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SPARTACIST

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The SWP and the Fourth International, 1946-54:

Genesis of Pabloism

The American Socialist Workers Party and the European Pabloists travelled at different rates along different paths to revisionism, to converge in uneasy alliance in the early 1960's in an unprincipled "reunification," which has now broken down as the American SWP has completed the transition from Pabloist centrism to outright reformism. The "United Secretariat" which issued out of the 1963 "reunification" teeters on the edge of an open split; the "anti-revisionist" "International Committee" fractured last year. The collapse of the various competing pretenders to the mantle of the Fourth International provides a crucial opportunity for the reemergence of an authentic Trotskyist international tendency. Key to the task of reconstructing the Fourth International through a process of splits and fusions is an understanding of the characteristics and causes of Pabloist revisionism and the flawed response of the anti-Pabloists who fought, too little and too late, on national terrain while in practice abandoning the world movement.

World War II: U.S. and France

Before the onset of the war, Trotsky and the Fourth International had believed that decaying capitalism and the rise of fascism removed the possibility for reformism and therefore for bourgeois-democratic illusions among the masses. Yet they could not but become increasingly aware that the revulsion of the working class against fascism and the threat of fascist occupation gave rise to social chauvinism and a renewal of confidence in the "democratic" bourgeoisie permeating the proletarian masses throughout Europe and the U.S. Faced with such a contradiction, the powerful pressures of nationalist backwardness and democratic illusions in the working class tended to pull the sections of the Fourth International apart, some adopting a sectarian stance, others capitulating to the social patriotism which was rampant among the masses. The SWP briefly adopted the "Proletarian

Military Policy" which called for military training under trade union control, implicitly posing the utopian idea that U.S. workers could fight German fascism without the existence of a workers state in the U.S., through "controlling" U.S. imperialism's army. British Trotskyist Ted Grant went even further, in one speech referring to British imperialism's armed forces as "our Eighth Army." The German IKD returned to outright Menshevism with the theory that fascism had brought about the need for "an intermediate stage fundamentally equivalent to a democratic revolution." ("Three Theses," 19 October 1941)

The French Trotskyist movement, fragmented during the course of the war, was the best example of the contradiction. One of its fragments subordinated the mobilization of the working class to the political appetites of the Gaullist wing of the imperialist bourgeoisie; another grouping renounced any struggle within the resistance movement in favor of work exclusively at the point of production and, not recognizing the existing level of reformist consciousness among the workers, adventurously attempted to seize the factories during the "liberation" of Paris while the working masses were out on the streets. The February 1944 European Conference document which was the basis for a fusion between two French groupings to form the Parti Communiste Internationaliste characterized the two groups:

"Instead of distinguishing between the nationalism of the defeated bourgeoisie which remains an expression of its imperialist preoccupations, and the 'nationalism' of the masses which is only a reactionary expression of their resistance against exploitation by the occupying imperialism, the leadership of the POI considered as progressive the struggle of its own bourgeoisie"

"the CCI . . . under the pretext of guarding intact the heritage of Marxism-Leninism, refused obstinately to

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The Case of Bala Tamboe

Suppressed Documents Expose United Secretariat

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The Road from the SWP to Trotskyism

Resignations from the SWP-YSA

The statement of resignation from the Socialist Workers Party in favor of a fusion perspective with the Spartacist League, printed immediately below, is from comrades who have made the difficult transition from the reformism of the SWP to Trotskyism. They originated out of the complex process around the last SWP Convention (August 1971). Two left oppositions emerged in that Convention period: the Communist Tendency in Boston, a handful associated with one David Fender, and the much looser Proletarian Orientation tendency which amassed perhaps a hundred supporters by Convention time. The CT took a more left-wing and multi-faceted stance; the PO as its name implies centered upon involving the SWP in the working-class movement. After the Convention the PO formally dissolved and in fact began disintegrating even before the post-Convention period. Of the older more prominent individuals drawn to or associated with the PO (Larry Turner, Hedda Garza, Harry DeBoer, Paul Boutelle), most simply capitulated to the party majority. The surviving right PO elements headed by Ralph Lewis seem to place their future hopes on the centrist European United Secretariat in the latter's incipient rupture with the reformist American SWP. The more radical left PO elements around Barbara Gregorich formally constituted a "Leninist Faction" within the SWP.

Meanwhile Fender and the CT early got themselves thrown out of the SWP, then split from each other. The CT, after a weeks-long attempt to conquer the American proletariat independently as the "Committee for a Workers Government," liquidated into the third-camp International Socialists, though not without swearing to all and sundry that they have not sold out but are rather on a vicious wrecking Trotskyite entry. Fender has signed on as co-editor of Harry Turner's "Vanguard Newsletter" to produce one of the more rotten little blocs of all time. The VNL is not only non-democratic-centralist itself 'but projects and seeks to work through its "Committees for Rank and File Caucuses," a hypothetical united front in willful substitution for the aim of a Leninist party. The record of the combined VNL-CRFC crew to date, to take the China question for example, is the "unity" of the pro-Maoist Turner and the pro-Liu Shao-chiist Fender, along with the sometime inclusion of the self-styled left pro-Lin Piaoist Bob Ross. In addition the CRFC swamp encompasses "Socialist Forum," some semi-ex-DeLeonist

14 August 1972

Political Committee, Socialist Workers Party
National Executive Committee,
Young Socialist Alliance

We, the undersigned, hereby resign from the SWP and the YSA. We take this step as the culmination of our previously declared support within the SWP to the Declaration of the Leninist Faction of 15 May 1972 or, in the case of the YSA member, of our present solidarity with the politics of that Declaration.

In accordance with the programmatic parallelism of our political position with that of the Spartacist League of the U.S., and as principled and serious revolutionists, we intend to seek fusion with the SL. We call upon all others in basic agreement with our views to adopt the same perspective.

Fraternally,

*Paul A., SWP (Washington D.C.)
Jeff B., SWP (Oakland-Berkeley)
Dave P., SWP (Washington, D.C.)
Martha P., SWP (Washington, D.C.)
Ron P., YSA (New York City)*

elements who presumably think all the Chinese are simply Stalinist totalitarians but that probably it is not very important since it is not an American question. Just before picking up Fender who is some kind of extreme "socialist" militarist i.e. an enthusiast of his own version of an ultra Proletarian Military Policy, Turner had fortuitously broken, over questions of international maneuvering, with a "socialist" draft dodger, Bob Sherwood, resident in Canada. But Turner-Fender do have a principled basis of a sort for their amalgam: Turner's VNL had gone along with support to the New York cops' strike (Turner was chasing the strongly pro-cop Workers League at the time) while most recently Fender as a VNL representative precipitated the forcible opening by campus cops of a WL "public" meeting in St. Louis where, as usual, the WL was forcibly excluding known radical opponents.

The record of the attempt of elements standing between the reformism of the "Trotskyist" SWP and the revolutionary Marxism of the Trotskyist Spartacist League to transcend their centrist limitations ranges in the main from the pathetic to the sordid.

The most characteristic nostrum seen as an antidote to the SWP's revisionism is a particularly trivial species of work-erism. Real revolutionary syndicalists, while they believe in

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concentrating all their effort and attention upon the class struggle at the point of production hence denying and liquidating crucial aspects of Leninism in the struggle to conquer power, at least focus on the class struggle. But much of the thrust of the oppositions born in the SWP is instead a yearning to be "at one" with the proletariat, a sentimental petty-bourgeois moralist felt belief that the be-all and end-all of the work of real revolutionists is simply to be immersed, hopefully continuously, in the real proletarian milieu--very different from the Leninist implantation of hard communist fractions at calculated spots within the labor movement.

The SWP oppositionists' disorientation reflects two interconnected deep-seated obstacles to achieving a bona fide revolutionary outlook. The first is that the SWP is very far from revolutionary politics, and in very many ways--hence the road from it to Trotskyism is long and tortuous. The second is that the American working class in recent decades has given little concrete empirical example of its real capacities in class struggle to the isolated panacea- and revisionism-prone radical movement. Hence it is difficult for even those with a subjective will to assimilate the historical and international experiences of Bolshevism and Trotskyism. But if experience in revolutionary politics is not easy to acquire in contemporary America, the catastrophes of petty centrist opportunism can and do teach a minority of revolutionary aspirants the lessons through hard knocks. The comrades now resigning from the SWP are by no means the last to come to Bolshevism from the still continuing interactions of the floundering SWP oppositional elements as they are driven to confront real programmatic alternatives.

Declaration of Leninist Fraction

1. As Trotskyists we are first and foremost proletarian internationalists. Today, though, we see not one single,

homogeneous Fourth International (World Party of Socialist Revolution), but five separate international groups all claiming to be either the Fourth International itself, or separate "factions" of it. The shattering of the Fourth International originally constructed by Trotsky, Cannon, Sedov, Klement, and others had its basis in the isolation from the working masses after World War II, and the methodology and positions adopted at the Third World Congress in 1951.

At the Third World Congress, adaptation to non-revolutionary currents took place, which resulted in the adoption of positions which negated the need for the Leninist vanguard party. These positions, based on impressionism and empiricism, were not decisively fought at the time of the 1952-53 split nor during the reunification of 1963. The result is that they still exist within the United Secretariat today.

2. The majority of the United Secretariat is currently adapting to peasant forces in Latin America, while the Canadian led minority (with fraternal SWP support) seeks to adapt to petty bourgeois and new middle class sectors. Neither strategy sees the industrial working class as the key to the revolution. Therefore, in the current dispute within the United Secretariat, we can support neither side.

Other international groupings have fared no better. About the International Secretariat of Posadas with its call for a nuclear first strike by the Soviet Union, or the Revolutionary

This is the first issue of Spartacist since the inauguration of the new monthly Workers Vanguard a year ago. At that time Workers Vanguard was described as part of the transformation of the Spartacist League into the nucleus of the vanguard party, and of the struggle to reconstruct the Fourth International. The role of Spartacist is to stress the polemical, theoretical and internationally directed aspects of these tasks. Hence the editors look forward to Spartacist becoming the organ of the Spartacist tendency internationally, as a step in the struggle for rebirth of the Fourth International.

—The Editorial Board

Marxist Tendency of Pablo with its deep entry in the Australian Communist Party, little need be said. The International Committee, led by G. Healy, can be characterized as both sectarian and opportunist, or "sectarians afraid of their own opportunism," with outright reactionary positions on such issues as women's liberation.

3. Errors similar to those of the United Secretariat are found within the current program of our party, the Socialist Workers Party.

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... SWP

4. The declaration that the Cuban Revolution had produced a healthy workers state without the intervention of the vanguard Leninist (i.e. Trotskyist) party represented a political denial of the need for such a party. This denial is outright political liquidationism. We declare that the current Cuban state is a deformed workers state and has been so from the very instant of its existence. In order for Cuba to become a healthy workers state, a political revolution is required just as in the degenerated workers state of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states such as China and the Eastern European states. Such a political revolution has as its most important task the establishment of institutionalized forms of workers democracy and the political destruction of the Stalinist theories of socialism in one country and peaceful coexistence.

5. The party majority has come more and more to base its program on bourgeois ideologies (such as nationalism and feminism) within the workers' movement. While we support the liberation of women and of the various national, ethnic, and racial groups oppressed by U.S. capitalism, we believe that such liberation will only be achieved by a successful proletarian revolution within the United States. While the party's current feminist politics imply that women-as-women can end their oppression, and its nationalist politics imply that nations as nations can end national oppression, we say that this is a poly-vanguardist approach. Only the working class, organized as a class and led by the vanguard party can liberate all humanity. Consequently, our most important task is to further the development of class consciousness which will link all sectors of the working class in a common struggle against the oppression that the various groups within the class currently face. We do not simply oppose such ideologies as feminism and nationalism. Rather, the nationalists and feminists are conscious of their oppression, but with a false consciousness (i.e., an ideology). What is necessary is to utilize the strategy contained in *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International* to destroy this false consciousness and replace it with its opposite by raising it to a qualitatively higher level—from bourgeois ideology to revolutionary class consciousness.

6. While we give unconditional support to the military battle being waged by the Vietnamese against United States imperialism, a revolutionary defense of the Vietnamese Revolution requires both its defense against the Stalinist bureaucracy as well as U.S. imperialism. Such a defense requires the preparation of the proletariat for its historic task of seizing state power. The party approaches the question of the war in a single-issue pacifist fashion. The party has not begun to build a mass movement that can defend the Vietnamese revolution, either from imperialism or its Stalinist misleadership. The majority sees no need to defend the Revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy currently in the leadership of the struggle. Having seen the bureaucracy sell out the interests of the Vietnamese workers in the past, we will see them continue to do so in the future, until the struggle

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distinguish the nationalism of the bourgeoisie from the resistance movement of the masses."

I. SWP ISOLATIONISM

European Trotskyism and American Trotskyism responded in initially different ways to different tasks and problems following World War II. The precarious internationalism of the American SWP, maintained through intimate collaboration with Trotsky during his exile in Mexico, did not survive the assassination of Trotsky in 1940 and the onset of world war. The American Trotskyists retreated into an isolation only partially forced upon them by the disintegration of the European sections under conditions of fascist triumph and illegalization.

Anticipating the difficulties of international coordination during the war, a resident International Executive Committee had been set up in New York. Its only notable achievement, however, appears to have been the convening of an "Emergency Conference" of the International, held 19-26 May 1940 "somewhere in the Western Hemisphere," "on the initiative of its U.S., Mexican and Canadian sections." A rump conference attended by less than half of the sections, the "Emergency Conference" was called for the purpose of dealing with the international ramifications of the Shachtman split in the U.S. section, which had resulted in the defection of a majority of the resident IEC. The meeting solidarized with the SWP in the faction fight and reaffirmed its status as the one U.S. section of the Fourth International. The conference also adopted a "Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution" written by Trotsky. Following Trotsky's death, however, the resident IEC lapsed into oblivion.

At least in hindsight, the American section of the Fourth International should have initiated a clandestine secretariat in a neutral country in Europe, staffed by qualified SWPers and emigres from other sections, to centralize and directly supervise the work of Trotskyists in fascist-occupied countries. But the SWP was content to limit its international activities during the war to the publication in its internal bulletins of letters and factional documents from European Trotskyists. The passage of the Voorhis Act in 1941 inhibiting U.S. groups from affiliation with international political organizations—a law which to this day has never been tested—also gave the SWP a rationalization for down-playing its international responsibilities.

The SWP's work during the war did evidence an internationalist perspective. SWP longshoremen used the opportunity of ships from Vladivostok docking on the West Coast to clandestinely distribute Trotsky's "Letter to Russian Workers" in Russian to the Soviet seamen. The SWP concentrated its merchant marine comrades on the supply runs to Murmansk until the extremely heavy casualties compelled the party to discontinue the Murmansk concentration. (It was in response to such activities that the GPU was directed to activate the Soblen anti-Trotskyist espionage net. Testimony years afterward revealed that Cannon's telephone was tapped by the GPU and that the business manager of the SWP's *Fourth International* magazine, one "Michael Cort," was one

of the GPU agents.) But the maintenance and direction of the Fourth International was part of the SWP's internationalist responsibility, and should have been a priority as urgent as the work which the SWP undertook on its own.

The leadership of the SWP came through the war period essentially intact, but reinforced in its insularity and ill-equipped theoretically to deal with the post-war situation.

During the later years of the war and the immediate post-war period, the SWP had registered some impressive successes in implanting its cadres in industry during the boom and in recruiting a new layer of proletarian militants drawn to the Trotskyists because of their opposition to the Communist Party's policies of social patriotism and class peace.

Optimism and Orthodoxy

The SWP entered the post-war period with buoyant optimism about the prospects for proletarian revolution. The 1946 SWP Convention and its resolution, "The Coming American Revolution," projected the indefinite continuation of successes for the SWP. The isolationist perspective of the Party was in evidence at the Convention. The necessarily international character of crises and revolutions is recognized, but not the concomitant international character of the vanguard party. The resolution in effect makes excuses for the political backwardness of the U.S. working class while praising its militancy and presents the following syllogism: the decisive battles of the world revolution will be fought in the advanced countries where the means of production are highly developed and the proletariat powerful—above all in the U.S.; therefore all that is necessary is to build the American revolution and world capitalism will be overthrown. Profound impressionism led the SWP to see the world through the eyes of American capitalism which had emerged from the war as the unquestioned pre-eminent capitalist world power.

The post-war stabilization of European capitalism, the emergence of the Stalinist parties as the dominant reformist workers parties in Europe, the expansion of Stalinism in Eastern Europe (apparently flying in the face of the Trotskyist analysis that Stalinism could only betray), the destruction of capitalism by peasant-based nationalist-Stalinist formations in Yugoslavia and China—all these developments posed new theoretical problems for the Trotskyist movement which the SWP, stripped of a layer of talented intellectuals by the petty-bourgeois Shachtman split and shortly thereafter deprived of Trotsky's guidance, could not handle. The SWP's immediate response was to retreat into a sterile "orthodoxy" stripped of real theoretical content, thus rendering its isolation more complete.

The 1950's brought a new wave of spontaneous working-class struggles in West and East Europe, but to the SWP they brought the onset of the Cold War witchhunt: the Smith Act prosecutions of CPers and former CPers; the deadening of every aspect of social and intellectual life; the relentless purge of known "reds" and militants from the union movement, severing the SWP's connection with the working-class movement which had taken years to build up; the dropping away of the whole layer of workers recruited to the SWP during the late 1940's. The objective pressure to become a mere cheering section for European and colonial

developments was strong but the SWP hung on to its verbal orthodox commitment to making the American revolution.

II. THE BREAK IN CONTINUITY IN EUROPE

The vulnerability of the European Trotskyist movement to revisionism hinged on the historic weaknesses of the European organizations combined with the thorough shattering of their continuity to the earlier period. When Trotsky in 1934 launched the struggle to found the Fourth International, the European working class, confronted with the decisive choice of socialism or barbarism, lacked a communist leadership. The task facing the Fourth Internationalists was clear: to mobilize the class against the threat of fascism and

"By its very nature opportunism is nationalistic, since it rests on the local and temporary needs of the proletariat and not on its historic tasks. Opportunists find international control intolerable and they reduce their international ties as much as possible to harmless formalities . . . on the proviso that each group does not hinder the others from conducting an opportunist policy to its own national task. . . . International unity is not a decorative facade for us, but the very axis of our theoretical views and our policy. Meanwhile there are not a few ultra-Lefts . . . [who] carry on a semi-conscious struggle to split up the Communist Opposition into independent national groups and to free them from international control."

(Leon Trotsky, "The Defense of the Soviet Union and the Opposition," 7 September 1929)

"We stand not for democracy in general but for centralist democracy. It is precisely for this reason that we place national leadership above local leadership and international leadership above national leadership."

(Leon Trotsky, "An Open Letter to All Members of the Leninbund," 6 February 1930)

war, to amass the cadres for the world revolutionary party which would stand for proletarian internationalism in the face of the march toward imperialist war and the social chauvinist capitulation of the Second and Third Internationals. But Trotsky had noted the immense difficulty for the conscious vanguard to go forward in a period of crushing defeat for the class and the "terrible disproportion between the tasks and the means." ("Fighting Against the Stream," April 1939) The weakness of the European movement was exemplified by the French section, which was repeatedly criticized by Trotsky and whose petty-bourgeois "workerist" deviation and dilettantism were the subject of a special resolution at the founding conference of the Fourth International in 1938.

The Fourth International geared itself up for the decisive struggle against fascism and war—and lost. During the course of the war and the Nazi occupations the very rudiments of international, and even national, coordination were destroyed: The International disintegrated into small groups of militants pursuing improvised policies: some opportunist, some heroic. The 65 French and German comrades who were

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...Pabloism

shot by the Gestapo in July 1943 because of their revolutionary defeatist fraternization and the building of a Trotskyist cell in the German armed forces are a monument to the internationalist courage of a weak revolutionary movement fighting against insurmountable odds.

Trotskyist Cadres Decimated

In August 1943 an attempt was made to reestablish the rudiments of organization in Europe. The European Secretariat set up at this meeting in Belgium included exactly one surviving member of the pre-war leadership and largely as a result of the nonexistence of tested cadres, Michel Pablo (Raptis), a skilled clandestine organizer not known for ability as a political leader or theoretician, emerged as the head of the International. When in June 1945 a European Executive Committee met to prepare for the holding of a World Congress, the experienced leading cadres and the most promising of the young Trotskyists (A. Leon, L. Lesoil, W. Held) had been killed at the hands of the Nazis or the GPU. The continuity of Trotskyism in Europe had been broken. This tragic process was duplicated elsewhere with the imprisonment and eventual execution of Ta Thu-tau and the Vietnamese Trotskyists, the virtual extinction of the Chinese Trotskyists and the liquidation of the remaining Russian Trotskyists (including, besides Trotsky, Ignace Reiss, Rudolf Klement and Leon Sedov). The Europeans were apparently so starved for experienced leading cadres that Pierre Frank (leading member of the Molinier group which Trotsky denounced as "demoralized centrists" in 1935 and expelled in 1938 for refusing to break with the French social-democracy after the "French Turn") was enabled to become a leader of the post-war French section.

At this crucial juncture the intervention and leadership of a truly internationalist American Trotskyist party might have made a great difference. But the SWP, which should have assumed leadership in the International throughout the war years, was sunk in its own national preoccupations. Cannon noted later that the SWP leadership had deliberately built up Pablo's authority, even going "so far as to soft-pedal a lot of our differences" (June 1953). The urgent responsibility of the SWP, which whatever its deficiencies was the strongest and most experienced Trotskyist organization, was precisely the opposite.

III. ORTHODOXY REASSERTED

The immediate task facing the Trotskyists after the war was to reorient its cadres and reassess the situation of the vanguard and the class in light of previous projections. The Trotskyists' expectations of tottering West European capitalist regimes and the renewal of violent class struggle throughout Europe, and especially in Germany where the collapse of Nazi state power left a vacuum, had been confirmed. However the reformists, particularly the Stalinist parties, reasserted themselves to contain the spontaneous working-class upsurges. Control of the French working class through the CGT passed from the social democracy (SFIO) which had controlled the CGT before the war to the French Stalinists. Thus despite the manifest revolutionary spirit of the European working class and the great waves of general

strikes, especially in France, Belgium, Greece and Italy, throughout West Europe, the proletariat did not take power and the Stalinist apparatus emerged with new strength and solidity.

The Fourth International responded by falling back on sterile orthodoxy and stubborn refusal to believe that these struggles had been defeated for the immediate period:

"Under these conditions partial defeats... temporary periods of retreat... do not demoralize the proletariat.... The repeated demonstration by the bourgeoisie of its inability to restabilize an economy and political regime of the slightest stability offers the workers new opportunities to go over to even higher stages of struggle."

"The swelling of the ranks of the traditional organizations in Europe, above all the Stalinist parties... has reached its peak almost everywhere. The phase of decline is beginning."

(European Executive Committee, April 1946)

Right-opportunist critics in the Trotskyist movement (the German IKD, the SWP's Goldman-Morrow faction) were correct in noting the over-optimism of such an analysis and in pointing out that the traditional reformist leaderships of the working class are always the first inheritors of a renewal of militancy and struggle. Their "solution," however, was to argue for a limitation of the Trotskyist program to bourgeois-democratic demands, and such measures as critical support to the post-war French bourgeois Constitution. Their advocacy of an entrism policy toward the European reformist parties was dismissed out of hand by the majority, which expected the workers to more or less spontaneously regroup under the Trotskyist banner. This attitude prepared the way for a sharp reversal on the entrism question when the implicit position of ignoring the reformists' influence could no longer be maintained.

The Fourth International's immediate post-war perspective was summed up by Ernest Germain (Mandel) in an article called "The First Phase of the European Revolution" (Fourth International, August 1946). The title already implies the outlook: "the revolution" was implicitly redefined as a metaphysical process enduring continuously and progressing inevitably toward victory, rather than a sharp and necessarily time-limited confrontation over the question of state power, the outcome of which will shape the entire subsequent period.

Stalinophobia

The later, Pabloist, capitulation to Stalinism was prepared by impressionistic overstatement of its opposite: Stalinophobia. In November 1947 Pablo's International Secretariat wrote that the Soviet Union had become:

"a workers state degenerated to the point where all progressive manifestations of the remains of the October conquest are more and more neutralized by the disastrous effects of the Stalinist dictatorship."

"What remains of the conquests of October is more and more losing its historic value as a premise for socialist development."

"...from the Russian occupation forces or from pro-Stalinist governments, which are completely reactionary, we do not demand the expropriation of the bourgeoisie...."

Within the SWP, the rumor circulated that Cannon was flirting with the characterization that the Soviet Union had become a totally degenerated workers state, i.e., a "state

capitalist" regime—a position which Natalia Trotsky shortly embraced.

On the question of the Stalinist expansion into East Europe, the Fourth International was united in simple-minded orthodoxy. An extensive discussion of "The Kremlin in Eastern Europe" (*Fourth International*, November 1946) by E. R. Frank (Bert Cochran) was shrill in anti-Stalinist tone and tended toward the view that the countries occupied by the Red Army would be deliberately maintained as capitalist states. A polemic against Shachtman by Germain dated 15 November 1946 was still more categorical: the theory of "a degenerated workers state being installed in a country where there has not yet previously been a proletarian revolution" is dismissed, simply, as "absurd." And Germain rhetorically queries, "Does [Shachtman] really think that the Stalinist bureaucracy has succeeded in overthrowing capitalism in half of our continent?" (*Fourth International*, February 1947)

The methodology here is the same as that pursued, more cynically, by the "International Committee" in later years over the question of Cuba (perplexed? then deny reality!) with the difference that the class character of East Europe, with capitalist economic institutions but the state power held by the occupying army of a degenerated workers state, was far more difficult to understand. Empiricists and renegades, of course, had no difficulty in characterizing the East European states:

"Everyone knows that in the countries where the Stalinists have taken power they have proceeded, at one or another rate of speed, to establish exactly the same economic, political, social regime as exists in Russia. Everyone knows that the bourgeoisie has been or is rapidly being expropriated, deprived of all its economic power, and in many cases deprived of mortal existence.... Everyone knows that what remnants of capitalism remain in those countries will not even be remnants tomorrow, that the whole tendency is to establish a social system identical with that of Stalinist Russia."

(Max Shachtman, "The Congress of the Fourth International," October 1948 *New International*)

Excruciating as this ridicule must have been for them, however, the orthodox Trotskyists were trapped in their analysis because they could not construct a theory to explain the East Europe transformation without embracing non-revolutionary conclusions.

Germain, as was typical for him in those years, at least posed the theoretical dilemma clearly: is the Trotskyist understanding of Stalinism correct if Stalinism shows itself willing in some cases to accomplish any sort of anti-capitalist social transformation? Clinging to orthodoxy, the Trotskyists had lost a real grasp of theory and suppressed part of Trotsky's dialectical understanding of Stalinism as a parasitic and counter-revolutionary caste sitting atop the gains of the October Revolution, a kind of treacherous middle-man poised between the victorious Russian proletariat and world imperialism. Having thus reduced dialectical materialism to static dogma, their disorientation was complete when it became necessary to answer Germain's question in the affirmative, and the way was prepared for Pabloist revisionism to leap into the theoretical void.

Fourth International Flirts with Tito

Virtually without exception the Fourth International was disoriented by the Yugoslav revolution. After some twenty

years of Stalinist monolithism, the Trotskyists were perhaps ill-disposed to scrutinize the anti-Stalin Yugoslav CP too carefully. The Yugoslav Titoists were described as "comrades" and "left centrists," and Yugoslavia as "a workers state established by a proletarian revolution." In one of several "Open Letters" to Tito, the SWP wrote: "The confidence of the masses in it [your party] will grow enormously and it will become the effective collective expression of the interests and desires of the proletariat of its country." The Yugoslav revolution posed a new problem (later recapitulated by the Chinese, Cuban and Vietnamese experiences): unlike East Europe, where the social transformations were accomplished by the army of a foreign degenerated workers state, the Yugoslav revolution was clearly an indigenous social revolution which, without the intervention of the working class or the direction of a Trotskyist party, succeeded in establishing a (deformed) workers state. The Fourth International avoided the theoretical problem by dubbing the revolution "proletarian" and the Titoists "left centrists." (The SWP avoided the question of China by refusing to unambiguously characterize the Maoist regime as a deformed workers state until 1955. As late as 1954 two articles by the Phillips tendency, characterizing China as state capitalist, were published in the SWP's *Fourth International*.)

Again orthodoxy is maintained but robbed of its content. The impulse, resisted until Pablo was to give it consistent expression, was that the ability of non-proletarian, non-Trotskyist forces to accomplish any form of social overturn robbed the Fourth International of its reason for existence. The crucial qualitative distinction between a workers state and a deformed workers state—demarcated in blood in the need for political revolution to open the road to socialist development and the extension of the revolution abroad—had been lost.

IV. PABLOISM CONQUERS

The numerically weak, socially isolated, theoretically unarmed and inexperienced cadres of the post-war Fourth International were easy prey for disorientation and impatience in a situation of repeated pre-revolutionary upsurges whose course they could not influence. Beginning in early 1951 a new revisionism, Pabloism, began to assert itself, responding to the frustrating objective situation by posing an ersatz way out of the isolation of the Fourth International from the main motion of the working class. Pabloism was the generalization of this impulse in a revisionist body of theory offering impressionistic answers which were more consistent than the one-sided orthodoxy of the early post-war Fourth International.

It is crucial that the organizational weakness, lack of deep roots in the proletariat and theoretical incapacity and disorientation which were the precondition for the revisionist degeneration of the Fourth International not be simply equated with the consolidation and victory of that revisionism. Despite grave political errors, the Fourth International in the immediate post-war period was still revolutionary. The SWP and the International clung to sterile orthodoxy as a talisman to ward off non-revolutionary conclusions from

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...Pabloism

world events which they could no longer comprehend. History had demonstrated that at crucial junctures revolutionary Marxists have been able to transcend an inadequate theory: Lenin before April 1917 was theoretically unequipped to project a proletarian revolution in a backward country like Russia; Trotsky until 1933 had equated the Russian Thermidor with a return to capitalism. Pabloism was more than a symmetrical false theory, more than simply an impressionistic over-reaction against orthodoxy; it was a theoretical justification for a non-revolutionary impulse based on giving up a perspective for the construction of a proletarian vanguard in the advanced or the colonial countries.

In January 1951 Pablo ventured into the realm of theory with a document called "Where Are We Going?" Despite whole paragraphs of confused crackpotism and virtually meaningless bombast, the whole revisionist structure emerges:

"The relation of forces on the international chess-board is now evolving to the disadvantage of imperialism.

"An epoch of transition between capitalism and socialism, an epoch which has already begun and is quite advanced . . . This transformation will probably take an entire period of several centuries and will in the meantime be filled with forms and regimes transitional between capitalism and socialism and necessarily deviating from 'pure' forms and norms.

"The objective process is in the final analysis the sole determining factor, overriding all obstacles of a subjective order.

"The Communist Parties retain the possibility in certain circumstances of roughly outlining a revolutionary orientation."

Pablo's elevation of the "objective process" to "the sole determining factor" reducing the subjective factor (the consciousness and organization of the vanguard party) to irrelevance, the discussion of "several centuries" of "transition" (later characterized by Pablo's opponents as "centuries of deformed workers states") and the suggestion that revolutionary leadership might be provided by the Stalinist parties rather than the Fourth International—the whole analytic structure of Pabloist revisionism emerged.

In another document, "The Coming War," Pablo put forward his policy of "entrism *sui generis*" (entrism of its own kind):

"In order to integrate ourselves into the real mass movement, to work and to remain in the masses' trade unions for example, 'ruses' and 'capitulations' are not only acceptable but necessary."

In essence, the Trotskyists were to abandon the perspective of short-term entrism whose purpose had always been to split the working-class organizations on a hard programmatic basis as a tactic for building the Trotskyist party. The new entrist policy flowed directly from Pablo's analysis. Since the asserted shift in the world relationship of forces in favor of the advance of the revolution would compel the Stalinist parties to play a revolutionary role, it was only logical that the Trotskyists should be a part of such parties pursuing essentially a policy of pressuring the Stalinist apparatus.

All this should have exploded a bomb in the heads of the

international Trotskyist cadres. Pablo was after all the head of the International Secretariat, the resident political body of the Fourth International! But there is little evidence of even alarm, let alone the formation of the international anti-revisionist faction which was required. One long document by Ernest Germain ("Ten Theses"), and perhaps some subterranean rumbling, did force Pablo to produce an attempt at orthodoxy on the question of the "transitional period" but no other literary notice was taken of Pablo's most overt assault against the program of Trotskyism.

Germain Resists

In March 1951 Germain produced "Ten Theses," which was a veiled attack on "Where Are We Going?" but did not attack Pablo or the document by name. Germain restated the Marxist use of "transitional period" as the period between the victory of the revolution (the dictatorship of the proletariat) and the achievement of socialism (the classless society). Without any explicit reference to Pablo's position, he wrote: "No more than the bourgeoisie will it [Stalinism] survive a war which will be transformed into a world upsurge of the revolution." Germain insisted on the contradictory Bonapartist character of Stalinism, based on proletarian property forms while safeguarding the privileged position of the bureaucracy against the workers. He emphasized the dual nature of the mass CPs outside the USSR as determined by their proletarian base on the one hand and their subservience to the Stalinist bureaucracies in power on the other.

Germain attempted to present the orthodox response to the Pabloist impulse that the destruction of capitalism in Eastern Europe, China and Yugoslavia without a Trotskyist leadership made the Fourth International superfluous. Again, he did not refer to the positions he was attacking; one would have thought that the "Ten Theses" simply dropped from the sky as an interesting theoretical exercise, rather than in response to the emergence of a revisionist current completely counterposed to Germain's thrust. Insisting that a new worldwide revolutionary upsurge would not stabilize Stalinism but rather was a mortal danger to it, he wrote:

"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 . . ." [our emphasis]

"To be 'closer to the Stalinist workers' then signifies at the same time to affirm more than ever our own program and our own Trotskyist policy."

The "Ten Theses" showed that all wings of the Trotskyist movement were still incapable of grasping the nature of the social transformations which had occurred in Eastern Europe (although the analysis of the British Haston-Grant RCP majority, borrowed by the SWP's Los Angeles Vern-Ryan grouping, achieved the beginning (but only the beginning) of wisdom in recognizing that in the immediate post-war period an examination of native property forms would hardly suffice since the state power in Eastern Europe was a foreign occupying army, the Red Army). In 1951 Germain still considered the process of "structural assimilation" uncompleted (!) and predicted the assimilation of the armies of the East European states into the Soviet army—i.e., that Eastern Europe would simply be incorporated into the Soviet Union.

Germain did recognize that the transformation in Eastern Europe destroyed capitalism but contained within it, even in victory, a decisive bureaucratic obstacle to socialist development; he stressed that the expansion of the USSR's non-capitalist mode of production "is infinitely less important than the destruction of the living workers' movement which has preceded it."

No such inbuilt obstacle was recognized with regard to China and, especially, Yugoslavia. The Trotskyists were unable to disassociate the phenomenon of Stalinism from the person of Stalin; the Titoists' break from the Kremlin obscured any recognition that Yugoslavia would necessarily pursue qualitatively identical domestic and diplomatic policies in safeguarding the interest of its own national bureaucratic regime against the working class. Uneasy about admitting that Stalinist forces heading peasant masses could ever consummate an anti-capitalist revolution, Germain in "Ten Theses" termed both the Yugoslav and Chinese events proletarian revolutions and also argued that "under such conditions, these parties cease being Stalinist parties in the classical sense of the term."

Whereas Pablo took these events as the new revolutionary model which invalidated "pure forms and norms" (i.e., the Russian Revolution) Germain—again without referring to Pablo—stressed that they were as a result of exceptional circumstances which in any case would not be relevant to advanced industrial countries. He contrasted "the de facto United Front which today exists between the colonial revolutions in Asia and the Soviet bureaucracy, which has its objective origin in their being both menaced by imperialism . . ." with the possibilities for Europe. He concurred in the prediction of an imminent World War III between "the united imperialist front on the one hand and the USSR, the buffer countries and the colonial revolutions on the other" but rather than hailing it, termed it a counter-revolutionary war.

The crux of Germain's argument was:

"What matters above all in the present period is to give the proletariat an international leadership capable of coordinating its forces and proceeding to the world victory of communism. The Stalinist bureaucracy, forced to turn with a blind fury against the first victorious proletarian revolution outside the USSR [Yugoslavia!], is socially incapable of accomplishing any such task. Herein lies the historical mission of our movement . . . The historical justification for our movement . . . resides in the incapacity of Stalinism to overturn world capitalism, an incapacity rooted in the social nature of the Soviet bureaucracy."

With the advantage of hindsight and the experience of the past 20 years—the counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism reaffirmed most clearly in Hungary in 1956; the 1960 Cuban revolution in which petty-bourgeois nationalism at the head of peasant guerillas uprooted capitalism only to merge with the Stalinist apparatus internally and internationally; the consistently nationalist and Stalinist policies of the Chinese CP in power—it is easy to recognize that "Ten Theses" is flawed in its analysis and predictions. What is much more important, however, is the document's consistent and deliberate non-factional tone which presaged Germain's refusal to place himself in the anti-Pabloist camp. Divorced from the determination to fight for a correct line in the

Fourth International, Germain's theoretical defense of the necessity of Trotskyism meant very little. This was Pabloism merely at one remove, the denial of the subjective factor in the revolutionary process.

Third World Congress

The Third World Congress of the Fourth International was held in August-September 1951. The main political report attempted to distinguish between the Communist Parties and "reformist parties" on the grounds that only the former were contradictory, and projected that under the pressure of a strong mass upsurge the CPs could become revolutionary parties. The opportunist nature of Pablo's version of an entrism tactic was sharply revealed in the repudiation of the principled entrism goal of sharp polarization and split: "The possibilities of important splits in the CPs . . . are replaced by a leftist movement within the CPs among its rank and file." There was no recognition of decisive deformations in the East European and Chinese workers states; thus implicitly the Congress posed only a quantitative difference between the Soviet Union of Lenin and the degenerated and deformed workers states. The report projected the possibility that Tito might "head a regroupment of revolutionary forces independent of capitalism and of the Kremlin . . . playing a major role in the formation of a new revolutionary leadership." There was no mention of the perspective of permanent revolution for the colonial countries.

The application of Pablo's policy of "entrism sui generis" was elaborated in the Austrian Commission:

"The activity of our members in the SP will be governed by the following directives: A. Not to come forward as Trotskyists with our full program. B. Not to push forward programmatic and principled questions . . ."

No quantity of verbal orthodoxy in resolutions could have any longer obscured the vision of those who wanted to see.

The Parti Communiste Internationaliste of France submitted Germain's "Ten Theses" for a vote (after Germain himself had apparently backed out of doing so) and proposed amendments to the main document. No vote was taken on the "Ten Theses" or the French amendments. The PCI voted against adopting the thrust of the main document; it was the only section to do so.

In the months that followed, the Pabloist line was elaborated along the lines already made clear before and at the Third World Congress:

"We are entering [the Stalinist parties] in order to remain there for a long time banking on the great possibility of seeing these parties, placed under new conditions ["a generally irreversible pre-revolutionary period"], develop centrist tendencies which will lead a whole stage of the radicalization of the masses and of the objective revolutionary processes . . ."

(Pablo, Report to the 10th Plenum of the International Executive Committee, February 1952)

"Caught between the imperialist threat and the colonial revolution, the Soviet bureaucracy found itself obliged to ally with the second against the first . . . The disintegration of Stalinism within these parties ought not to be understood . . . as an organizational disintegration . . . or a

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public break with the Kremlin but as a progressive internal transformation."

(*"The Rise and Decline of Stalinism," International Secretariat, September 1953*)

V. THE ANTI-PABLOISTS

With the capitulation of Germain, whose role in the preliminary conflicts over Pabloist policies is ambiguous but in whom the French appear to have placed some degree of confidence, the task of fighting Pabloism fell to the French PCI majority of Bleibtreu-Lambert and the American SWP. Despite a considerable body of mythology to the contrary, both the PCI and SWP vacillated when revisionism manifested itself at the head of the Fourth International, balking only at applying it to their own sections. Both groups compromised themselves by uneasy acquiescence (combined in the case of the PCI with sporadic resistance) to Pablo's policies until the suicidal organizational consequences to their sections necessitated sharp fights. Both abdicated the responsibility to take the fight against revisionism into every body and every section of the Fourth International and both retreated from the struggle by the foundation of the "International Committee" on the basis of "the principles of orthodox Trotskyism." The IC from its inception was only a paper international tendency consisting of those groups which had already had splits between pro-Pabloist and orthodox wings.

PCI Fights Pablo

The PCI majority, having had been placed in receivership by the International Secretariat (which had installed the Pablo-loyal minority led by Mestre and Frank as the leadership of the French section), continued to claim agreement with the line of the Third World Congress, arguing that Pablo and the IS and IEC were violating its decisions! According to the French, Pabloism "utilizes the confusions and contradictions of the World Congress—where it could not impose itself—in order to assert itself after the World Congress." (undated "Declaration of the Bleibtreu-Lambert Tendency on the Agreements Concluded at the IEC," March or April 1952)

An important letter dated 16 February 1952 from Renard on behalf of the PCI majority to Cannon appealed to the SWP. Renard's letter claimed agreement with the Third World Congress, including its French Commission, and contrasted the supposedly non-Pabloist World Congress (citing vague platitudes to demonstrate its presumably orthodox thrust) with Pablo's subsequent actions and line in the IEC and IS. Renard asserted that "Pabloism did not win out at the Third World Congress." (He wisely did not attempt to explain why his organization voted against the main Congress documents!) The main argument of the letter is an appeal against the Pabloist international leadership's intervention into the French national section.

Cannon's reply of 29 May accused the PCI majority of Stalinophobic opportunism in the union movement (a bloc with progressive anti-communists against the CP) and denied the existence of any such thing as Pabloism.

The PCI majority evidenced a clear understanding of the

implications of the Pabloist entrism. In a polemic against minority theoretician Mestre the majority had written:

"If these ideas are correct, stop chattering about the tactic of entrism, even entrism *sui generis*, and pose clearly our new tasks: that of a more consistent tendency, not even a left opposition... whose role is to aid Stalinism to overcome its hesitation and to pose under the best conditions the decisive clash with the bourgeoisie.... If Stalinism has changed... [it means that] it no longer reflects the particular interests of a bureaucratic caste whose very existence depends on the unstable equilibrium between classes, that it is no longer bonapartist, but that it reflects solely... the defense of the workers state. That such a transformation should be produced without the intervention of the Soviet proletariat... but on the contrary by an evolution of the bureaucracy itself... would lead us not merely to revise the Transitional Program [but] all the works of Leon Trotsky since 1923 and the foundation of the Fourth International."

(*"First Reflections of Zig Zag," PCI Internal Bulletin No. 2, February 1952*)

But the PCI majority, not unlike the SWP, demonstrated a failure of concrete internationalism when faced with the prospect of all alone carrying through the fight against Pabloism.

On 3 June 1952 the PCI majority asked for recognition of two French sections of the Fourth International, thus permitting the PCI majority to carry out its own policies in France. This was in clear violation of the founding statutes of the Fourth International and meant the liquidation of the International as a disciplined world body. What was required as an international faction fight over the political line of the Fourth International. But the PCI majority was unwilling to subordinate work in France to the crucial fight for the legitimacy and continuity of the Fourth International. Pablo's refusal to accede to this demand led directly to the split of the PCI majority.

SWP Enters the Struggle

The SWP only joined the fight against revisionism when a pro-Pabloist tendency, the Clarke wing of the Cochran-Clarke faction, manifested itself within the American party. In his reply to Renard dated 29 May 1952 Cannon had said:

"We do not see [“any kind of pro-Stalinist tendency”] in the International leadership of the Fourth International nor any sign nor symptom of it. We do not see any revisionism [in the documents]... we consider these documents to be completely Trotskyist.... It is the unanimous opinion of the leading people in the SWP that the authors of these documents have rendered a great service to the movement."

The story that the SWP had prepared some amendments to the Third World Congress documents which Clarke (SWP representative to the International) had burned instead of presenting is quite possibly true but not very significant, in view of Cannon's declaration of political allegiance to Pablo when it counted, in refusing to solidarize with the anti-Pabloist PCI majority.

Against Cochran-Clarke's advocacy of an orientation toward the CP fellow-travellers, the SWP majority affirmed support to the Pabloist CP entrism tactic in general but insisted on a kind of American exceptionalism, contrasting the mass European parties with the pathetic American CP milieu, lacking a working-class base and peopled with shoddy

third-rate intellectuals.

In response to the Cochran-Clarke threat, Cannon set about forming a faction in the SWP aided by the Weiss leadership in Los Angeles. Cannon sought to line up the old party cadre around the question of conciliation to Stalinism and appealed to the party trade unionists like Dunne and Swaback by drawing an analogy between the need for factional struggle within the party and the struggle within the class against the reformists and sellouts as parallel processes of factional struggle against alien ideology. He told the May 1953 SWP Plenum:

"During the course of the past year, I had serious doubts of the ability of the SWP to survive . . . I thought that our 25 year effort . . . had ended in catastrophic failure, and that, once again, a small handful would have to pick up the pieces and start all over again to build the new cadre of another party on the old foundations."

(Closing speech, 30 May)

But Cannon chose another road. Instead of pursuing the necessary struggle wherever it might lead, Cannon made a bloc with the Dobbs-Kerry-Hansen apparatus over the organizationally liquidationist implications of the Cochran-Clarke line. In return for their support Cannon promised the routinist, conservative Dobbs administration total control of the SWP with no further interference from him ("a new regime in the party").

The SWP's response to finding the dispute in the International reflecting itself inside the American section was to deepen its isolationism into virulent anti-internationalism. Cannon's speech to the SWP majority caucus on 18 May 1953 stated, "We don't consider ourselves an American branch office of an international business firm that receives orders from the boss" and extolled discussion in which "we work out, if possible [!], a common line." Cannon denied the legitimacy of an international leadership and referred to "a few people in Paris." He contrasted the Fourth International with Lenin's Comintern, which had state power and a leadership whose authority was widely recognized, and thus denied that the contemporary Fourth International could be a democratic centralist body.

Cannon belatedly took exception to Pablo's conduct against the French majority, but only over the organizational question in keeping with the proposition that the International leadership should not intervene in the affairs of national sections. He wrote:

" . . . we were flabbergasted at the tactics used in the recent French conflict and split, and at the inconceivable organizational precedent established there. That is why I delayed my answer to Renard so long. I wanted to help the IS politically, but I didn't see how I could sanction the organizational steps taken against the majority of an elected leadership. I finally resolved the problem by just ignoring that part of Renard's letter."

(*"Letter to Tom,"* 4 June 1953)

The "Letter to Tom" also reiterated the position that the Third World Congress was not revisionist.

The crucial defects in the anti-Pabloist struggle of the PCI and SWP were duly utilized by the Pabloists. The 14th IEC Plenum took Cannon to task for his concept of the

International as a "federative union." It noted that the SWP had never opposed the Pabloist entrism policy in principle and accused the SWP-PCI of an unprincipled bloc on China. Seizing on the SWP's one-sided orthodoxy (Hansen's defense of an SWP majorityite's formulation that Stalinism is "counterrevolutionary through and through"—a characterization which fits only the CIA!) the Pabloists were able to cloak their liquidation of an independent Trotskyist program with pious reaffirmations of the contradictions of Stalinism as a counterrevolutionary caste resting atop the property forms established by the October Revolution.

IC Formed

Following the Cochran-Clarke split, the SWP precipitously broke publicly with Pablo. On 16 November 1953 The Militant carried "A Letter to Trotskyists Throughout the World" which denounced Cochran-Clarke and Pablo and belatedly solidarized with the "unjustly expelled" PCI majority. The SWP's previous characterizations of the Third World Congress as "completely Trotskyist" necessitated an attempt in this so-called "Open Letter" to locate the emergency of Pabloism after the Congress, which doomed the SWP to present a somewhat unconvincing case leaning heavily on a leaflet or two of the Pabloist French minority from 1952. At about the same time the SWP produced "Against Pabloite Revisionism" dated November 1953, which contained a more competent analysis of Pablo's liquidationist accommodation to Stalinism:

"The conception that a mass Communist Party will take the road to power if only sufficient mass pressure is brought to bear is false. It shifts the responsibility for revolutionary setbacks from the leadership to the mass . . ."

"The working class is transformed [by Pablo's theories] into a pressure group, and the Trotskyists into a pressure grouping along with it which pushes a section of the bureaucracy toward the revolution. In this way, the bureaucracy is transformed from a block and a betrayer of the revolution into an auxiliary motor force of it."

In 1954 the "International Committee" was formed. It included the French PCI majority, the American SWP (fraternal) and the Healy (Burns) grouping in England. The latter did not play any significant or independent role in the fight against revisionism. The Healy-Lawrence split from the disintegrating Revolutionary Communist Party after the war, impelled by the Healy-Lawrence faction's deep entrism perspective toward the British Labour Party, had been backed by Pablo's International Secretariat, which recognized two sections in Britain and gave them equal representation on the IEC. Healy was Cannon's "man" in England and had been consistently supported by the SWP in disputes within the RCP. When the SWP broke from Pablo, the Healy-Lawrence faction split, Healy aligning with the SWP and Lawrence with Pablo (Lawrence later went over to Stalinism as did the PCI minority's Mestre). Despite being part of the new anti-Pabloist international bloc, the Healy group continued its arch-Pabloist Labour Party opportunism. It had no

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weight in the IC bloc until its recruitment of an impressive layer of CP intellectuals and trade unionists (most of whom it later lost) following the 1956 Hungarian Revolution made it considerably more substantial in the British left.

The IC also claimed the adherence of the Chinese (emigre) section, which had already undergone a split, and the small Swiss section.

The IC managed to produce a couple of internal bulletins in early 1954 but never met as a real international body, nor was a centralized leadership ever elected. The tactic adopted by the SWP was to boycott the Fourth World Congress, as merely a meeting of Pablo's faction having no legitimacy as the Fourth International.

The world movement paid a high price for this evasion. To cite only one example: Ceylon. The Ceylonese LSSP took a non-factional position on Pabloism, appealing to the SWP not to split and to attend the Fourth Congress. A hard fight should have been aggressively pushed toward the passive Ceylonese doubtists, forcing a polarization and forging a hard cadre in the struggle. Instead the Ceylonese drifted along with Pablo. Some seven years later, the revolutionary reputation of Trotskyism was besmirched in the eyes of militants throughout the world by the LSSP's entry into the bourgeois Ceylonese coalition government, precipitating a last-minute split by the international Pabloist leadership. Had a hard principled anti-revisionist fight been waged in the Ceylon section in 1953, a hard revolutionary organization with an independent claim to Trotskyist continuity might have been created then, preventing the association of the name of Trotskyism with the fundamental betrayal of the LSSP.

Thus the anti-revisionist fight was deliberately not carried to the world movement, the IC consisting mainly of those groups which had already had their splits over the application of Pabloist policies in their own countries, and the struggle to defeat revisionism and reconstruct the Fourth International on the basis of authentic Trotskyism was aborted.

From Flirtation to Consummation

In 1957 Pablo's International Secretariat and the SWP flirted with possible reunification (the Hansen-Kolpe correspondence). The basis at that time was formal orthodoxy—the similarity of line between the IS and SWP in response to the 1956 Hungarian revolution. The SWP, perhaps naively expecting a repetition of Clarke's 1953 position on the possibility of self-liquidation of the Stalinist bureaucracies, tended to accept the IS's formally Trotskyist conclusions over Hungary as good coin. These early reunification overtures came to naught because of the opposition of the British and French IC groups, as well as Cannon's suspicions that Pablo was maneuvering. The issue was posed in a defective way—simply apparent empirical agreement without an examination of past differences and present motion.

When the question of reunification, consummated in 1963 with the formation of the United Secretariat, came up again, the entire political terrain had shifted. The IS and the

SWP found themselves in agreement over Cuba. But the basis was no longer an apparent convergence on orthodoxy, but the SWP's abandonment of Trotskyism to embrace Pabloist revisionism (which the SWP in its class-collaborationist line on the Vietnamese war has now transcended on the path to outright reformism).

The basis for the 1963 reunification was a document titled "For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement—Statement by the Political Committee of the SWP," 1 March 1963. The key new line was section 13:

"Along the road of a revolution beginning with simple democratic demands and ending in the rupture of capitalist property relations, guerilla warfare conducted by landless peasant and semi-proletarian forces, under a leadership that becomes committed to carrying the revolution through to a conclusion, can play a decisive role in undermining and precipitating the downfall of a colonial and semi-colonial power. This is one of the main lessons to be drawn from experience since the Second World War. It must be consciously incorporated into the strategy of building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries."

In "Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International," 12 June 1963, the Spartacist tendency counterposed:

"Experience since the Second World War has demonstrated that peasant-based guerilla warfare under petit-bourgeois leadership can in itself lead to nothing more than an anti-working-class bureaucratic regime. The creation of such regimes has come about under the conditions of decay of imperialism, the demoralization and disorientation caused by Stalinist betrayals, and the absence of revolutionary Marxist leadership of the working class. Colonial revolution can have an unequivocally progressive revolutionary significance only under such leadership of the revolutionary proletariat. For Trotskyists to incorporate into their strategy revisionism on the **proletarian** leadership in the revolution is a profound negation of Marxism-Leninism no matter what pious wish may be concurrently expressed for 'building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries.' Marxists must resolutely oppose any adventurist acceptance of the peasant-guerilla road to socialism—historically akin to the Social Revolutionary program on tactics that Lenin fought. This alternative would be a suicidal course for the socialist goals of the movement, and perhaps physically for the adventurers."

Ironically, the SWP's further rightist evolution leads it to now repudiate the basic line of section 13, from the other side—the U.Sec.'s advocacy of petty-bourgeois armed struggle is far too adventurous for the legalistic SWP which aims to become the mass party of American reformism.

Spartacist and the Fourth International

In his struggle to found the Fourth International, Trotsky repeatedly underscored the imperative need for revolutionary organization on an international basis. Prolonged national isolation within one country must ultimately disorient, deform and destroy any revolutionary grouping no matter how subjectively steadfast. Only a principled and disciplined international collaboration can provide a counterbalance to the fierce pressures toward insularity and social chauvinism

generated by the bourgeoisie and its ideological agents within the working-class movement. As Trotsky recognized, those who deny the need for a programmatically founded democratic centralist world party deny the Leninist concept of the vanguard party itself. The destruction of the Fourth International by Pabloist revisionism, paralleled by organizational fracturing into numerous competing international blocs, necessitates unremitting struggle for its rebirth.

In our ten year history, the Spartacist tendency has faced and resisted powerful objective pressures toward abandonment of an internationalist perspective. Cut off from the possibility of disciplined international ties as a result of the organizational sectarianism and subsequent political degeneration of Gerry Healy's International Committee, the Spartacist League has refused to passively acquiesce to the national isolation forced upon us. We have emphatically rejected the ersatz "internationalism" which achieves its international connections at the price of a federalist non-aggression pact thus renouncing in advance the struggle for disciplined international organization. We have sought to develop fraternal ties with groupings in other countries as part of a process of clarification and polarization. Our aim is the crystallization of a cohesive democratic centralist international tendency based on principled programmatic unity, the

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there is led by the Leninist party. While the party press gives lip service to [criticizing] the criminal attitude of the Chinese and Soviet workers' states toward the Vietnamese Revolution, we maintain that Stalinism is still the major obstacle in the workers movement to the international socialist revolution and must be thoroughly exposed and fought against at every step.

In trying to defend the Revolution against imperialism, the party blocs with one wing of U.S. imperialism in NPAC. The betrayals of such a course are precisely the betrayals that arose in the classical Popular Front. While the party should attend antiwar conferences and marches, it should fight to unite the working class around the banner of Leninism. It should have a position of revolutionary defeatism by making a clear, unambiguous call for the military victory of the DRVN, and NLF. It should take no organizational responsibility for NPAC and should oppose the idealistic single-issuism and class collaboration that characterize it.

7. An integral part of the party's flight from a revolutionary working class program has been its flight from the working class itself. The party's line dictates a primary and almost exclusive orientation to the petty bourgeoisie, which is reflected in the party's overwhelmingly petty bourgeois composition. These two interacting factors, program and composition, lead the party directly away from revolutionary Marxism. We continue to call for a proletarian orientation, as outlined in **For a Proletarian Orientation**. However, we believe that the most important thing is not simply orienting to and becoming rooted in the working class, but doing that with the correct program. The party's energies must be pri-

embryo of a reborn Fourth International.

The current cracking of the several international "Trotskyist" blocs now provides heightened opportunity for the Spartacist tendency to intervene in the world movement. Our history and program can serve as a guide for currents now in motion towards authentic Trotskyism, because despite involuntary national isolation for a time, we upheld our internationalist determination and continued to wage a principled fight against revisionism.

The shattering of the revisionists' and centrists' pretensions to international organization—the revelation that the United Secretariat, the International Committee, etc. have been nothing more than federated rotten blocs—combined with the worldwide renewal of proletarian combativeness in a context of sharpened inter-imperialist rivalry and intensified deep-seated capitalist crisis, provide an unprecedented objective opportunity for the crystallization and development of the Spartacist tendency internationally. As the political corpses of the revisionist blocs continue to decay, the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution, must be reborn.

FOR THE REBIRTH OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!

marily oriented to the working class and to building a Leninist party thoroughly proletarian in composition.

8. The current program of the SWP is sharply counterposed to the revolutionary heritage of the party and to the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We announce the formation of the Leninist Faction of the SWP which shall fight to win the majority of the party to its program.

The Leninist Faction
15 May 1972

Marxist Bulletin No. 10

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TO
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Suppressed Documents Expose United Secretariat



The Case of Bala Tampoe

We are bringing to the attention of the international working-class movement the "case" of Bala Tampoe, head of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary), Ceylon section of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International." The Tampoe scandal is much more than the revelation of clear-cut anti-revolutionary conduct on the part of an individual U.Sec. leader. It is a record of deliberate, deep and long-standing complicity on the part of the U.Sec., which had continued to pass off as a "revolutionary" an individual compromised by the most shameless violations of elementary communist morality. The conduct of the wretched Tampoe is in and of itself a scandal of enormous dimensions. But the Tampoe "case" is crucial in that it unambiguously reveals on the part of the U.Sec. the most profound political corruption.

The "case" of Bala Tampoe was raised at the U.Sec.'s "World Congress" in April 1969, at the insistence of Edmund Samarakkody, a member of the International Executive Committee whose group had split from Tampoe's LSSP(R) the previous year. As detailed in the letter from Samarakkody reprinted below, a Commission on Ceylon was established, which met with Samarakkody and Tampoe. Two reports were submitted from the Commission, a report of the Commission itself and a separate report from its Indian member, a senior leader of the Indian U.Sec. group who served as chairman of the Commission.

The Commission on Ceylon was faced with the question of what to do about Tampoe in the face of uncontested facts: Tampoe's acceptance of a trip to the United States in 1967 financed by the Asia Foundation, a well-known recipient of CIA funds, during which Tampoe had a private interview in Washington with McNamara, then U.S. Secretary of

Defense; Tampoe's attendance at small social gatherings of imperialist diplomats, including a private reception for ex-Nazi Kiesinger of West Germany; Tampoe's conduct as the bureaucratic head of the Ceylon Mercantile Union, a large union of rather conservative white-collar workers; the policies of the LSSP(R) particularly in situations relating to union policy. With reference to the latter, the Commission report made a sweeping denunciation of the LSSP(R), couched in mild language: ". . . in none of these instances is there any evidence that the party took what the Commission considered a policy consistent with revolutionary Marxism," or as the Indian delegate's report put it, "the role of the LSSP(R) during some of the recent strikes in Ceylon . . . has been such as to place the party in the camp of the enemy as opposed to workers in action."

Any one of these incidents would have been sufficient to compel a revolutionary working-class organization to immediately and publicly expel Tampoe as a traitor and an enemy. But of course the U.Sec. is not a revolutionary working-class organization. Having been compelled to constitute a Commission on Ceylon, the U.Sec. then suppressed the entire matter: in the minutes of the "World Congress" there appeared not a single reference to the scandalous facts which were the basis for the investigation! Reprinted below from the "World Congress" minutes are all the sections which deal with the Commission on Ceylon; they give no hint of the nature of the uncontested accusations against Tampoe.

What about the one operative recommendation of the Commission—that Tampoe's dual role as head of the LSSP(R) and of the Ceylon Mercantile Union be terminated "as soon as possible"? The full reports of the Commission and the Indian delegate demonstrate that were Tampoe forced to choose between control of the 30,000-member CMU and the 50-member "party"—whose policies show that it is self-evidently nothing other than an appendage of Tampoe's CMU bureaucracy—there can be little doubt he would choose the CMU. And three years later, the 3 July 1972 issue of the SWP's *Intercontinental Press*, in reprinting a resolution of the General Council of the CMU, referred to "Bala Tampoe, general secretary of the union and secretary of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary), the Ceylonese section of the Fourth International."

So much for the Commission. In fact, the outcome of the Tampoe "case" was never in doubt, recommendations for further investigations to the contrary. For the "World Congress" made its position unambiguously clear when it unanimously elected Tampoe to the incoming IEC. Thus the U.Sec., whose adherents pride themselves on their calls for "Victory to the NLF," included on its leading political body a man who admittedly has private discussions with U.S. imperialism's War Minister!

Some Background

The Trotskyist movement in Ceylon developed essentially after Trotsky's death, but achieved effective hegemony in the urban working class. The Lanka Sama Samaja Party, founded in 1935, remained insulated from the Trotskyism/Stalinism

split in world Communism until the outbreak of World War II, when the urgent question of the Comintern's line toward the war propelled a split in the LSSP. The forces who identified with Trotskyism gained the majority and shortly thereafter expelled the Stalinists. During the war the LSSP was illegalized and most of its leadership arrested. In the general strikes that broke out in the early post-war period, the LSSP consolidated its substantial mass base among the Sinhalese working class in the cities, but never attained any real rooting in the doubly oppressed Tamil plantation proletariat. In the Parliament issuing out of the 1947 elections, the LSSP was the main Opposition to the bourgeois United National Party. The LSSP provided the leadership for the massive general strike of 1952 against the UNP government.

In 1951 Bandaranaike had led a split from the UNP to form the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (now led by his widow). In its class roots and program the SLFP was no different than the UNP from which it had issued. After the 1952 elections, where the UNP won a substantial majority, the SLFP became the main Parliamentary Opposition. In the period leading up to the 1956 elections, the SLFP made its move. Consolidating an electoral bloc with a group which had split from the LSSP in 1953, the SLFP launched a formidable agitation campaign centered around a policy of

"*tion*" with the new bourgeois government, but was compelled into a more oppositional stance. Widespread rioting which broke out in 1958 was followed by the imposition of a state of emergency lasting several months. Outbreaks of strikes continued sporadically for several years, in which the LSSP played a considerable role due to its leadership of key unions including the Government Workers Trade Union Federation.

In the March 1960 elections, the LSSP initially stood for election in its own name. When the SLFP government lost a motion of confidence, forcing new elections, the LSSP entered into a no-contest and mutual support pact with the SLFP. An SLFP government was installed under Mrs. Bandaranaike. In the ensuing Parliament the LSSP defined itself as neither part of the government nor of the Opposition.

In 1964 the LSSP entered the Bandaranaike government composed of the SLFP-LSSP-CP and was suddenly and speedily expelled by the United Secretariat. The LSSP(R), the current "Ceylon section" of the U.Sec., was formed at that time.

The importance of Ceylon is the struggle to win over the Ceylonese proletariat—and especially the Tamil plantation workers—as a staging area for proletarian revolution on the Indian subcontinent as a whole. The LSSP's adaptation to the bourgeois SLFP, which culminated in the entry into the Bandaranaike government in 1964, was a degeneration begun years before and ignored by the Pabloists, the SWP and the Healyites (see WV No. 3). The capitulation to the SLFP was rooted at least in part in the LSSP's historic failure to base itself among the Tamil rural proletariat, finding roots almost exclusively in the relatively privileged unionized Sinhalese workers, leading to accommodation when the SLFP's appeal to anti-Tamil chauvinism among Sinhalese workers threatened the LSSP's mass base.

After the "Ninth World Congress"

In the spring of 1971 a mass uprising of peasant and student youth took place in Ceylon. The uprising was led by the Janata Vimukthi Peramuna, or People's Liberation Front, which had been organizing clandestinely since 1966. The JVP forces had initially helped to install the SLFP-LSSP-CP government. In 1971, operating under youth-vanguardist and peasant-vanguardist conceptions, the JVP launched an uprising. They relied on their own forces, without having politically prepared and mobilized any section of the broad masses, neither the working class nor the peasantry. The JVP had no position on the burning question of the rights of the oppressed Tamil minority in Ceylon. The rebel youth demonstrated tremendous combativity and courage but no section of the masses rose in support of the youth, who were brutally crushed. The Bandaranaike government's pretensions to "socialist democracy" and "anti-imperialism" did not of course interfere with its bloody repression of the youth uprising. In the undertaking the government received military aid from Britain, the U.S., the Soviet Union, India, Pakistan, Egypt and elsewhere, and economic aid and explicit political solidarity from China. Thus all interested, counterposed

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"Sinhala Only," aimed against the pro-English language policy of the UNP but mainly against the Tamil minority, whipping up and capitalizing on virulent anti-Tamil chauvinism. The LSSP maintained its programmatic plank in favor of both Sinhala and Tamil being official languages, but defined the defeat of the UNP as the main task, making a no-contest electoral agreement with the bourgeois SLFP bloc—a policy which the LSSP had sought since 1951.

After the 1956 elections the SLFP bloc became the government. The LSSP led the Opposition in Parliament. It began by defining its attitude as one of "responsive coopera-

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power blocs of imperialists, Stalinists and nationalists competed in aiding the Ceylonese government in crushing the domestic uprising. Thousands of youth were massacred and thousands more arrested.

The line of the United Secretariat was, predictably, to politically solidarize with the JVP without any criticism of its Sinhalese chauvinism, its adventurist substitution of armed struggle for political preparation of the working masses, its denial of the uniquely leading role of the proletariat in socialist revolution. This uncritical Pabloist tailing of qualitatively politically defective elements is classic centrism.

This was, however, not the policy of the U.Sec.'s own section in Ceylon. Tampoe is nothing but a social chauvinist and cynical reformist union bureaucrat. Tampoe's real role caused no alarm in the U.Sec.—it had after all been clearly demonstrated two years before at the 1969 "World Congress." The U.Sec. simply manufactured a fairy tale about the role of Tampoe and the LSSP(R) in the youth uprising.

The U.Sec. line was presented in a statement of the U.Sec. printed in *Intercontinental Press*, 19 April 1971. The claim is that the JVP and the LSSP(R) were participants in a "single revolutionary front" leading the uprising. The same line was repeated in an article in the British *New Left Review*, from which several people have recently gone over to the U.Sec. (The article was later reprinted in *PL* magazine, of all places. This puts *PL* in the unenviable position of politically and physically attacking all "Trotskyites"—except one—the one who took money from the Asia Foundation.)

The problem with the "single revolutionary front" is really quite simple. It is a lie from start to finish. The JVP was brutally suppressed, and thousands of its members and suspected members were indiscriminately killed or arrested. For weeks the bodies of young people killed by the armed forces floated in the rivers of Ceylon. It is a fact that not one member of the LSSP(R) was taken into police custody at that time even accidentally—surely inexplicable favoritism on the part of the bourgeois state toward an organization which the U.Sec. claims was equally the vanguard of the uprising!

Tampoe and the Youth Uprising

In September 1971 one Lord Avebury of "Amnesty International" was expelled from Ceylon after attempting to enter a youth detention camp. A government communique identified Bala Tampoe as one of the individuals who had accompanied Avebury. It further stated: "Lord Avebury was in close contact with several persons who appeared to be anxious to embarrass and discredit the government and to smear the image of Ceylon, in this island and abroad." To disassociate himself from the terrible charge of wanting to discredit the government—which had just brutally butchered thousands of young insurgents—Tampoe rushed off an indignant letter: "... the insinuation . . . is not only false but obviously malicious. Never in my life have I said or done anything to smear the image of Ceylon in this island or abroad."

A letter from Tampoe to the Prime Minister dated 30 April 1971 hardly befits a leader in a "single revolutionary front" discussing the massive execution of the JVP. Unwilling to take responsibility for even the mildest protest, Tampoe hid behind LSSP Cabinet Minister Leslie Goonewardena: "Mr. Leslie Goonewardena himself seems to believe that 'excesses' have been committed by the armed services since the uprising began . . ." Tampoe cannot even protest the unspeakably brutal JVP suppression without putting the word "excesses" in quotation marks!

In August 1971 a resolution of the General Council of Tampoe's CMU resolved that "the General Council will mobilize the entire membership of the union to make whatever sacrifices that the mass organizations of the people may consider necessary" if the bourgeois government will undertake measures "to break Ceylon free of the stranglehold of Imperialism upon it, and thereby to enable the people to set about the establishment of a genuine socialist democracy in Ceylon." To call upon a capitalist regime—and one which has just demonstrated its viciously reactionary nature in blood—to build socialism, to urge the working class to make "sacrifices" in the interests of such a government, is this the line of the United Secretariat? We confidently expect that at least some elements in the U.Sec. will profess themselves very shocked about Tampoe's conduct, pleading innocence of the information. Yet the *Intercontinental Press* statement quoted earlier as identifying Tampoe as head of the LSSP(R) and the CMU is an introduction to a declaration of the very same CMU General Council. The United Secretariat's selective memory when it comes to Bala Tampoe is quite deliberate. It is the application in practice of the Pabloist revisionism that is built into the foundations of the United Secretariat. Thus that "United Secretariat," its "fraternal" SWP included, is led, purely and simply, to perpetuate a fraud and a crime against the international working class.

Revolutionary Samasamaja Party
(Fourth Internationalist)
SC, Galle Road, Dehiwala
[Ceylon]

26 May 1972

Dear Comrade Gordon,

I received your letter of 12 May 1972.

Regarding your inquiry on the authenticity of the two typewritten documents entitled "Report of the Commission on Ceylon of the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International" and "[Indian delegate's] Report—Ceylon Question" both of which I handed to Comrade Bill L. when he was recently in Ceylon, I may inform you as follows:

I attended the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International (United Secretariat) held in Europe from 11 to 19 April 1969 as a member of the International Executive Committee elected at the Eighth Congress in 1965. At this Congress (Ninth Congress) a Commission was appointed to inquire into the circumstances leading to, and the politics of the split in the LSSP(R) in 1968 and the request of the RSP

that it be recognized as the Ceylon section of the Fourth International. The Commission consisted of the following: [two delegates from North America, one from Switzerland, a senior delegate each from China and India, and a delegate from Japan designated who, however, was not present].

[The Indian delegate] left the Congress on the 17th. Before leaving [the Indian delegate] handed me a copy of his report which he stated was a minority report and which he left with the Commission. I returned his report to [the Indian delegate] after taking a true copy of it. I informed [the Indian delegate] that I had taken a copy of it.

On 19 April, two days after, the Ceylon question came up for consideration before the Congress. The report of the Commission was read out in open Congress by a member of the Commission and translated simultaneously to other languages. Copies of the report were handed to Tampoe and me.

I raised with the Commission the question of the minority report of [the Indian delegate] a copy of which I said was with me. I displayed this copy of the [Indian delegate's] report and requested the Commission to table this report. The spokesman for the Commission thereupon admitted that [the Indian delegate] had submitted a report but that it was not a minority report. When my turn for intervention in the Ceylon question came I quoted extensively from the [Indian delegate's] report without being challenged in regard to the accuracy of it.

At the end of the deliberations on the Ceylon question the Praesidium collected the copies of the report of the Commission that were in the hands of the translators and also the copies that had been handed over to me and Tampoe. I however had with me my copies of the Commission report and [the Indian delegate's] report made by me from the originals in that regard when these were handed over to me by [a North American Commission member] and [the Indian delegate] respectively. I am in a position therefore to state that the copies of these two reports that I handed over to Comrade L. are true copies of the Ceylon Commission report and of the [Indian delegate's] report.

You are free to give publicity to these reports. I agree with you that "the scandalous revelations will be a service to the struggle to rebuild the Fourth International."

Yours fraternally,
[signed]
Edmund Samarakkody
Secretary
Revolutionary Samasamaja Party

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON CEYLON

The Commission had to deal with the following matters:—

(a) A request by the RSP led by Comrade Edmund not to allow Comrade Bala to sit in the Congress because as an "agent of the class enemy" he would endanger the world movement. This request was reiterated in the Commission and in front of the Congress charging Bala explicitly with being a "CIA agent."

(b) A written request of the RSP to disaffiliate the LSSP(R) led by Comrade Bala, as the section of the 4th International and to recognize the RSP as the Ceylon section of the 4th International.

(c) A written request by Comrade Karalasingham for his tendency that neither the LSSP(R) nor the RSP be recognized as the Ceylon section of the 4th International by this Congress.

Concerning the charges that Comrade Bala is an agent of the enemy class, on the basis of documents submitted by Comrade Edmund and Bala and after hearing extensively from the two comrades the Commission [found] that the accusation that Comrade Bala is "an agent of the class enemy" or an "agent of the CIA" was totally unsubstantiated by Comrade Edmund. To make such a grave charge was totally irresponsible on the part of Comrade Edmund and should be condemned by the World Congress.

All members of the Commission were able to agree on one point; while the leadership of a large militant union by a comrade of the 4th International might be an important achievement, the close interrelationship between the Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU)—a union of 30,000 white collar workers with its own political needs—and a small party of some 50 members a large percentage of whom either belong to the union or hold leadership positions in that union inevitably results in a tendency to subordinate the party line and actions of the party to the needs of the trade union policy. Such a situation is dangerous even if the comrades involved start with the best revolutionary intentions.

It was with this question that the Commission was centrally concerned. The Commission did not feel it was in a position to fully examine the policies of Comrade Bala in his Union. We were concerned only with the possible subordination of party policies to the needs of the union, and the serious problems posed by the dual position of Comrade Bala as secretary of the LSSP(R).

The Commission felt that some of the actions and policies of Comrade Bala and the LSSP(R) brought to our attention by Comrade Edmund and not denied by Comrade Bala could have seriously damaged the reputation of Comrade Bala as a revolutionary leader, compromised the 4th International in Ceylon and [could] have been exploited by all the enemies of our movement. In this context, we refer especially to the following examples:—

(a) A series of incidents which together constitute compromisingly close relations between Comrade Bala and the Ceylonese embassies or missions of the imperialist countries;

(1) A trip to the U.S. in the summer of 1967, financed by the Asia Foundation.

(2) His acceptance of a small private luncheon invitation at the residence of the British High Commissioner, during the 1966 plantation workers strike—a luncheon that was also attended by Thondaman, a trade union leader who was playing an open strikebreaking role against the plantation workers.

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(3) His attendance at a small dinner party at the West German Embassy for visiting Chancellor Kiesinger.

(b) A letter sent to the Ceylonese Prime Minister on 22 January 1966 by Comrade Bala in his capacity as union General Secretary, concerning the state of emergency in which he implied support for the imposition of a curfew in response to the "violence" that occurred in Colombo. (This letter is included in bulletin 17 March 1969.)

(c) Comrade Bala's policy in regard to the struggle against devaluation of the rupee in November-December 1967. The CMU did not support the strike that took place at that time in the private sector. Serious questions are raised concerning why the LSSP(R) did not take the lead in fighting for united action by all the trade unions and working-class parties against devaluation.

Again on these charges and in other similar ones we did not attempt to pass judgment on the policies of the CMU, but on the subordination of the policies of the LSSP(R) to the union, as in none of these instances is there any evidence that the party took what the Commission considered a policy consistent with revolutionary Marxism.

The Commission was not unanimous in evaluating all these actions. While all agreed they were, or could be, extremely compromising, some comrades felt they might be explained in the context of Ceylonese political and trade union life; others felt they were totally unjustifiable.

With regard to the appeal of the RSP, headed by Comrade Edmund, to be recognized as the Ceylon section of the 4th International, the Commission clearly established the following facts: (1) that this group while in the LSSP(R) before the split operated as an undeclared faction within the party, (2) that its claim of manipulation of the attendance of the April 1968 LSSP(R) conference is extremely dubious since at this conference both tendencies received the same number of votes as in the conference of June 1967, (3) that while Comrade Edmund's tendency was not granted any minority representation at this 1968 conference, either on the Central Committee or on bodies such as the controlling body of the party press, and that this refusal of representation is contrary to Trotskyist practice, Comrade Edmund's group split one week after this conference, without consulting or even informing the United Secretariat in advance. In previous letters the United Secretariat had clearly stated it was opposed to any splits in the LSSP(R), (4) that upon splitting or forming the RSP, this group quickly issued a declaration to the public not only simply announcing its break, but attacking Comrade Bala, leader of the Ceylon section, openly as an enemy of the working class and in a thinly disguised way as an agent of the CIA. The Ceylon capitalist press featured the full text of this statement gravely accusing Comrade Bala whose union had just ended a large strike. (5) Finally in its press and its letterhead the RSP has fraudulently proclaimed itself as the Ceylon section of the 4th International.

On the basis of the undisputed facts the Commission had this established, and after lengthy and serious consideration,

the Commission unanimously recommends the following conclusions to the World Congress:—

(1) It is the duty of the 4th International to defend Comrade Bala against accusations of the "agent" type. The World Congress should appeal to the RSP to withdraw these slanderous and damaging accusations publicly and in an appropriate manner.

(2) The split from the LSSP(R) in April 1968 was only the last of a series of crises and breakaways that have beset the LSSP(R) since its founding in the necessary break from the LSSP. One of the reasons for these periodic crises is that the leadership of the LSSP(R), or at least a part of it, could not adapt itself to the new reality of a reduced size of the party and tried to operate as they did during the days of the mass LSSP. The United Secretariat was completely correct in stating that there was no principled political basis for the split of the Edmund group from the LSSP(R). The 4th International hopes that eventually all Trotskyist forces in Ceylon will be able to unite their efforts in one organization. However at this time, the latest split and the wounds it has caused being too recent to allow the two groups to function seriously as one.

(3) The evidence placed before the Commission tends to support the conclusion that the policies followed by Comrade Bala—especially in his dual role as CMU secretary and as LSSP(R) secretary—were gravely compromising to the 4th International. The Commission was not in a position to get a clear enough picture of the policies of Comrade Bala in the concrete circumstances of Ceylon and the LSSP(R) to propose that this section be disaffiliated by the World Congress. But we strongly feel the need for further investigation of this matter. We therefore recommend the establishment of a small Commission composed of experienced comrades, preferably including at least one comrade able to speak the languages of Ceylon who could investigate the case by going to that country. At the same time, of course, the FI should not only investigate, but should try to help the LSSP(R) concretely in its work.

Specifically we urge the World Congress the following:—

(1) That the leading bodies of the International be instructed to appoint a small investigating committee along the lines mentioned above. This committee will submit a report of its findings and its recommendations for action to the next meeting of the IEC.

(2) That the IEC act with all possible speed on the recommendations of this committee with full powers of a World Congress including the power to disaffiliate the LSSP(R) as the Ceylon section of the 4th International if it feels this is the proper action.

(3) That until the IEC decides otherwise, the LSSP(R) remains the Ceylon section of the FI and thus should be given all possible assistance in its work by all bodies of the International.

(4) That the double function of Comrade Bala as the secretary of both the CMU and the section be terminated as rapidly as possible.

(5) The RSP would not be recognized as the Ceylon section even were there not already a recognized section in Ceylon. The unacceptable methods by which this tendency carried through its factional fight before and after the split dictate a very reserved attitude on this question. We appeal

to the RSP to prove its loyalty to the FI in renouncing at once the pretension of being the recognized section, by retracting the above mentioned attacks of a factional [nature] upon the LSSP(R) and its leadership, and by this means prepare the eventual regrouping of the Trotskyist forces of Ceylon in a united section.

INDIAN DELEGATE'S REPORT

The Ceylon Commission invited both Comrade Bala Tampoe as General Secretary of the LSSP(R), the official section of the Fourth International in Ceylon, and Comrade Edmund Samarakkody, leader of the RSP which has broken with the section, to explain their respective positions in connection with the split of April 1968 following a special Conference of the Party.

The Commission had before it a written representation submitted by the Provisional Committee of the RSP entitled "Events leading to the split in LSSP(R) in April 1968" demanding that the LSSP(R) be disaffiliated as a section of the Fourth International on the grounds that the latter was following bourgeois politics alien to Marxism-Leninism and further suggests that the RSP be recognized as a section in its place.

The RSP has also made some charges of a personal nature against Comrade Bala as the leader of the LSSP(R). These charges relate to a trip made by Comrade Bala to the U.S. of America on an invitation and financed by the Asia Foundation and also to the unusually friendly relations maintained by him with the British and West German diplomatic missions in Colombo.

Comrade Bala on the other hand made a separate representation in a statement on behalf of the CC of the LSSP(R) challenging the right of Comrade Edmund, a former member of the IEC, to be present at the World Congress as a representative of a split away group. He had accused Comrade Edmund of splitting the Party in defiance of a specific directive given by the Fourth International leadership for maintaining unity, and of now trying to cover it up with various baseless charges.

The Commission sought clarification from both comrades on the charges and counter-charges made by them against each other. It is indeed regrettable that the split in the LSSP(R) took place in the manner in which it did without giving proper opportunity to the International leadership to intervene and avert it if possible.

Comrade Edmund justified the split on the grounds that the differences between his tendency and the majority of the LSSP(R) had reached a stage where they could not be resolved within a single organization. He also maintained that he kept the United Secretariat informed of the developments. He claimed the support of 40 out of 110 members who constituted the LSSP(R) in 1964 after they broke away from the reformist LSSP led by N.M. Perera as a protest against the class collaborationist coalition politics of the leadership of the united LSSP.

The LSSP(R) which was recognized as an official section of the Fourth International in 1964 had to contend with the

secession of a pro-coalition tendency led by Comrade Karlo which has since entered the reformist LSSP. It had then to face the disruptionist activities of the Healyites inside its organizational fold. After the April 1968 split the Healyites have left the Party to form their own separate group. It has been contended that some of the Healyites are still in the LSSP(R) led by Comrade Bala.

The latest split has not only seriously undermined the prestige of the Fourth International in Ceylon where the Trotskyist movement had once a mass party in the LSSP which has since degenerated. On the basis of some reports before the Commission there is no guarantee that the LSSP(R) as constituted at present after April 1968 will not further split especially in the context of the Healy tendency in the fold.

Therefore it is necessary for the World Congress to re-examine the entire strategy of constructing a section of the Fourth International in Ceylon by regrouping the best elements of the Trotskyist movement.

It must be said that the Commission did not have any evidence to substantiate the charge made by Comrade Edmund that Comrade Bala is an agent of the CIA, because he accepted a trip to the U.S.A. on a project sponsored by the Asia Foundation. The Commission rejects the charge as irresponsible and motivated by factional considerations.

But at the same time the Commission cannot but take a dim view of the manner in which Comrade Bala got himself invited to the U.S.A. ostensibly under a project sponsored by the Harvard University. Although Comrade Bala maintains that he had kept the United Secretariat and SWP informed about his trip, some of his activities in Washington like his interview with McNamara have not been fully explained. Also the unusually friendly relations he maintains with the diplomatic missions of West Germany (he was invited to a dinner party by West German Chancellor Kiesinger) and U.K. (he and his wife were invited to a luncheon by the British High Commissioner in the midst of a strike of plantation workers)—all these do not befit a militant trade unionist and a revolutionary Marxist belonging to the Fourth International. More important, however, is the fact that the political positions adopted by the LSSP(R) leadership on a number of questions during the last two or three years and the trade union tactics pursued by Comrade Bala as leader of the CMU also give scope for a great deal of misunderstanding. There is enough documentary evidence to show that the LSSP(R) has been pursuing a line on issues like united fronts with other working-class organizations which, to say the least, does not conform to the general strategy of the Fourth International movement. The role of the LSSP(R) during some of the recent strikes in Ceylon like the Government Employees strike and workers' strike action against devaluation measures of the UNP government, and its consistent refusal to have joint action with other working-class parties has been such as to place the party in the camp of the enemy as opposed to workers in action. It has been even alleged that during a recent strike some of the CMU units on specific instructions from the leadership resorted to strikebreaking activities—not

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a complimentary development for the Fourth International movement.

Further the letter written by Comrade Bala to the Prime Minister of the UNP government during the anti-devaluation strike and the privileged treatment given to him to hold a public meeting when meetings by others were banned in Colombo—along with some other incidents—have made Comrade Bala a suspect in the eyes of the militant working-class movement in Ceylon. Comrade Bala's contention that the charges had been borrowed from the journals published by the LSSP, CP(M) and pro-Peking group, etc., does not minimize the gravity of the situation.

There is enough evidence to show that the CMU is controlled bureaucratically by Comrade Bala. His wife is an important paid functionary of the CMU. So are some of the other colleagues of his in the LSSP(R). The fact that a section controls a big union like the CMU with a membership of 30,000 is indeed a positive gain. But it must be remembered that the CMU consists mostly of white collar employees known for their conservative political outlook especially in Ceylon. And there is an unfortunate tendency on the part of Comrade Bala to subordinate the politics of the LSSP(R) to the needs of the CMU.

This perhaps explains to a large extent the opportunist tactics pursued by the party on several trade union questions. Whatever be the final decision of the World Congress on the status of the LSSP(R) there is certainly a need for separating the leadership of the LSSP(R) from that of the CMU. In other words the top functionary of the CMU should not be the chief executive of the Party especially when the CMU represents the only mass [base] of the Party in Ceylon.

There are several charges against the leadership of the LSSP(R) which could not be verified on the basis of the documents placed before the Commission. But there is enough grounds to feel that there is something rotten about the functioning of the Ceylon section as it stands. It has been alleged by a member of the LSSP(R), Comrade T.M. Perera for example, that the leadership denied any representation to the minority represented by Edmund on even the CC of the LSSP(R). Even if some of the charges are exaggerated the repercussions of unseemly controversy now raging in Ceylon in other countries can be far reaching.

Under the circumstances, the Commission feels that it would seriously undermine the prestige of the Fourth International as an international party of the revolutionary proletariat if the LSSP(R) as constituted today is continued as an official section of the Fourth International. Its bona fides are in doubt, even if there is no slur on the character of the individual leaders of the Party. The Commission therefore recommends that the LSSP(R) should be disaffiliated as a section to create the proper political conditions and facilitate the regrouping of genuine Trotskyist elements in Ceylon as a new section of the Fourth International.

At the same time the Commission rejects the claim of the RSP to be granted recognition as an official section of the Fourth International as the behavior of its leadership in

precipitating a split has been far from being responsible. The Commission deeply regrets to recommend such steps in a country where the Trotskyist movement has had a long tradition. It would have favored a course whereby the two tendencies that have split from each other could be brought together into a single party. Such a possibility does not exist for the present.

The Commission suggests that the World Congress should set up a special Commission with powers to visit Ceylon at an early date and explore the possibility of a new section of the Fourth International being built in that country.

"WORLD CONGRESS" MINUTES

"MINUTES OF THE THIRD WORLD CONGRESS SINCE REUNIFICATION (NINTH WORLD CONGRESS) OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL, WORLD PARTY OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION."

[Extracts dealing with Ceylon]

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE CONGRESS.

Procedural motions from the outgoing United Secretariat:

d. That the following commissions be constituted with the following members:

3. Ceylon Commission—Therese, Abel, Kailas, Pia, Peng, Okatani (if he arrives).

Bala raises question as to the basis for constitution of the Ceylon Commission.

Clarification by Livio for the outgoing United Secretariat that the Ceylon Commission was constituted to review an appeal and charges made by Comrade Edmund, a member of the outgoing IEC.

Pia requests that he not be a member of the Ceylon Commission.

Amendment by Pia: That Pia be removed from the Ceylon Commission.

Amendment by Pia defeated.

Motion by Therese: To approve the composition of all commissions as amended.

Motion carried.

XI. REPORT FROM THE CEYLON COMMISSION by Pia.

Motions from Ceylon Commission:

1. That the leading bodies of the International be instructed to appoint a small investigating committee along the lines mentioned above. This committee will submit a report of its findings and its recommendations for action to the next meeting of the IEC.

2. That the IEC act with all possible speed on the recommendations of this committee with the full powers of a

World Congress, including the power to disaffiliate the LSSP(R) as the Ceylon section of the Fourth International if it feels this is the proper action.

3. That until the IEC decides otherwise, the LSSP(R) remains the Ceylonese section of the Fourth International, and thus should be given all possible assistance in its work by all bodies of the International.

4. That the double function of Comrade Bala as secretary of both the CMU and the section be terminated as rapidly as possible.

5. The RSP would not be recognized as the Ceylon section even were there not already a recognized section in Ceylon. The unacceptable methods by which this tendency carried through its factional fight before and after the split dictate a very reserved attitude on this question. We appeal to the RSP to prove its proclaimed loyalty to the Fourth International in renouncing at once the pretension of being the recognized section, by retracting the above-mentioned unacceptable attacks upon Comrade Bala, by renouncing further attacks of a factional nature upon the LSSP(R) and its leadership, and by this means prepare the eventual regrouping of the Trotskyist forces of Ceylon in a united section.

Motion by Pia: That Bala and Edmund be given each one-half hour to explain their positions.

Motion carried.

Discussion on Ceylon Commission report: Edmund, Bala, Pierre.

Motion by Pierre: That the only question to be discussed now is the recognition of the Ceylon section.

Discussion.

Motion carried.

Continuation of discussion on Ceylon Commission report: Walter, Abel.

Motion by Abel: That the International Executive Committee investigate with the full power of the World Congress the allegations made by the comrades from Ceylon and that the incoming IEC have the power to disaffiliate the Ceylon section pending the results of the investigation.

Continuation of discussion on Ceylon Commission report: Lewis, Walter, Abel, Gulam, Pierre.

Summary of Ceylon Commission report by Pia.

XIII. VOTING ON RESOLUTIONS AND COMMISSION REPORTS.

5. **Motion by Abel:**

a. That this World Congress rejects the request that the LSSP(R) be disaffiliated and that the RSP of Comrade Edmund be recognized as the Ceylon section.

b. The LSSP(R) is and remains the Ceylon section of the Fourth International.

c. That in view of the charges leveled, we instruct the International Control Commission to carry out a thorough investigation and to submit a report containing its findings and

its recommendations for action to the coming meeting of the IEC.

Motion by Pierre:

a. The World Congress rejects the request by Comrade Edmund for disaffiliation of the LSSP(R).

b. The LSSP(R) is and remains the Ceylonese section of the Fourth International.

c. The next session of the IEC will have on its agenda the activity of the Ceylon section.

Points a. and b. of both motions carried unanimously.

Roll call vote on point c. of Abel's motion.

Full delegates: 14 for, 28 against, 8 abstentions.

Fraternal delegates: 8 for, 8 against, no abstentions.

Motion defeated.

Voice vote on point c. of Pierre's motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

XIV. ELECTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Motion by Walter: That the following comrades make up the IEC: ... Bala. . . .

Motion by Walter: To accept slate as amended by inclusion of [two additional nominees] as full members.

Motion carried unanimously. ■

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...Economism

(Continued from page 24)

economism is the failure of the working class, in the absence of revolutionary leadership, to reject bourgeois ideology and place its revolutionary class interests above particular, sectional or apparent needs or desires. Concretely, economism manifests itself in competition between groups of workers undercutting or destroying the unity of the entire class, support by the labor movement for its national bourgeoisie, failure to fight racial and sexual oppression, indifference to democratic rights and civil liberties, and a lack of concern for the cultural heritage of mankind (bourgeois culture).

What economism is not is the workers' strong desire for a higher standard of living. On the contrary, the basis of economism is the material and cultural oppression of the working class. It is material deprivation, or the fear of it, which causes groups of workers to view their particular and immediate interests as more important than any other consideration. It is social and cultural oppression which causes workers to accept pernicious bourgeois ideologies like nationalism and religion. The struggle to raise the material and cultural level of the workers is essential to the real struggle against economism. The need for a revolutionary transitional program is precisely to ensure that these gains do not come at the expense of other sections of the oppressed but transcend the framework of competition for "a slice of the pie." Preachments of moral uplift in the labor movement are not a serious fight against economism.

Social-Democratic Reformism and Trade Unionism

There is a strong tendency on the left to identify economism with simple trade unionism and thus to see any concern with the affairs of government as a step away from economism. The Workers League, American affiliate of Gerry Healy's "International Committee," presents any strike propaganda containing demands on the government, or raising the slogan of a labor party regardless of its program, as inherently anti-economist. Lenin is sufficiently explicit that economism does not mean merely lack of concern for "politics." The economism/politics dichotomy demonstrates crude anti-Leninism. In *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin repeatedly insists:

"Lending 'the economic struggle itself a political character' means, therefore, striving to secure satisfaction of trade [union] demands, the improvement of working conditions in each separate trade . . . by legislative and administrative methods. This is precisely what all trade unions do and have always done . . . the phrase 'lending the economic struggle itself a political character' means nothing more than the struggle for economic reforms."

Trade unions are always and necessarily impeded by the bourgeois state. Even the most backward trade union bureaucrats are in favor of reducing legal restrictions on themselves and achieving through government reforms what cannot be attained over the bargaining table.

Social-democratic reformism and simple business unionism are two forms of economism that usually co-exist peacefully within the labor movement. And when reformism and business unionism do conflict, it is not always "politics" (reformism) that represents the higher form of class struggle. In the U.S. proto-social-democratic, "progressive" unionists (Sidney Hillman, Walter Reuther) have often been less

militant in industrial conflicts than straight business unionists (John L. Lewis, Jimmy Hoffa). This is because the "politically concerned," "progressive" union bureaucrats are closely associated with a wing of the Democratic Party, which they don't want to embarrass by industrial disruption. The "anti-economism" of these politically sensitive union bureaucrats is a facade for sellouts and a cover for seeking bourgeois respectability.

Coalitionism

One of the few constant elements in the New Left radicalism of the past ten years has been the denial of the unique and leading role of the organized working class in the socialist revolution. Replacements have been sought in "the wretched of the earth," the "Third World," racial and ethnic minorities in countries like the U.S., then the lumpens, students and/or youth dropouts. Recently a spirit of ecumenism has made itself felt in radical circles and all oppressed social groups are expected to participate in the revolution on an equal footing.

The strategy is seen as building a coalition of various oppressed groups on a "program" achieved through the multi-lateral trading of demands. For example, if the women's liberation movement supports the repeal of anti-strike legislation, the unions in turn are expected to support the repeal of anti-abortion laws. The two most developed advocates of coalitionism in the ostensibly Marxist U.S. left are the Socialist Workers Party and the Labor Committee. The SWP projects a coalition largely based on ethnic and sexual groups around a petty-bourgeois utopian program, while the Labor Committee presents a coalition of economically defined groups around a social-democratic program. Thus, the SWP foresees a black, Chicano, women's, homosexuals' and workers' revolution, while the LC looks forward to a trade unionist, unemployed, welfare recipient, white-collar and student soviet.

Its advocates see coalitionism as a means of fighting economism. In actuality, coalitionism is simply another form of economism. It is based on the central theoretical premise of economism—that the working class cannot transcend (as distinct from disregard or deny) its immediate sectional interests and identify its interests with all the oppressed and with the future of humanity. Coalitionism does not seek to transform the consciousness of workers, but simply to gain their acquiescence for some "other" group's "program" on the basis of necessarily unstable bargains. To the extent that they concern themselves with the labor movement at all, coalition advocates perpetuate the view, that workers are selfish pigs whose political activities are correlated purely and simply to their paychecks.

Working-Class Conservatism and Petty-Bourgeois Utopianism

Revisionists and fakers feed upon the left's general lack of familiarity with pre-Marxian socialism. Thus people are permitted to call themselves Marxists while putting forward the very ideas against which Marxism developed. A superficial view of Leninism is that it developed solely in opposition to reformism and simple trade unionist consciousness. But Bolshevism also developed in intense struggle against petty-bourgeois utopian radicalism, particularly in its anarchist variant. As Lenin noted in *Left-Wing Communism*:

"It is not yet sufficiently known abroad that Bolshevism grew, took shape and became steeled in long years of struggle against 'petty-bourgeois revolutionariness,' which smacks of or borrows something from anarchism, and which in all essentials falls short of the conditions and requirements for sustained proletarian class struggle."

The hallmark of utopian socialism is the belief that socialist consciousness is based on a generalized moral sense, unrelated to existing social relations. Utopian socialism counterposes itself to Marxism by its denial that the organized working class, driven by material exploitation under capitalism, is uniquely the leading force in the socialist revolution. On one plane, utopian socialism is a reflection of the moral and intellectual snobbery of the petty bourgeoisie. Insofar as utopian socialism concerns itself with attempting a class analysis of the revolution, it usually locates the leading force in the educated middle class, particularly the intelligentsia, which is presumed to be genuinely concerned about ideas, unlike the working class which presumably will sell out socialist principles for a mess of porridge.

Working-Class Progressivism

Existing working-class social attitudes certainly fall far short of socialist consciousness. However, it is equally certain that of the major classes in society, the working class is everywhere the most socially progressive. It is the working-class parties, even despite their treacherous bourgeoisified reformist leaderships, that stand for more enlightened social policies. In Catholic Europe and in Islam, it is the working-class parties that carry the main burden of the struggle against religious obscurantism. The distinctly non-economist issue of divorce was an important factor in breaking the alliance between the Italian social democrats and the dominant bourgeois party, and has stood as a major obstacle to the projected bloc between the Italian CP and left Christian Democrats. In England the anti-capital-punishment forces were overwhelmingly concentrated in the Labour, not in the Conservative or Liberal, Party.

It is true that the relatively progressive social policies of most workers' parties do not accurately reflect the most backward elements in the class. (Aspiring social democrats use this as a justification for accommodating to the labor bureaucracy, insisting that it is to the "left" of the "average" worker.) All this shows is that working-class organizations represent a higher form of political consciousness than workers taken as atomized individuals in the manner of public opinion polls. This is because the activists and organizers of workers' organizations represent a certain selection, generally of the most conscious workers who have already broken from personal "economism" and see themselves as representatives of broader class interests. Working-class organizations are shaped by the attitudes of what Lenin called "the advanced workers." Ideologically conservative workers are almost always politically passive, forced by social pressure against being activists in the right-wing bourgeois parties.

Marxists have always been profoundly aware of and concerned with working-class conservatism. Genuine Marxism, in contrast to utopian moralism, locates and fights this conservatism in the actual living conditions of workers. As early as the Communist Manifesto, the demands for a shortened work week to give workers the leisure necessary for political and cultural activity, for the emancipation of

women, and for free universal higher education, for example, have been an important aspect of revolutionary socialist policy. The utopian moralists have no program to counter working-class backwardness, simply emitting cries of horror coupled with occasional predictions that the working class will be the vanguard of fascism.

Trade Unions and Revolution

An important anarcho-Maoist myth is that trade unions are simply bargaining agents for particular groups of workers and are inherently apolitical. While this may have been true in the nineteenth century, when labor unions were weak, defensive organizations, it is certainly not true now. In all advanced capitalist countries, and particularly those which have mass social-democratic parties, trade unions exercise considerable influence in all aspects of political life. Even in the U.S. in the 1960's—a period in which the unions were regarded as particularly passive and bread-and-butter oriented—the union bureaucracy was intimately involved in the major social issues. Liberal union bureaucrats like Walter Reuther helped finance the Southern civil rights movement of the early 1960's and played an important role in keeping it within the limits of bourgeois reformism. Millions of dollars in union dues are spent by union lobbyists seeking to pressure Washington politicians. The deeply conservative AFL-CIO central leadership under George Meany is one of the few significant social bases remaining for a "hawk" policy in Vietnam. The problem is not that the labor movement is apolitical, but that it is tied to bourgeois politics. The role of revolutionaries in the unions is not "to divert the economic struggle to a political struggle," but to overthrow the conservative, reformist bureaucracy and pursue a revolutionary policy on both the industrial and the political level.

To assert that trade unions are inherently parochial and economist organizations is undialectical. All genuine class organizations (e.g., unions, parties, factory committees) reflect the class struggle. To say that unions as such (i.e., simply as bargaining agencies for particular groups of workers) cannot be revolutionary is a tautology. But unions can give birth to other forms of organization (e.g. parties, general strike committees, workers' councils) and can themselves provide the structure for a workers' insurrection, ceasing then to function simply as "unions." As Trotsky, who certainly knew something about the organization of revolutions, said: "in spite of the enormous advantages of soviets as organs of struggle for power, there may well be cases where the insurrection unfolds on the basis of other forms of organization (factory committees, trade unions, etc.)."

The radicalization of the masses must take place through struggle within the mass organizations of the class, regardless of form. It is not possible for revolutionary consciousness to develop among the mass of workers without lengthy and intense struggles and the intervention of communists in such fundamental mass organizations as the unions. To term this perspective "economism," as do the New Leftists, is to transform "Leninism" into a justification for petty-bourgeois utopian-moralistic anti-Marxism. ■

[This article is adapted from a leaflet produced by the Spartacist League of New Zealand.]

The Faces of Economism

Revisionism is an attempt to attack the substance of Marxism-Leninism without openly coming into conflict with its great authority. Therefore revisionism often takes the form of maintaining lip-service to traditional Marxist terminology but re-defining (usually broadening) certain key concepts in order to smuggle in a different political line. For example the term "self-determination," which for Lenin simply meant the ability of a nation to establish a separate state, has been transformed, most notably by the Socialist Workers Party, into the thoroughly utopian reformist concept of freedom from all oppression (class exploitation, national and racial oppression, sexual oppression, etc.) through separation or even "community control" within U.S. capitalism.

While the term "economism" has not undergone so grotesque a change, it also has been broadened well beyond its Marxist meaning. For Lenin, the "economists" were a distinct tendency in the Russian socialist movement which held that socialists should concentrate on improving the conditions of working-class life and leave the fight against Czarist absolutism to the liberals. After **One Step Forward, Two Steps Back**, Lenin rarely used the term and referred to similar attitudes as reformism or narrow trade union consciousness. Nevertheless the term "economism," which has become an important part of the contemporary radical vocabulary, need not be restricted to a purely historical category. However it is essential that it not be given a

meaning fundamentally subversive to Leninism, i.e. that Lenin's authority not be put behind ideas alien to Marxism.

Anti-"Economism" as Anti-Materialist Spiritualism

Attacks on "economism" are a frequent rallying cry of petty-bourgeois radicals whose response to labor reformism and working-class backwardness is to reject the working class as the driving force of the revolution. The current popularity of the term probably stems from its widespread use in the Chinese "Cultural Revolution," where "economism" was identified with a desire for a higher standard of living. "Economist consciousness" was the sin of workers who resisted the "Cultural Revolution"—that is, who were unwilling to make the material sacrifices demanded of them by the Maoist faction. The political thrust of the "anti-economism" campaign was evident during the 1967 nationwide railway strike, when Red Guards demanded that railway workers accept a 12% pay cut and disregard standard safety regulations. This would have concentrated greater economic surplus in the hands of the Maoist bureaucracy, but would not have significantly benefited the Chinese masses.

It is precisely the anti-materialist spiritual aspects of Maoism—its rejection of the "consumer society" and Khrushchev's "goulash communism"—that provides the link between the early New Left of Herbert Marcuse and the later popularity of Third World anarcho-Maoism. The likes of Robin Blackburn of the British **New Left Review** and Rudi Dutschke of the German SDS can be considered transitional figures.

Anarcho-Maoist attacks on working-class "economism" are similar to Victorian conservative attacks on "the intense selfishness of the lower classes" (the phrase is from Kipling, poet laureate of British imperialism). These attitudes are generally voiced by genuine reactionaries. Marshal Petain blamed the fall of France on the "love of pleasure of the French common people." As George Orwell once remarked, this statement is seen in its proper perspective if we compare the amount of pleasure in the life of the average French worker or peasant with Petain's own!

The anti-Marxist perversion of the term "economism" by the Maoists and their New Left sycophants reflects fear of and contempt for the working masses on the part of petty-bourgeois strata. In the case of the Chinese bureaucracy, it is a real fear that the aspirations and organization of the Chinese working class threaten its privileged position. In the case of the Western radical intelligentsia, it is a belief that the social backwardness and cultural narrowness of the working masses threaten its life styles—both bourgeois and "liberated"—and values.

What Is Economism?

In the most general sense, economism is the failure of the working class to embrace its historic role, or in Marx's words, failure to realize that the proletariat cannot liberate itself without "destroying all the inhuman conditions of life in contemporary society." (**The Holy Family**) In other words,

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