsky. And it directly sabotaged the urgently needed defense of the Chinese Trotskyists, who to this day remain in Mao's jails (if they have not already died in prison).

Because of his personal weaknesses, Mandel became not only a revisionist but a *traitor* to the Trotskyist movement.

Not only did the revisionist program of Pabloism mean liquidation of the struggle to construct a Trotskyist vanguard, it was soon expressed externally as well in a series of political capitulations to Stalinism. When on 17 June 1953 the working class of East Berlin rose up against their bureaucratic rulers—in the first instance against the Russian army of occupation—the shock waves spread throughout Europe. Playwright Bertold Brecht, a longtime Communist Party member, penned an epigraph of bitter irony and resignation: according to the authorities, "the people had lost the confidence of the government and could only win it back through redoubled effort. Wouldn't it be easier if the government dissolved the people and elected another." What was the response of Pablo's International Secretariat to this event, the first abortive attempt at political revolution in the Soviet bloc? It issued a manifesto calling for "real democratization of the Communist parties"—i.e. bureaucratic self-reform—and failed, deliberately, to call for the withdrawal of Soviet troops (*Quatrième Internationale*, July 1953).

Three years later Pablo/Mandel & Co. repeated this capitulation to the Kremlin, this time by turning their backs on the Hungarian workers who rose up against the hated secret police and the Russian army. Contrasting this attempt at proletarian anti-bureaucratic revolution unfavorably to Poland, these fraudulent "Trotskyists" wrote that the absence of a political leadership "provoked exactly those flaws and dangers" which Poland had avoided "thanks to the leadership role played by...the Gomulka tendency...a centrist tendency nonetheless evolving to the left...." (*Quatrième Internationale*, December 1956). Again the perspective was that of *pressuring* the bureaucracy, supporting one wing against another, and *not* mobilizing the workers around an independent Trotskyist party.

With the beginning of the 1960's, however, the Pabloists' eyes turned toward the so-called "Third World" and in particular the petty-bourgeois nationalists Ben Bella (Algeria) and Castro. While recognizing that the Cuban bourgeoisie had been expropriated as a class with the nationalizations of fall/winter 1960, they went further and gave *political* support to the Castro leadership. In this Pablo, Mandel et al. were joined by the American SWP, which in 1953 had belatedly but firmly rejected the liquidationist consequences of Pabloism. The SWP put forward a document ("For Early Reunification of the Trotskyist Movement") in March 1963 which stated: "In its evolution toward revolutionary Marxism, the [Castroite] July 26 Movement set a pattern that now stands as an example for a number of other countries." This was the founding document of the "United Secretariat" (USec) now headed by Mandel.

In another document at this time SWP leader Joseph Hansen wrote that Cuba was a workers state "lacking as yet the forms of democratic proletarian rule." It certainly was true that it lacked the forms...and the substance. In fact, Castro and Guevara proved this quite conclusively by jailing the Cuban Trotskyists in 1963. Trotsky's book, *Permanent Revolution*, was proscribed and the printing plates containing the offending text were smashed on the presses! Guevara, the USec's special favorite, even

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Mandel...

suggested that the Trotskyists were Yankee agents, noting that they had long had influence in the city of Guantanamo (near the U.S. base). But at this very moment Mandel was meeting with Guevara at the ministry of industry and counseling "my friend 'Che'" on economic policies. And what was he advising the "heroic guerrilla"-to-be? Was he "fighting for workers democracy" in the corridors of power, perhaps? Hardly. Here is what Mandel wrote in the journal of Guevara's ministry, *Nuestra Industria*:

> "The more underdeveloped a country's economy...the wiser it is in our opinion to reserve decision-making power over the more important investments and financial matters to the central authorities."
>
> —"Mercantile Categories in the Period of Transition," in Bertram Silverman, ed., *Man and Socialism in Cuba*

This is an unalloyed apology for the extremely irrational economic "planning" by the Cuban bureaucracy, where decisions were so centralized that everything was decided by the *líder máximo* from the saddle of his jeep.

The Stalinist repression did not faze the Pabloists. It seemed nothing could. Thus when Castro launched his famous, frothing attack against Trotskyism at the 1966 Tricontinental Congress in Havana, USec leader Hansen wrote that,

> "however much it satisfied the right-wing CP leaderships, it was taken by all vanguard elements with any real knowledge of the Trotskyist movement as at best a mistaken identification of Trotskyism with the bizarre sect of J. Posadas and at worst nothing but a belated echo of old Stalinist slanders, the purpose of which remained completely obscure."
>
> —*International Socialist Review*, November-December 1967

For the proletarian militants who had been locked up in Castro's prisons the purpose of his attack was not at all obscure. The USec apologists for Cuban Stalinism were right about one thing, however. In denouncing Trotskyism Castro was directing his fire not at them but at those who call for political revolution to overthrow this bonapartist regime and replace it with the democratic rule of soviets. Any equation of the capitulationist policies of the USec with this Marxist program—uniquely upheld by the international Spartacist tendency—is clearly a case of mistaken identity. If the charge is Trotskyism then Ernest Mandel can plead in good conscience: "Not guilty!"

From Guerrillaism to Popular Frontism

The principal focus during the late 1960's of the Mandelites' quest for a shortcut to fame and fortune was the Castroite movement in Latin America. Thus a resolution passed at the USec's "Ninth World Congress" in 1969 stated point-blank:

> "Even in the case of countries where large mobilizations and class conflicts in the cities may occur first, civil war will take manifold forms of armed struggle, in which the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare...."
>
> —"Draft Resolution on Latin America," in [SWP] *International Information Bulletin*, January 1969

The first task of USec supporters in Latin America, therefore, would be: "(a) Integration into the historic revolutionary current represented by the Cuban revolution and the OLAS...." This was in essence the same liquidationist perspective put forward in the early 1950's by Pablo—only the recipient of the political flattery and capitulations had changed.

Mandel, as is his wont, expressed himself more circumspectly on the subject of guerrillaism than gung-ho "pick-up-the-gun" Guevarists like Livio Maitan. But as to the continuity of Pabloist methodology Mandel was certainly frank; in an article on "The Place of the Ninth World Congress in the History of the Fourth International" (1969), he wrote:

> "The situation began to change in the course of the 1960's and it was the French May 1968 which most clearly revealed this

change.... The Ninth World Congress sought to bring this change to the attention of the entire international revolutionary movement.

"The most striking trait of the change is the appearance of a new revolutionary vanguard on a universal scale which has completely escaped from the control of the Stalinist and reformist apparatuses and is organized autonomously. The first important signs of this new phenomenon go back quite a ways: the 'July 26 Movement,' which led the guerrilla struggle which overthrew the Batista dictatorship independently of the CP and of all traditional organizations of the Cuban left...."

"This turn is not only a turn toward the creation of independent organizations, capable of serving as poles of attraction for the militants of the new vanguard who are neither reformists nor Stalinists, and who seek to regroup nationally and internationally. It also implies a change of accent as to the principal forms of activity of the movement. In this sense it has the same importance as the turn outlined by the Third World Congress, but at a much more advanced stage of construction of the International."

The Third Congress of the Fourth International was when Pablo first elaborated his plans for "deep entry" into the mass Stalinist and social-democratic parties. Mandel goes on:

"At the Third World Congress it was a question of breaking with essentially isolated activity and integrating into the revolutionary mass movement. At the Ninth World Congress it was a question of breaking with an essentially propagandist practice—i.e., centered on criticizing the betrayals and errors of the traditional leaderships—...and of passing over to a phase where we are capable of undertaking revolutionary initiatives, within the mass movement."

—*La longue marche de la révolution* (1976)

In both cases the essence of the "tactic" was capitulation before alien class forces. The American SWP under Hansen objected to the "guerrilla turn" of the "Ninth Congress," but only because *it* wanted to make a bloc with liberals opposed to the Vietnam war. Democratic Party "doves" were not about to get on a platform with supporters of "terrorism" in Latin America. The Mandelites were not able to cash in on their maneuver, however. Castro's OLAS never did anything to organize "two, three, many Vietnams" after Guevara's debacle in Bolivia. And the two main USec groups engaged in guerrilla struggle defected: the Bolivians to join the Castroite ELN en masse, and the Argentine PRT splitting from Mandel & Co. in 1973.

Roger Pic

Ho Chi Minh

As it became clear that there was no shortcut to power in La Paz or Santiago by heading for the hills, the pro-Moscow Communist parties revived their refrains of a "peaceful road." In Chile the vehicle was to be the Unidad Popular (UP), a popular front of the Communist and Socialist parties together with small bourgeois parties, which was headed by Salvador Allende. Meanwhile in Europe, in the aftermath of the 1968-69 working-class and youth upsurge the reformists were looking for means to head off a mass radicalization with revolutionary implications. Their answer was a new wave of popular frontism: the French Union of the Left, the Italian CP's strategy of an "historic compromise."

The Chilean experience was pivotal. In a certain sense it was a bridge from the guerrillaism of the late 1960's to the popular frontism of the 1970's. It was also—and most importantly—the battleground on which the drama of the popular front was played out to the bitter finale. The "peaceful road" ended in a bloodbath. The responsibility of the Stalinists and social democrats, who preached faith in the officer corps and "democratic" bourgeoisie, is patent. But neither does Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat have clean hands. First its Chilean supporters hailed Allende's 1970 electoral victory. Then, a year later, the USec itself issued a "unanimous" statement terming the UP a popular front and even declaring:

"Complete independence must be maintained with regard to the popular front coalition. Revolutionists cannot participate in such a coalition even by offering it electoral support. (Revolutionary Marxists can, in certain situations, vote for a labor candidate but not for a candidate of a front that includes petty-bourgeois and bourgeois parties.)"

Intercontinental Press, 21 February 1972

This policy was put forward *only* by the international Spartacist tendency at the time of the 1970 Chilean elections. Moreover, at no time since then has the USec refused to vote for all popular front candidates. But this curious declaration does indicate that they are not ignorant of the orthodox Trotskyist policy toward popular fronts...just opposed to it. In any case, none of the several groups of Chilean USec supporters ever carried out this policy. And in September 1973, on the morrow of the Santiago coup, a "Draft Political Resolution" by the USec's Mandelite majority reversed its previous verdict on the UP, declaring:

"...from the start, it differed from a classical Popular Front regime by the fact that it openly proclaimed its resolve to enter on the road of socialism, and that it openly based itself on the organized workers movement."

[SWP] *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, October 1973

This deliberate confusionism, designed to cover up the USec's total failure to present a revolutionary alternative to Allende & Co., was soon compounded in Europe. In France in 1973, the Mandelite LCR called for votes to the Union of the Left on the second round in parliamentary elections; in 1974 it called for votes on the second round for the single candidate of the popular front for the presidency (Mitterrand); in 1977 it called for votes for Union of the Left slates (including bourgeois Left Radical candidates) on the second round of municipal elections, and with the scantiest of fig leaves called for abstention only where the slate was *headed* by a Radical.

Similarly in Italy the USec section ran candidates on the Democrazia Proletaria ticket in the June 1976 parliamentary elections. While standing to the left of the Communist Party's program for a coalition with the Christian Democrats, the DP advocated a Chilean-style popular front with the minor republican and secular parties of the bourgeoisie. And in Portugal not only did Mandel's disciples join a front, the FUT, which supported and had

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Mandel...

the blessing of a wing of the Armed Forces Movement; but in the June 1976 presidential elections USec Mandelite superstar Krivine advocated voting for Otelo de Carvalho, a general of the bourgeois officer corps!

From being handmaidens of the Kremlin in the 1950's and cheerleaders for the Castroites in the 1960's, these inveterate renegades from Trotskyism had become a left pressure group on the popular fronts of the 1970's.

Labels

When the United Secretariat was formed in 1963, both parties agreed to let "bygones be bygones," and differences over China, "deep entrism" and other disputed questions were declared off-limits. However, with the first signs of mass radicalization all the old differences resurfaced, with the SWP and its satellites squaring off against Mandel and friends (the old guard of Pablo lieutenants). The result was a factional struggle in the USec that lasted from 1969 to 1977, with bitter public attacks on each other by the SWP-led reformist minority and the centrist International Majority Tendency (IMT). When the IMT opened the door last year to dissolution of the factions, by backing off from its previous support to Guevarist guerrillaism, it was with the understanding that previous factional documents would be relegated to the status of "historical material."

Thus even though there is a real approximation of political appetites between the ex-IMT and the SWP during this popular front period, the USec remains a rotten bloc. It is not surprising, then, that Mandel should periodically propose to abandon his phony "Fourth International" altogether, in favor of polymorphous groupings of the broad "far left." Such perverse creatures would unite virulently anti-Soviet Maoists, ostensible Trotskyists and syndicalist-spontaneists, with the only possible political basis being the desire to pressure a larger popular front of the traditional workers parties to the left. Thus in an interview with a Spanish leftist review in late 1976 Mandel stated:

> "In my opinion the future of the revolutionary movement is in the kind of groups which are broader than those which call themselves Trotskyist. Groupings which, however, unite with sections of the Fourth International."
>
> *Topo Viejo*, November 1976

A few months earlier Mandel had floated the same concept in a dialogue with the left wing of the French PSU, led by none other than Michel Pablo. Asked if the French LCR wasn't closer to some of the Italian Mao-syndicalist groups than to the American SWP, Mandel responded:

> "...the real debate is not over the label, the organizational framework, the statutes, the human relations or references to a fellow with a beard named Leon Trotsky....
> "What difference do labels make? If we should find in the political arena forces which agreed with our strategic and tactical orientation, and which were only put off by the historical reference and the name, we would get rid of the latter inside of 24 hours."
>
> *Politique Hebdo*, 10-16 June 1976

PSU left-wing leader Yvan Craipeau, himself a former Trotskyist, responded that it was not enough to change labels: it was necessary to renounce the Leninist conception of the party as well.

AP

For Mao, the Cultural Revolution was a cynical maneuver to recover authority lost to party enemies during the "Great Leap" disaster.

Does this kind of maneuver offer the USec jugglers an effective means of reaching the "new vanguard," and subtly gaining hegemony over it? One only has to cast a brief backwards glance to observe the results of past attempts of this sort. The archetype of such a centrist grouping in the recent past is the Chilean MIR, a Castroite group set up in 1965 with the active intervention of the USec affiliate led by Luis Vitale. All the "labels" were abandoned (Fourth International, Trotskyism, permanent revolution, deformed/degenerated workers states), but on the basis of a vague left-of-the-CP program the USec's *World Outlook* (17 September 1965) declared the MIR the "most important Marxist-Leninist party yet to be formed in Chile...."

Less than two years later, however, the MIR leadership began systematically purging all "Trotskyists," soon including Vitale and other top leaders. Undaunted, the European Mandelites (and the expelled Vitale) continued flattering their centrist creation, and it was partly in order to stay close to the MIR that the IMT took a position of de facto "critical support" to the UP. The Latin American commission of the French LCR protested against the December 1971 USec resolution on Chile (quoted above) because of its mild criticisms of the MIR, claiming that the latter had "an absolutely clear position on the question of permanent revolution" and "the influence of Trotskyist positions" ([SWP] *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, February 1973). The Mandelites criticized their own fraternal organization in Chile as worse than the MIR, and have frequently raised large sums for the Castroites while leaving their comrades begging for crumbs!

But the classic example of the kind of "broad" grouping, "including Trotskyists," of which Mandel dreams is the Spanish POUM, established in 1935 as a fusion of the Communist Left (headed by Andrés Nin) and Joaquin Maurin's Workers and Peasants Bloc. It too dropped the labels, and took ambiguous positions on the nature of Stalin's Russia, popular frontism and other vital issues. Trotsky's answer to this was to break all political ties to the renegade Nin and to call for a vigilant struggle within the Fourth Internationalist movement against those sympathetic to the POUM and similar centrist roadblocks. With its vacillations, this unstable amalgam became the worst enemy of proletarian revolution in Spain, Trotsky wrote. And that is precisely what would become of the products of Mandel's opportunist "regroupments" if they succeeded in gaining mass support.

Objectivism and Capitulators

In the last two years the major new development on the European left has been the appearance of a Eurocommunist current. As one might expect from Mandel, ever ready to tail after a new rage, the USec leader saw this process as possibly leading to a conversion of longtime Stalinist hacks like Santiago Carrillo into Leninists! In the second installment of the *Topo Viejo* interview quoted previously, Mandel refers to the contradiction between the "positive and negative aspect" of the rise of Eurocommunism:

> "The leading comrades of the Communist Party, especially its worker cadres, must take on [this contradiction] and resolve it; and I hope and believe that they will be capable of resolving it positively, in the sense of returning to the path of revolutionary Marxism.
>
> "Eurocommunism is a policy of transition, although no one knows what to or where to. Perhaps it represents a transition to the reabsorption of the Communist parties by social democracy, something which in my opinion is rather unlikely, but not totally impossible. Perhaps it will be a transition to a new Stalinism. And also—why not?—it could be a transition, on the part of the worker cadres of the party, to a reacquaintance with revolutionary Marxism, with Leninism."
>
> —*Topo Viejo*, December 1976

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Mandel...

This brings us right back to 1950's vintage Pabloism, seeing the "leading comrades" of the CPs as perhaps salvageable for the revolution. Thus once again independent Trotskyist parties and an authentic Fourth International built in struggle against Stalinism, social democracy and all varieties of centrism are superfluous (mere "labels" to be discarded in the course of organizational maneuvers). But it should be obvious even to those unfamiliar with the various ostensibly Trotskyist groups that there is something grievously amiss with a "Trotskyist" who does not seek to build Trotskyist parties and a Trotskyist international. The sickness is diagnosed as Pabloist liquidationism, and Ernest Mandel is one of the prime carriers.

Mandel's political revisionism is closely linked to his economics, which are marked by a fundamental objectivism. In the early 1950's he argued that "the relation of forces has evolved decisively in favor of the anti-capitalist camp." Thus by lining up with the pro-Soviet parties one would be in position to capture leadership of the revolutionary mass movements which would inevitably be generated by the CPs. At the same time he argued that the restoration of capitalism in the USSR "is no longer in the realm of the possible" in the short run ("Decline and Fall of Stalinism," resolution presented to the Pabloist "Fifth World Congress," *Quatrième Internationale*, December 1957).

In the mid-1960's version of this objectivism, Mandel asserted that capitalism "will not again experience new crises such as 1929" (*Temps Modernes*, August-September 1964). Consequently under "neocapitalism" the transitional program was transformed into a smorgasbord of "anti-capitalist structural reforms." This objectivism is at the very heart of his outlook. Thus the opening sentence of his *Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory* reads: "In the last analysis, every step forward in the history of civilization has been brought about by an increase in the productivity of labor." Contrast this, for example, with the *Communist Manifesto*, which states equally succinctly: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."

One of the best examples of Mandel's politico-economic objectivism is his January 1953 letter to Jean-Paul Sartre, written under the impact of the Chinese revolution:

> "For us the nature of a period is not determined in the first instance by the *leadership* of the mass movement but by its *extent*.... Never in the history of capitalism has there been a period during which, over the entire globe, the number of participants, the violence and extent of this mass movement have been as considerable as today. That is why we consider the present period as an eminently revolutionary period. "...On the world scale, the relation of forces is evolving in a manner increasingly unfavorable to capitalism."
>
> *La longue marche de la révolution*

We have pointed out elsewhere the similarities between the economist objectivism of Mandel and Bukharin, with the former's "long waves" a more generalized version of the latter's "periods" of imperialism. Trotsky wrote in 1928 in response to Bukharin's draft program for the Stalinized Comintern—based on the assertion of a "Third Period" of terminal capitalist crisis—a polemic which utterly demolishes the objectivist tailism of Ernest Mandel:

> "But as soon as the objective prerequisites have matured, the key to the whole historical process passes into the hands of the subjective factor, that is, the party. Opportunism which consciously or unconsciously thrives upon the inspiration of the past epoch, always tends to underestimate the role of the subjective factor, that is, the importance of the party and of revolutionary leadership. All this was fully disclosed during the discussions on the lessons of the German October, on the Anglo-Russian Committee, and on the Chinese revolution. In all these cases, as well as in others of lesser importance, the opportunistic tendency evinced itself in the adoption of a course that relied solely upon the 'masses' and therefore completely scorned the question of the 'tops' of the revolutionary leadership. Such an attitude, which is false in general, operates with positively fatal effect in the imperialist epoch."
>
> *Third International After Lenin*

Swedish USec...

(continued from page 32)

the party," put forward a strategy counterposed to that of the KAF: the need to construct an alternative leadership, based on a revolutionary transitional program, to oust the pro-capitalist labor "leaders."

The reaction of the KAF leadership to "For a Trotskyist Program" was not a political reply but an attempt to instigate organizational measures against the dissidents on the grounds that their views overlapped those of the Spartacist tendency. At the instigation of one Jakob Lundmark, head of the former pro-SWP faction, the KAF Political Bureau (PB) addressed a letter to Christer and Gunilla demanding they affirm that the KAF and the USec were "revolutionary Trotskyist organizations which stand for revolutionary politics and represent a continuity back to the Fourth International's founding Congress in 1938 and the early Comintern" (letter of 26 November 1977). In a document we reprint below, the two comrades replied that the PB's demand for a loyalty oath was simply an attempt to expel them "solely on the basis of our political views and our political struggle." They noted they were being victimized for political "characterizations that were acceptable before this" that is, before the bitter faction fight in the USec was shoved under the diplomatic rug.

In their courageous reply, the comrades exposed the USec rotten bloc, noting the former factions' public criticisms of each other and contrasting the PB's concern that they affirm the USec's "continuity" to the Fourth International with Ernest Mandel's infamous 1976 statement, "What do labels matter?" While noting the difficulty of judging any political current from a distance, Christer and Gunilla forthrightly refused to deny the "commonality" of their views with the iSt "on some questions."

The PB responded with a draconian recommendation that the two be expelled at the upcoming KAF congress. A special Commission of Inquiry was constituted and enjoined to discover some basis for this purge. The Commission began to take testimony from members of the several locals of which the dissidents had been members during their years in the KAF. Simultaneously, to provide a political cover, Lundmark distributed a turgid ten-page attack on Christer and Gunilla and the iSt, drawing heavily on the political distortions of ex-Spartacist Bob Pearlman, now in the American SWP.

But the scheme backfired. The witchhunting "inquiry" could produce not a shred of evidence of indiscipline by Christer and Gunilla, but only testimonials to their seriousness and disciplined functioning, as comrades who had worked with them in branches over the years testified to their dedication and active work as KAF members. Faced with the Commission's refusal to recommend that the comrades be expelled, the embarrassed leadership was abruptly forced to change its mind about taking up the question of disciplinary action at the congress. Despite a statement protesting the leadership's bureaucratic maneuver signed by 18 delegates, the matter was tabled to the next meeting of the KAF Central Committee. The CC set up yet another "investigative" body which was instructed to look into such matters as the oppositionists' "uncomradely tone." But even this second, presumably more carefully picked, commission refused to cover for a purely political expulsion and again exonerated the two comrades.

The ferocious purge assault directed at Comrades Christer and Gunilla was a test of the KAF leadership's willingness to abandon the remnants of its left past to act as loyal flunkies for Mandel--a test which the KAF PB "passed" with flying colors. The leadership is moving to expunge from the cadres any left impulses remaining from the KAF in its earlier period. To their credit, some of the KAF cadres refused to be sucked into complicity with the leadership's cynical attempts to carry out the first political expulsion in the history of the organization. But the KAF has moved very far from the leftist impressionism of its younger days, and with the "help" of its international mentors of the USec it will rapidly complete its rightist consolidation.

In the months following the congress, the KAF has undergone massive disintegration. An internal bulletin noted:

> "Education did not function. On the whole, members and candidates complain of lack of education. However, emphasis on pre-conference discussion went by the boards. The expectations of many people were transformed into disappointment.... Propaganda does not function in any meaningful way.... Recruitment is uneven...we have a minimum of local intervention...we are losing people in the trade unions."
>
> Stockholm local bulletin No. 61

Members have been leaving the KAF in significant numbers. In fact, according to a leadership report to the Stockholm local, only one functional trade-union fraction remained in the city: day-care center employees. The state-capitalist Tendency D quit and the workerist Tendency C retreated into passivity, apparently content to allow the leadership to do as it pleased in exchange for being left in peace to do "its" trade-union work. Thus the main winner at the congress was the pro-SWP wing; with the KAF moving ever more to the right in its capitulation to the petty-bourgeois "movements" like anti-nuclear power and its rotten blocs with social democrats and Stalinists, the reformist political logic of the SWP is gaining strength in the organization.

Explosive factional potential still lurks beneath the diplomatic ceasefire in the USec. But the SWP's social-democratic reformism cannot be effectively combated by the impressionistic centrism of the IMT. To the SWP's "strategy" of becoming the "best builders" of petty-bourgeois and reformist organizations under the "theory" that "consistent" democracy equals socialism, the IMT can counterpose only a verbal sleight-of-hand which terms the disgruntlements of disparate strata a "new radicalization" of a new "vanguard."

Refusing to capitulate to joint majority/minority attempts to stifle all internal discussion in the KAF, Christer and Gunilla wrote a major political reply to the maneuvers of the KAF leadership and to Lundmark's slanderous attack on them and the international Spartacist tendency. Their document, which is also reprinted below, focuses on the political issues: Lundmark's falsification of the USec's own past; the leadership's capitulation to popular frontism in France and Chile, to Castroism in Cuba and more generally to Stalinism; Lundmark's pathetic attempts to distort the SWP's position on sending federal troops to Boston in order to justify it; and why the

continued on next page

Swedish USec...

USec leadership is obliged to blatantly distort positions of the international Spartacist tendency in ways obvious to anyone reasonably familiar with its published material.

However, even with all political discussion effectively blocked, with the organization in a shambles, with the IMT and SWP loyalists more than willing to join hands against any serious left opposition, Christer and Gunilla refused to abandon the struggle for the internationalist program of authentic Trotskyism, and resigned from the KAF in February to pursue political discussion with the international Spartacist tendency. Through their work with the Stockholm Spartacist comrades and through such activities as the Stockholm public meeting on the KAF and the recent publication of the documentation of their oppositional struggle, the comrades demonstrate their commitment to assisting their former comrades of the KAF to find the road forward to the authentic Trotskyism of the iSt. ■

—adapted from "Swedish USec Face to Face with Trotskyism." WV No. 204, 5 May 1978

Statement of Resignation from the KAF

To the Political Bureau/Executive Committee:

> "The crisis of the proletarian leadership cannot, of course, be overcome by means of an abstract formula. It is a question of an extremely humdrum process. But not of a purely 'historical' process, that is, of the objective premises of conscious activity, but of an uninterrupted chain of ideological, political and organizational measures for the purpose of fusing together the best, most conscious elements of the world proletariat beneath a spotless banner, elements whose number and self-confidence must be constantly strengthened, whose connections with wider sections of the proletariat must be developed and deepened – in a word: to restore to the proletariat, under new and highly difficult and onerous conditions, its historical leadership."
>
> —Leon Trotsky, *Writings, 1935-36* (first edition), p. 112

After reading that tangle of distortions, slanders and outright falsehoods presented as a political document under the name of Jakob Lundmark (see "Comments on a Farewell to the Class Struggle and Politics"), we feel compelled to reply, even if only briefly.

If Lundmark's document is the best that the SWP forces in Sweden (aided and abetted by the majorityites) can produce, then the KAF is in worse shape than we thought. Distortions and falsehoods aside, the tendency throughout the document is the utter disdain of the KAF leadership for the history and politics of Trotskyism.

The KAF PB claims that a respect for the history and continuity of Trotskyism is a condition for membership in the KAF and the United Secretariat (USec).

Unfortunately, the Lundmark document clearly asserts that an evaluation of that history is a secondary question, subordinate to organizational maneuvers:

> "The reunification did not solve the problems which led to the 52-54 split. This means that the International did not reach a common understanding of the deviation from the immediate perspective of the Transitional Program which characterized the development of world revolution after the Second World War. It was correct not to make discussion of the history of the International a roadblock to common work in an organization..." (Lundmark, p. 2)

In spite of assurances to the contrary, the KAF leadership proclaims here that it considers it correct not only to have no position on the last forty years of the history of the Trotskyist movement, but also to refuse to discuss this question. One cannot conceive of Lenin fusing with Trotsky's group in 1917 while "agreeing to disagree" about the disputes which earlier had separated the Bolsheviks from the Mensheviks and Conciliators (i.e., all the groups that wanted to reconcile the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks), or of Trotsky accepting a group into the Left Opposition or the Fourth International while passing over its history in silence!

The reason why these questions could not be discussed in 1963 is clear: while the SWP's capitulation to the Pabloites was decisive, it was not yet complete, since differences still existed over the 1953 split, China and other crucial questions. Reunification was based on refusing to discuss these political differences. Yet the USec leadership today is sufficiently shameless to accuse those groupings in the International Committee which demanded a clarifying political discussion of "fleeing from political discussion," supposedly "under the pretext of rejecting a capitulation to 'Pabloism'" (Lundmark, p. 4). The hypocrisy of the KAF leadership knows no bounds.

The political rationale for this refusal to discuss questions of crucial importance to any serious Trotskyist is encapsulated in the statement, so characteristic of the KAF leadership: "While Marxist criticism takes as its starting point the actual movement of the masses in order to give them a scientific understanding of their experience..." (Lundmark, p. 5). This type of statement serves the USec as an excuse *not* to raise the Trotskyist program, but to capitulate instead to the "new mass vanguard." This typically revisionist line was answered long ago by Trotsky:

> "Our tasks don't depend on the mentality of the workers. The task is to develop the mentality of the workers. That is what the program should formulate and present before the advanced workers. Some will say: good, the program is a scientific program; it corresponds to the objective situation but if the workers won't accept this program, it will be sterile. Possibly. But this signifies only that the workers will be crushed since the crisis can't be solved any other way but by the socialist revolution."
>
> —Leon Trotsky, *Writings, 1938-39* (first edition), pp. 43-44

The USec and KAF's rejection of political program goes hand in hand with their mindless glorification of anything that "lives and struggles." By giving "concrete struggles" priority over political clarification, the KAF leadership

simply echoes banally Bernstein's classic statement of revisionism: "The movement is everything, the final goal nothing." Lundmark and the KAF leadership are quite shameless about this: "...we support every struggle [sic!] against imperialist or bureaucratic oppression regardless of or despite the illusions which the masses have concerning petty-bourgeois leaderships or reformist solutions" (Lundmark, p. 6). That is true. Our leading Pabloists have tailed after petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships for years. The KAF leadership accuses us and the iSt of "parasitic sectarianism" (Lundmark, p. 6) for daring to criticize such petty-bourgeois leaderships. Again, we can do no better than to let Trotsky reply to such charges. In 1935 Pierre Frank and Molinier accused Trotsky's supporters of "organizational ultimatism" for refusing to capitulate to Marceau Pivert (old dogs never learn new tricks, it seems). Trotsky replied:

> "'No organizational ultimatism.' What a revolting distortion of the Leninist formulation! No ultimatism whatsoever in relation to the masses, the trade unions, the workers' movement; but the most intransigent ultimatism in relation to any group that claims to lead the masses. The ultimatism we are talking about is called the *Marxist program*."
>
> —Leon Trotsky, *The Crisis of the French Section (1935-36)*, p. 106

Trotsky's polemics against the Frank-Molinier clique, recently published in *The Crisis of the French Section (1935-36)*, deserve wide circulation in the KAF.

It is because for the KAF and USec leadership "the struggle is everything, the program nothing" that they resort to unbridled demagogy and feel free to falsify their own history as well as others'. We will take up a few examples of this below.

Lundmark gives a series of revealing examples of the way in which the Pabloites have "supported" various movements. Thus he says, "We could 'support' a Union of the Left government against a reactionary coup in the same way as the Bolsheviks supported Kerensky against Kornilov" (Lundmark, pp. 5-6). Quite true.

But that is not the question, comrades.

The question is, do you vote in elections to bring such a government to power? Do you vote for the popular-front Union of the Left (as the French LCR has consistently done) via one or several of its representative parties? Did you vote to bring Allende to power in Chile? Is Lundmark suggesting that the Bolsheviks should have "supported" the Kerensky government by voting for it if the opportunity had existed? Or should the Bolsheviks perhaps have supported Kerensky's government to the extent that it carried out progressive measures—a position resolutely opposed by Lenin. Apparently Lundmark does, since his document even declares support, in a different context, for the "Ben Bella government's anti-capitalist measures" (Lundmark, p. 6).

Comrades, it is blatantly dishonest and demagogic to compare voting to put a bourgeois government headed by a Kerensky (or an Allende, Mitterrand or Soares) into power with militarily defending their government against a rightist coup.

Furthermore, Lundmark declares his support for "the right of the Yugoslav workers state under Tito to act independently of the Stalin regime" (Lundmark, p. 6). Unfortunately, facts are tenacious. The Fourth International did more than just choose sides in a squabble between Stalinists. One of the very serious errors of the Fourth International in the postwar period was to claim that Tito and the Yugoslav bureaucracy were "genuine communists" who had decisively broken from Stalinism. The International Secretariat repeatedly sought a political bloc with the Yugoslav Stalinists, even raising the possibility that they might join the Fourth International. "Work brigades" were also recruited to go to Yugoslavia to help "build socialism." This is a much different question than resolute opposition to the possibility of Soviet military intervention into Yugoslavia.

Concerning the question of Boston, Lundmark is forced to take refuge in omitting certain facts in order to hide the SWP's true position. Lundmark (p. 7) quotes the statement by Pearlman: "In practice... the call for federal troops was never counterposed to self-defense efforts." But in the very passages he quotes from Pearlman, he conveniently omits the following sentence: "At no time was the call for labor defense squads for Black students anything more than empty sloganeering" (B. Pearlman, "Spartacist: The Making of an American Sect," *Intercontinental Press* No. 21, [6 June] 1977, p. 648).

How can "empty sloganeering" be "complementary" to what the SWP claims was the "real" issue, namely calling on the bourgeois state to protect the rights of the oppressed?

Does the KAF reject, like Pearlman and the SWP, Trotsky's view in the Transitional Program?

> "In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating *workers groups for self-defense*....
>
> "It is necessary to advance the slogan of a *workers' militia* as the one serious guarantee for the inviolability of workers' organizations, meetings and press."
>
> —*Transitional Program*, 1977 Swedish edition, p. 38

Lundmark, together with Pearlman and the KAF and USec leaderships, is careful to avoid answering the question "Is it not, as the Spartacists assert, 'unprincipled' to demand that the armed forces of the bourgeois state defend the oppressed?" (Lundmark, p. 7). Instead, Pearlman scornfully dismisses as "Super-Marxists" those who, like Lenin and Engels, consider, to quote Pearlman, "that the state, in the last resort, is 'special bodies of armed men' and that therefore the police and the army are the 'arms of the ruling class'" (quoted by Pearlman, p. 649). What is the position of the KAF leadership on the SWP's fundamental revision of the Marxist concept of the state?

Finally, the KAF leadership attacks the Spartacists for putting forward the slogan "Military Victory to the NLF" during the antiwar movement in the U.S. and accuses them of "unmasking the NLF to the American masses" (Lundmark, p. 8). Just what is wrong with that? Before the Tenth World Congress even Ernest Mandel felt called upon to mildly chide the SWP for its slogan, "Out Now," and his criticism was repeated more forcefully by other USec leaders. Even within the KAF this criticism against the SWP was presented, wasn't it, comrades?

In order to attack our positions the KAF leadership is obliged to assume that its membership is ignorant and that even when comrades may recognize distortions and demagogy they don't care enough about political program to object.

We reject these insults to the membership of the KAF. Not content to play on comrades' ignorance, Lundmark

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KAF Resignation...

and the KAF leadership must resort to outright falsification.

Comrade Lundmark (and behind him the not so invisible hand of the SWP) accuses the International Committee [I.C.] of refusing to defend Cuba against imperialist attack, in particular during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. This is a serious charge; the problem is that it is false.

The statement which Lundmark quotes was issued by the I.C. on 28 October 1962 under the title "Defend the Cuban Revolution."

> "The working class of the world must act to prevent the Cuban Revolution from being crushed. Such action must be independent of the policies of Khrushchev and the Soviet bureaucracy.
> "... The International Committee of the Fourth International calls on all its sections to take their place in all actions for the defense of the Cuban Revolution from the US imperialists.
> "Cuba, as a sovereign state, has the right to accept whatever military aid it decides. But the setting up of Soviet missile bases as a *substitute* for the international working-class struggle cannot defend the revolution....
> "In the advanced countries, especially the USA, the working class must organize actions in full support of the workers and peasants of Cuba. End the blockade! End the invasion preparations!"

Not content merely to rip a phrase out of context, Lundmark in the true spirit of the SWP falsifies even the portion he bothers to quote.

Of course, it is easy for the SWP to attack the obviously contradictory position of the Socialist Labour League (SLL: Gerry Healy's organization, now the Workers Revolutionary Party) that Cuba remained capitalist even after the massive nationalizations in late 1960. The I.C. position was a mechanical attempt to resist the simple characterization of Cuba as a workers' state made by the SWP and the Pabloites. But the KAF leadership feels it is irrelevant and unnecessary to proceed to a thorough analysis of what Lundmark calls the "shortcomings" of the Cuban leadership and [of his statement] that "The prospects of the development of the Cuban leadership were overestimated" (Lundmark, p. 2). Whatever one can say about the Spartacists, it cannot be denied that they have attempted to analyze this in a way which merits serious consideration. The correct position that Cuba was qualitatively a *deformed* workers' state by the end of 1960 was developed and adopted only by the Revolutionary Tendency within the SWP (which was to become the Spartacist tendency).

Rather than "fleeing political discussion" they have faced the issue of Cuba squarely. It is Lundmark's document which represents a determined attempt to evade the question.

The membership of the KAF has a right to answers to the following questions:

—if you now characterize Cuba as a deformed workers state, when did it become so? Why? How?

—if the Castro leadership is still characterized as "revolutionary," does this mean that non-Trotskyist leaderships can establish genuine workers states (whatever shortcomings they may have)?

—can there be a non-Trotskyist leadership which is "revolutionary" in the sense that Trotsky's Fourth International would have used the term?

We certainly do not claim to be fully familiar with all the positions of the international Spartacist tendency. However, even a quick and preliminary examination of their positions reveals an important falsification in Lundmark's account of their history.

According to documents published by the Spartacists, they were willing to remain disciplined members of the SWP and USec after the 1963 reunification, even though they were opposed to reuniting without political clarification of the central issues which had separated the Pabloite International Secretariat from Trotskyism for over 10 years.

However, the Spartacists were *EXPELLED* by the SWP; they did not "depart" as Lundmark claims. They appealed their expulsion to the 1965 World Congress but were answered by Pierre Frank:

> "We call your attention first of all to the fact that the Fourth International has no organizational connection with the Socialist Workers Party and consequently has no jurisdiction in a problem such as you raise, namely the application of democratic centralism as it affects the organization either as a whole or in individual instances."

Comrades, is this a statement the World Party of Socialist Revolution would have made?

It is not we, but the leadership of the KAF and the USec which are opposed to a political discussion of their past. It is the KAF leadership which "flees from political discussion" by refusing to even attempt to remedy what is so discreetly called a "weakness" which "should not be looked upon as a correct principle."

We believe that it is the duty of those who claim to be Trotskyists today to "reach a common understanding" and knowledge of the development of the world revolution after World War II. A "leadership" which refuses to discuss this question, while admitting having no position on it, can hardly claim to be Trotskyist.

* * * * *

We consider it a question of principle to be exonerated of the groundless charges about breaking discipline brought against us. Therefore we have appeared before the Control Commission [CC] in a disciplined fashion. It is with satisfaction that we see that the KAF leadership has been

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forced to retreat. The CC statement totally exonerates us of all charges.

Regarding the CC statement (which we demand be printed in an internal bulletin) that it is "the *right* of KAF members to sample and advocate other opinions within the organization," our rights were not at all that clear a few months ago.

The answer from the CC is hypocritical; from the very first moment it was clear that we were threatened with expulsion because of our *political positions* and not because of any possible breach of discipline.

That the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) deserves the attention of every serious militant is beyond any doubt. Even comrades from the United Secretariat have been forced to admit it, as the following quote demonstrates:

> "...they have consistently maintained principled positions on such issues as feminism and nationalism; they have established a generally commendable record of support for other left tendencies under attack from the bourgeois state and have refrained from the use of violence against other left groupings (itself not a minor achievement in the light of the record of most other left formations in the U.S.). In a period in which other ostensibly Trotskyist tendencies have been characterized by bizarre deviations and hysterical excesses—from the Posadista call for a preemptive nuclear strike by the USSR (with socialism rising triumphant from the ashes) to the shrill 'fascism is around the corner' clamor of the American Wohlforthites (coupled with the Healy/Wohlforth blatant opportunism and authoritarian party regime)—the Spartacist League has presented a sober, solid, down-to-earth tone that is refreshing."
>
> —*Spartacist League: Anatomy of a Sect. Contribution to an Analysis of the American Left.* Education for Socialists by the RMG/Canada

Due to the bankruptcy of the leadership's politics, it appears impossible to carry on a political debate within the organization, and as clearly shown by the report on the work of the Stockholm local [local bulletin no. 61], demoralized members are now leaving the organization. And "militants" such as those in the ex-Tendency "C" are content to maintain an uneasy laissez-faire attitude vis-à vis the leadership. Under such conditions we believe that *continuing our struggle* for a *revolutionary internationalist program* requires that we take up discussions with the international Spartacist tendency.

We believe that all serious KAF militants will face this same imperative and we urge them to join in such political discussions and in the *reforging of the Fourth International.*

Nacka
22 February 1978

With Trotskyist Greetings
C.
G.

Reply to the KAF Political Bureau

Comrades of the Executive Committee of the PB:

We have received your request that we confirm that the United Secretariat is Trotskyist, that the USec represents the continuity of the Fourth International and that we publicly defend that the USec is Trotskyist against all its opponents, especially against the international Spartacist tendency.

We are, have been and will be disciplined members of the KAF. We recognize unequivocally that the KAF's Central Committee and Political Bureau are our leading bodies, likewise that the United Secretariat is the leading body of the Fourth International and that we submit to its discipline.

The purpose of your letter and your questions in this matter does not lie in seeking our assurance that we are going to be loyal members of the organization. What you are really after is our ideas, our attempt to evaluate the political motion, possibilities and development of the KAF: the organization to which we have belonged for several years and to which we feel a responsibility both in regard to the organization as such, and its members.

What you are trying to do is really dishonest. First by trying to prevent our positions from reaching members of the KAF ("For a Revolutionary Trade Union Tactic," written in May, has not yet been published, nor has "For a Trotskyist Program," written in November, been published either internally or in *Internationalen*).

After that you threaten expulsion solely on the basis of our political views and our political struggle. As far as we know, this is unique in KAF's history.

As you know these bureaucratic maneuvers are not new. Your administrative and bureaucratic measures are not a new invention. The technique of placing us on the bench of the accused, not for any break of discipline but because of our programmatic ideas, is only reminiscent of the Bolshevik party's destruction by the Stalin faction and Pablo's actions in destroying the FI around the time of the Third World Congress. It ought to be noted that things went a lot further than most of the well-meaning comrades in the original Stalinist and Pabloist factions undoubtedly intended.

Although our case is actually nothing but a form of witchhunt, we want to try and answer your questions.

In the first place, the Trotskyist program including its organizational norms is a decisive criterion for an organization that wants to call itself Trotskyist. This concerns the program as well as the actions.

What, then, is the USec's organizational relationship to Trotsky's Fourth International and the Trotskyist program? How do we decide this question? The answer to this is precisely the political discussion which you are trying to prevent.

Since 1968 the USec has been deeply split. Insofar as the harsh reality of the class struggle has brought forward clear political positions, unfortunately different parts of the USec have found themselves on opposite sides of the barricades on questions such as Angola, Portugal, their attitude toward Eurocommunism, toward the SWP/USA's demand that the army of the bourgeois state protect democratic rights, etc.

continued on next page

Reply to KAF PB...

It is impossible to deny that these viewpoints and positions flow from a political program (namely centrist and reformist) and these can hardly be called Trotskyist. Consequently the least one can do is to put a question mark after the USec's "Trotskyism."

The leadership of the ex-LTF, the SWP/USA, has a whole range of reformist viewpoints. That the SWP is reformist is a view which is shared by a large part of the IMT leadership including leading comrades in the KAF. Furthermore, the majority has publicly condemned the Argentine PST's position of support to the "process of institutionalization" in Argentina. During 1973-74 IMT supporters in North America openly described the SWP and the Canadian LSA as reformist and non-Marxist. When the Internationalist Tendency was expelled from the SWP solely because of this opinion the majority protested this political explusion.

Have the leading comrades of the KAF changed their views on the explusion of the IT?

The USec majority, to which our section belongs, has given a whole range of contradictory political answers under the pressure of different events in the class struggle. There unquestionably are comrades who honestly support the Leninist road, but we also have a political leadership which first is impressionist and secondly is swinging to the right. The KAF is soft on Eurocommunists, it seeks rotten blocs with left social democrats and Stalinists in the unions, these days the KAF even has difficulty in drawing the class line against the repressive apparatus of the bourgeoisie (to which the "terrorist affair and the immigrant incidents" attest), etc.

One of the central criteria for the Trotskyist Fourth International is its organizational norms regarding democratic centralism.

Has the functioning of the USec ever really been democratic centralist during the last years? Obviously not!

We have seen two factions, the IMT and the LTF, which have constantly publicly criticized each other. We have seen different national sections refuse to abide by the decisions of the World Congress. In short, the USec doesn't function as a democratic centralist organization. And isn't this precisely one of the criteria by which we can characterize an organization as Trotskyist or not?

The USec's failure to function according to democratic centralism does not automatically disqualify it as Trotskyist. It does raise a question as to whether or not it can be called the Fourth International.

It is also a proof of the absolute necessity of the struggle that we have begun to wage in the KAF.

Your letter seems to put forward the tautological assertion that the FI is Trotskyist and that for an individual to say that the USec or some section of it is not Trotskyist is sufficient to call his membership status into question. Despite this, such statements were made rather frequently before the Tenth World Congress. A whole wing of the majority wanted to break with the SWP/USA. Parts of the LTF characterized the IMT as centrist.

Why do you single us out for our political descriptions and characterizations that were acceptable before this? Let us look at what this could lead to in an extreme case.

In hunting after a fusion with parts of the French PSU under the then-leadership of Michel Pablo, Ernest Mandel made the following statement in the French paper *Politique Hebdo* (10 June 1976) cited in *Intercontinental Press* No. 37 (1976).

> "What do labels matter? If in the political arena we found forces that agreed with our strategic and tactical orientation and which were put off only by our name [Fourth International] and historical references [Trotsky] we would drop these things within twenty-four hours."

Apparently for Mandel the question of Trotskyism and the Fourth International is only a bagatelle. If your procedures were not merely "sanitary measures," aimed at getting the KAF congress to expel us, you would

immediately take up the struggle for the Eleventh World Congress to remove Mandel as the USec's leading spokesman. Instead of doing this you are making us scapegoats.

Furthermore, if the characterizations we made of the SWP and Moreno's PST, which we think that some of you share, are correct, then we think you should investigate whether or not they are Trotskyist. You should do this in order to either adopt their line or denounce it. Instead you choose to hunt us down.

Finally, you raise the question of the iSt. It is naturally difficult for us to judge an organization's practice from afar, but as far as we can tell, the positions of the iSt are those of Trotskyism, and therefore we feel sympathy and a commonality with them on some questions. Naturally the positions of the iSt, like those of the USec or any other organization, have to be tested in practice.

From that perspective, it seems like the SWP sees the Spartacist League as a real force in the USA. We think that the discussion between comrade Pearlman (a former SL member) and the Spartacist League should be thoroughly studied by all comrades in the KAF. Pearlman's document can be found in *Intercontinental Press* Nos. 21, 22 (1977) and the Spartacist League's answer in *Workers Vanguard* Nos. 168 and 170.

It is scandalous of you to ascribe to us the views of the iSt, an organization whose practice we know little about, and to counterpose them to the USec. Not even the Spartacists themselves claim that they are any "counter"-Fourth International. They do not claim to be an international in competition with any other. On the other hand they do claim to uphold the political program of Trotskyism.

The USec has recently been active in trying to regroup "the left" to its advantage. In the USA and in Sweden [the USec] has even admitted organizations and individuals which had political positions similar to those who at the time of the Second World War and Korean War quit the Fourth International and betrayed its program. We are talking about so-called state capitalists like the RMC in the SWP and the so-called study group or "Tendency D" in KAF.

You seek to counterpose yourselves to an organization which sees itself as orthodox Trotskyist and which shares many fundamental programmatic positions with critical left comrades in the USec. An organization which shares our position against the opportunist leadership of the USec —a leadership which accepts into membership those who call the defense of the Soviet Union into question and who in fact oppose defending the deformed and degenerated workers states against imperialist attack. You dissociate yourselves from an organization which wages a principled fight for a proletarian and not petty-bourgeois line in the class struggle.

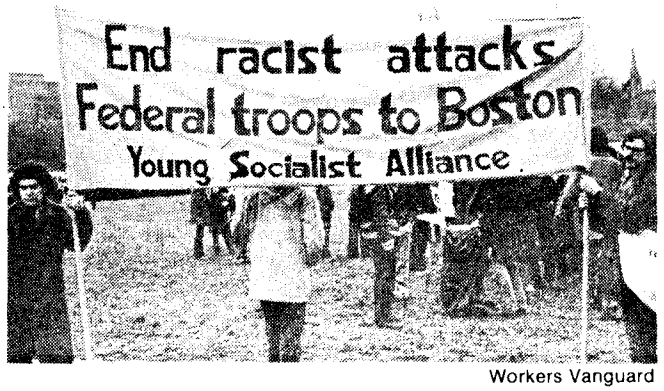
If the KAF was the genuine and Trotskyist organization that it claims to be, then it should take up discussions with the iSt, if for no other reason than to politically unmask them. But why not investigate the possibilities for principled fusion? And not, as is now the case, put a Spartacist crown of thorns on our heads.

One of the things that we found positive about the iSt is that at the time of the 1963 reunification congress (when a lot of work was done to bring the so-called Healyites and Lambertistes into the USec) they were prepared to participate in this reunification. This can be seen clearly from their various publications. Instead they were met by bureaucratic maneuvers and expulsion, no doubt an attempt to destroy them. This did not succeed and furthermore the iSt now is a small but nevertheless international current, while not claiming to be in organizational competition with the USec.

It seems to us that the leadership of the KAF is now reproducing a similar process in trying to expel us before the congress. Comrades, why do you want your bureaucratic maneuvers to prove (by expelling us) what we are trying to prove, namely, that the KAF and the USec are neither Trotskyist nor the Fourth International. These are political questions which have to be solved by an open political debate and not by bureaucratic expulsions. A debate which you are using administrative measures to prevent.

You can be sure that as long as we are members of KAF and the USec, we will unequivocally defend their positions in public (including against the representatives of the international Spartacist tendency). At the same time we assure you that we are going to continue to struggle for Trotskyist unity in a genuine democratic, as well as centralist, international organization.

With comradely greetings,
Christer F.
Gunilla S.



Workers Vanguard

Once critical of the American SWP's reformist policy of preaching reliance on capitalist state, the KAF now chastises the Swedish state for failing to intervene on behalf of harassed immigrants and political refugees who are denied asylum.

Swedish USec Face to Face with Trotskyism

"Like alchemists of the old days, they are looking for the saving formula," Christer F. told a recent Spartacist public meeting in Stockholm, Sweden. Comrade Christer was talking about the centrist Kommunistiska Arbetarförbundet (KAF—Communist Workers League), Swedish section of the United Secretariat (USec), of which he had been a long-time member before finally rejecting the USec's brand of get-rich-quick opportunism and solidarizing with the principled Trotskyist politics of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt). Comrade Christer recounted the story of his oppositional struggle in the rightward-moving KAF, which culminated at the KAF national congress last December with the KAF leadership's hilariously ineffectual efforts to railroad him and a cothinker, Comrade Gunilla, out of the organization.

It all began when the two left oppositionists submitted a document, "For a Trotskyist Program," in November during the pre-conference discussion period. Though centrists must be professional confusionists and abhor above all any attempt at programmatic clarity, the furor unleashed by the document is explicable only in terms of the precarious internal situation of the KAF. The USec's uneasy truce between the former International Majority Tendency (IMT) of Ernest Mandel and the faction led politically by the reformist American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has been dutifully carried out in Sweden through the dismantling of Tendencies A and B. But disgust with the social-democratic SWP has not been fully expunged from the ranks of the KAF, which has historically been rather leftist within the USec spectrum. Thus the two oppositionists were heaping salt on still-open wounds when they wrote:

> "Today the KAF assists in spreading illusions about the bourgeois state. The bourgeois state and its repressive apparatus are charged with failure to intervene on behalf of immigrants who are harassed, political refugees who are turned away, and 'terrorists' who are sent packing.... The Malmö local called for better behavior on the part of cops in connection with attacks on immigrants (*Internationalen*, 12 August 1977).
>
> "This is indeed different from a few years back when the KAF protested against the SWP as the latter put forward the demand that police/military troops should be sent in to defend (sic!) blacks in Boston."
>
> —"For a Trotskyist Program"

The document also castigated the USec for increasingly open abandonment of the Trotskyist principle of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism:

> "Defense of the Soviet Union is abandoned—evidently it is acceptable these days to endorse appeals with Maoists and the bourgeoisie aimed directly against the deformed and degenerated workers states. The SWP is even permitted to fuse with a state capitalist grouping without protest from any leading organ."

In Sweden, a country which directly faces the Soviet Union across the Baltic Sea (the nearest major city to Stockholm is Leningrad), this is certainly no abstract question. The oppositionists noted that the cadres who founded the KAF in 1971 had been gained largely from the sizable Swedish Maoist groups through the posing of Trotskyist positions on such questions as the class nature of the Soviet Union.

The left critics' insistence on discussing the differences between the pro-IMT and pro-SWP wings of the USec was certainly galling to the KAF leadership, which has tried to relegate them to the status of "merely historical" disputes (the USec's equation of "historical" with unimportant itself speaks volumes). But an even more sensitive subject raised by Christer and Gunilla was the question of the KAF's foundering trade-union work. After the dissolution of Tendencies A and B, a workerist current, Tendency C, remained to plague the KAF leadership's dreams of internal peace. Though this current was far from possessing a coherent critical analysis of KAF trade-union work, its formation reflected uneasiness within the organization over the KAF's turn from "putting the union up against the wall" to attempts to become a pressure group on the union bureaucracy, often through forming propaganda blocs with left social democrats or Stalinists. "For a Trotskyist Program," with its insistence that "KAF should have communists in the trade unions and not trade unionists in

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