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SPARTACIST

NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY-MARCH 1964

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WITCH HUNT IN THE SWP

The National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party expelled five members of the party's left wing minority at a plenum in New York City at the end of December. The five expelled supporters of the SWP's Revolutionary Tendency are Shane Mage, James Robertson, Geoffrey White, Laurence Ireland, and Lynne Harper. The Party Political Committee had suspended them two months earlier on the grounds that a Control Commission investigation had revealed that Robertson, Ireland, and Harper had expressed "disloyal" written opinions privately within their own tendency. The accused had written that the SWP had ceased to be a revolutionary party and had become centrist, and that an irreconcilable struggle within the framework of party discipline was therefore required against the Majority line and leadership. Mage and White were accused of having also been leaders in a tendency which held or permitted such views. Upon refusing to recant or disassociate themselves from one another, all five were summarily expelled.

Disciplined Acceptance

These expulsions mark a new phase in the thirty-five year history of Trotskyism in the United States. The degeneration of the party in recent years has reached such a point that for the first time in the entire experience of the SWP the leadership has used expulsions to rid the party of an internal opposition which met the Bolshevik conditions for party membership—disciplined acceptance of the policies imposed by the Majority.

Wide Support

Within the party *all* oppositional tendencies, dissidents, and critics, totaling more than a quarter of the membership, rallied to the defense of the expelled comrades following the preliminary suspensions. Among

those opposing and protesting the PC action were: Myra Tanner Weiss, several times the party's vice-presidential candidate; Arne Swabeck, a founding leader of American Trotskyism, together with many members of his tendency across the country; prominent party members such as Jack Wright of Seattle and Wendell Phillips from Southern California; the Wohlforth-Phillips grouping; several party branches including New Haven and Seattle.

Control Commission

Two strong reactions felt in the party are responsible for this outpouring of support from the most diverse and politically antagonistic sections of the party. One response was *indignation* at the exclusion of party comrades accused of having "disloyal attitudes." Intensifying this feeling was widespread disgust with the means which were, and must be, used in such political witch hunting. The party leaders refused to grant even the formality of a trial. The expulsions took place following a sordid investigation led by Control Commission member Anna Chester, wife of a PC majority member and notorious in her own right for her fanatical belief in the party leadership. The investigators first demanded access to private minority draft documents and correspondence. Under extreme protest RT supporters complied with these demands. Apparently unsatisfied with the results, the Control Commission proceeded to call in young and new comrades for tape-recorded interrogation sessions in the rooms of the party national office. The youth were asked to admit their own and their tendency's indiscipline, disloyalty, and Menshevism. Failing to win such admissions, the investigators then turned to questioning which was clumsily designed to entrap the young comrades into involuntary confessions of guilt!

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SPARTACIST

—published bimonthly by supporters of the Revolutionary Tendency expelled from the Socialist Workers Party.

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EDITORIAL NOTES

In Lieu of a General Policy Statement:

We are publishing the SPARTACIST because our expulsion from the Socialist Workers Party cuts off our expression of views within that party. We will continue to print a public organ pending readmission to the SWP and resumption of our proper role within it.

We aim to summarize our viewpoint as a brief declaration of "Where We Stand" in an early issue of the SPARTACIST. In the meantime, while *this* issue is intended to deal specifically with the SWP, its whole content speaks for us as well in a more general way.

We intend our periodical to be a propagandist publication directed toward the same two aims which we have hitherto pursued exclusively within the confines of SWP membership. We want to *influence* such radical and leftward moving groups or sections as aspire to Marxist clarity and direction. We frankly state in advance that the purpose of our action is to further a revolutionary regroupment of forces within this country such that a Leninist vanguard party of the working class will emerge. Secondly, we want to win individual supporters for our viewpoint from among radical youth, militants in the civil rights struggle, and seek to create modest nuclei within key sections of the working class. Critical to our success will be the ability of our comrades to both be involved as revolutionists in the social struggles of our times and to undertake effective inquiry into the pressing theoretical and political issues posed for Marxists today.

Our Name:

We chose the title, SPARTACIST, after the name, Spartakusbund, taken by the German revolutionary left wing led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht during the First World War. The German Spartacists waged a brave struggle against their imperialist rulers in wartime and, moreover, had to fight every step of the way in opposition to the degenerate, patriotic Majority social democrats of their time.

(Continued Next Column)

In the United States the Trotskyist youth in the early 1930's called their paper *Young Spartacus*. It was an outstanding journalistic fusion of an advocate of revolutionary ideas with a guide to action. We aspire to do no more today than serve as well in honor of the name we have chosen for our endeavor to express the viewpoint of consistent *Trotskyism*, the authentic revolutionary Marxism of our epoch.

And About the SWP:

Any tendency to surrender to a sense of grievance at the outrages committed by the party leadership must be resolutely opposed. Certainly the principal authors of the witch hunt in the party have drawn a hard line between themselves and elementary norms of revolutionary socialist practice. While these individuals can likely be written off, this is by no means the case for the bulk of the party's ranks who have shown rather the lesser and more reversible weakness of insensitivity to blows against party democracy and acquiescence to misleaders.

Above all, a political response is required. The expulsions cut across necessary clarification of what has underlain all the inner-party disputes of recent years: *i.e.*, can the struggle for socialism be successfully waged today with the ostensible revolutionary Marxists acting as auxiliaries to others? Or does the Trotskyists' strategic aim necessarily continue to center on themselves winning the leadership of the working class? This issue still has to be concretely and decisively met in the SWP. This is but the contemporary formulation of an old question among socialists. At bottom it resolves into the basic division—reform or revolution! The presently unresolved quality to the question is shown subjectively in the party by the contradiction in the consciousness of most members. They still think of themselves as Trotskyists, while following revisionist leaders ever further from Marxism! We aim to allow no organizational measures of petty bureaucrats to stand in the way of the coming polarization along principled lines in the centrist SWP. For we know full well that many who today place their factional allegiance with the Majority leadership, will tomorrow find themselves in the revolutionary left wing.

We Urge:

To all supporters of our tendency, friends and sympathizers, and defenders of our rights in the ranks of the SWP, we urge you to remain resolute in the face of the expulsions. Support us in our efforts to gain readmission to the party. Abide by party discipline and persist in upholding your views. In short, stay in and fight in the SWP!

We, for our part, intend to exhaust all recourses to reverse the expulsions. More—we will not be content to merely subject the line and actions of the party to necessary criticism through the pages of the SPARTACIST and elsewhere. It is equally our responsibility to support the public actions of the SWP in all principled ways. In particular we declare our intention to participate fully in the work of the party's 1964 presidential campaign.

... WITCH HUNT

(Continued from Page 1)

The second major basis for the rallying to the defense of the Revolutionary Tendency was *fear* of the precedent set by such expulsions. The exclusions came as a climax to a mounting series of provocations and repressions over the past several years against all opponents of what has now become the Dobbs regime. The blow against the RT was broadly and clearly directed against the right of any organized group, other than the Majority faction, to continued existence outside convention periods. Thus all oppositional elements know they are threatened with similar treatment.

The political logic behind the expulsions is a simple extension of the proposition that the Majority's loss of a revolutionary working-class perspective makes party democracy *superfluous* in its view. Combining this outlook with the presence of very widespread internal opposition, the Majority has found that the apparent luxury of democratic practice, above all the right to factions, becomes *intolerable*. Today in facing its internal critics, the Dobbs leadership openly advances the slogan, "The Majority Is the Party!"

POLITICAL BASIS

The Revolutionary Tendency was formed initially as a party minority in 1961 in response to the Majority's line on the Cuban Question. The Majority went beyond even uncritical endorsement of the Castro government; the party leadership ended up putting the Cuban Revolution on a par with the Russian October as an historic model for emulation.

The Minority charged that this response was an impressionistic abdication from fundamental Leninist and Trotskyist positions on several counts. The Majority made a mockery of the Permanent Revolution by doing away with its most essential aspect — the struggle to win workers' power in order to consummate colonial revolution. The Majority ripped the heart from our understanding of proletarian democracy as a vital condition for opening the road to socialism. The Majority was necessarily led to deny the need for a conscious vanguard party of the working class. Similarly, by degrading the international struggle for socialism to separate, autonomous national incidents, the Majority emasculated the struggle to build the world party of the socialist revolution, the *Fourth International*.

The Revolutionary Tendency counterposed to the specific SWP Majority Cuban line a viewpoint which evolved into the position that Cuba had become a *deformed workers' state*, similar to the outcome of the Yugoslav and Chinese revolutions.

Following the revision of Marxism over Cuba, the Majority leaders proceeded openly to deepen and extend their new vision of reality. Thus Ben Bella in Algeria was discovered to be laying down the foundations of agricultural socialism. And toward the bureaucratic regimes of the Soviet bloc all sorts of softening and accommodation took place. As a further step, the SWP brought about an international regroupment of forces, breaking its ten-year association with the revolutionary Marxists of the *International Committee of the Fourth International*, to ally with the Pabloists who had for years been press agents for the more radical bureaucratic strata within the working class and colonial liberation movements.

As the SWP became more deeply enmeshed vicariously in the alien aspirations of impressively larger movements, new deterioration appeared. The party itself became caught up in an interrelated pattern of gross abstention from struggle in its own right, together with a sectarian hostility toward genuinely leftward moving, and therefore potentially competitive, forces.

The year 1963 found the SWP demonstrating the most central surrender of all—loss of confidence in its own earlier conception and role in the coming American Revolution. The party seized upon the growth of the Black Muslims as a substitute for the aim of building in the United States a unified vanguard party based upon Leninist program, not upon color. Instead, the Majority's National Convention resolution projected the schema of an All Black Movement for Freedom Now paralleling the separate, white, working-class, SWP-led struggle for socialism. The resolution suggested hopefully that the two movements might one day collaborate through cementing a working unity between their two vanguards. For the SWP to aim to be no more than a white party in the United States is simply to write off any revolutionary perspective at all. L. D. Trotsky noted in 1939 that:

"If it happens that we in the SWP are not able to find the road to this stratum [the Negroes], then we are not worthy at all. The permanent revolution and all the rest would be only a lie."

In November, 1963, the Dobbs leadership of the party made the first big, clear transition from revisionist accommodation towards petty bourgeois formations to old-fashioned reformist surrender to "one's own" ruling class in a moment of crisis. As shown at length elsewhere in this issue of the SPARTACIST, the response of the SWP leadership to the Kennedy Assassination was not different in kind from

NEW EXPULSION!

Roger Abrams, supporter of the Revolutionary Tendency, was expelled from the Socialist Workers Party, February 15, by the New York City branch in a vote of 28 to 11. Comrade Abrams, a 23-year-old student, had participated in a hastily called picket line on January 22 at Columbia University protesting the awarding of an honorary degree to the Greek Queen Frederika. Abrams figured prominently in TV coverage of the demonstration when he was led away by guards who objected to his sign, "Free Greek Political Prisoners!"

Comrade Abrams was charged by the SWP Majority with joining the picket line "without prior consultation or approval of the branch or branch leadership." When Abrams stated that he was previously unaware of this new policy and that he would abide by it, he was also accused of internal disloyalty and expelled.

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that of the American Communist and Socialist Parties. The SWP plenum which endorsed this action of the central party leaders also expelled us.

RESCIND THE SUSPENSIONS!

(Statement to the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party by the five then suspended supporters of the Revolutionary Tendency, Dec. 10, 1963.)

I.

Introduction: The Political Committee Action Against Us

1. On August 2, 1963, the Political Committee adopted a motion which took up some old accusations of Wohlforth and Philips, paraphrasing them in summary form as (1) "Hostile Attitude toward the Party," (2) "Double Recruiting," and (3) "Split Perspective." The PC motion concluded by instructing the Control Commission to look "into possible violations of the statutes of the party, especially involving Robertson, Ireland, and Harper." On October 24, after some months of purported investigation the CC reported, exclusively on the basis of written opinions offered by Robertson, Ireland, and Harper internally within their own tendency, that: "In these statements by the Robertson-Mage-White minority their hostile and disloyal attitude toward the party is clearly manifested." The PC, in its motion of November 1, found it necessary to expand on the CC's sole conclusion by presenting lurid accusations created out of thin air and giving as sole source "as indicated by the Control Commission's report." The PC went on to suspend from party membership comrades Harper, Ireland, Mage, Robertson, and White. Moreover, the suspensions were without specified time limit and were to be with "the same force and effect" as expulsion during the period of suspension.

2. Thus for the first time in the history of the SWP a leadership has taken the punitive action of exclusion from the party of minority supporters on the basis of opinions! This action is rendered even more grave and unprecedented by the fact that the views for which punishment was inflicted were themselves nothing more than personal contributions to a private discussion within a minority tendency!

II.

Background: Recent Trends in the Party

3. Through the period of the last two party conventions (1961, 1963), the party has witnessed a systematic and general attrition of representation on the NC of all minority factions or tendencies, dissidents, and other crit-

ics. Thus, for example, Bert Deck, the then managing editor of the *International Socialist Review* and associate of Murry Weiss was removed from the NC after he offered a slight modification to the PC line on the Cuban Question for the 1961 convention. In the same period there has been a systematic denial, compounded by calculatedly hysterical Majority hostility, of the rights of the party membership in branches—above all in the largest branch, New York—to express opinions, offer recommendations to leading bodies, or even to discuss new developments or the actions and decisions of the party leadership.

4. A year ago the Majority made an assault on the very right of our minority, and by implication any minority, to exist within the party. A provocative attempt was made by Majority supporters to intrude into a private Minority gathering. As the upshot of our informal protest to party authorities, it was revealed that the incident had taken place at the instigation and under the direction of a Majority PC member. The leadership white-washed this action by adopting a condemnatory motion which accused the Minority of being the guilty party for having held such a private tendency meeting! These events are fully detailed in our document "For the Right of Organized Tendencies to Exist within the Party!"

5. In connection with the last party convention, the Majority made severe incursions upon party democracy and upon our party rights:

a) The National Secretary, Dobbs, without offering any reason, refused to print in the bulletin material on the international question which we deemed important to present to the party. In the same pre-convention discussion period the National Secretary likewise deferred printing documentary material on the youth question. Later an opportune legal problem presented itself as an excuse for refusal. A key document in this collection has been kept from the movement since September, 1961, by the PC.

b) At the convention itself the Majority refused to give any representation on the National Committee to our minority despite a sufficient numerical as well as clear cut political basis for such representation. Thus the Majority has not only deprived us of our proper voice within the party, but it has also put into question the legitimate authority of the leading party

bodies, the NC and PC, by electing them on a restricted basis.

c) In reporting the convention to the public, the *Militant* article, after identifying James Robertson and Shane Mage among others by name, stated that "They charged that . . . the leadership of the SWP were in the process of abandoning Marxism." This cynical abuse of control of the public press by the Majority to identify and isolate inner-party opponents is indeed an abandonment of the method of controversy among Marxists.

6. In a continuous series of incidents over the past two years, the Majority has abused its leading position in the party to hinder, harass, and immobilize supporters of our tendency. The evident general aim of the Majority has been to make as the penalty for individual comrades becoming oppositionists the paralysis of any political role, either within the party or in broader outside movements. Thus there has accumulated a seemingly endless list of all-too-legitimate grievances on this score. Perhaps the most outrageous and flagrant incident of harassment was that against Comrade Shirley in removing her from Southern SNCC work. Most common has been the regular, rarely overridden refusal to accept into membership contacts brought to the party by the minority. Yet throughout the past several years, and whatever the provocation, our tendency has always counselled and insisted that its supporters abide in a disciplined way by the decisions the Majority imposed upon the party.

7. The foregoing sections are intended only to sketch the immediately relevant portion of the party's organizational side in the past period. We do not suggest that these are the main characteristics of the party's evolution, even of the organizational aspect. Rather what is described is that part of the party's face shown to the party's minorities, particularly to our own tendency. At the same time as the comrades of the Revolutionary Tendency have responded in a disciplined fashion to developments within the party, we have not failed to form and offer opinions among ourselves and to the whole party as to the meaning, implications, and direction of the course the party has been pursuing in regards to both political revisionism and organizational degeneration. The determination of the more general processes at work in shaping the party was ex-

actly the subject under hot discussion in the tendency when the documents were drafted over which the Majority now raises a scandal in its desire to exclude us from the party. See, for example, Robertson and Ireland's "The Centrism of the SWP and The Tasks of the Minority" (September 6, 1962), and also the earlier basic tendency statement, "In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective" (in 1962 SWP Bulletin No. 4).

Suffice it to say that the most salient features of the party's overall motion in the last period have been as follows:

a) In general political approach the party has sought after substitutes for a revolutionary working class perspective—notably the surrender of all Marxist responsibility toward the Cuban Revolution through abasement as an uncritical apologist for the Castro regime; repeating this process over Ben Bella's Algeria; negotiating an alliance of convenience and mutual amnesty with fellow Pabloists internationally ("reunification of the F.I."); and most lately, within the United States, in a will-o'-the-wisp chase after Black Nationalism.

b) Yet while the party Majority has eagerly given itself over to enthusiasm for the goals of alien movements, it has resolutely avoided such opportunities as would further involvement and struggle in the party's own right. Thus actual civil rights work, North or South; a serious approach to Progressive Labor or participation in the travel to Cuba committee and its trip; any modest effort at rebuilding the party's contact with the workers, such as plant press sales or Hazard miners work, have all either come at the Minorities' urgings, but vastly too little and too late, or have been refused outright. The proper word for such conduct is abstentionism.

c) It was in the party leadership's instant, instinctive responses in the moments of great crisis or apparent peril—the Cuban missile crisis last year and the Kennedy assassination this year—that the party's utter loss of a revolutionary compass has been most decisively shown. (See our statement "Declaration on the Cuban Crisis," later printed in 1963 SWP Bulletin No. 18.)

d) Within the party the shift in equilibrium of forces in the central party leadership through the retirement of Cannon and the elimination of Weiss has intensified the drive by the Dobbs regime to solve all questions by brute organizational force.

As a result of the totality of these underlying considerations the Majority leadership has been driven now to seek the exclusion of our tendency from the party. In essence this is a

"punishment" of us for our very tenacity in remaining in the party despite its degeneration and for our intransigence in struggling against that degeneration.

III.

The Accusations Against Us

8. In view of the material already written, listed below, there is by this time little that need be added as regards the vacuity, irrelevance, or downright falseness of the accusations of statutory violations made against our tendency or its individual supporters.

The party leadership has officially presented its case against our tendency in the following materials: a) letter of National Secretary Dobbs to James Robertson, July 5, 1963; b) PC motion of August 2, 1963, "On the Robertson-Ireland-Harper Case"; c) "Report of Control Commission on the Robertson Case," October 24, 1963; d) PC motion of November 1, 1963. The following replies and refutations have been offered by individual tendency supporters: a) letter of Robertson to Dobbs, July 9, 1963; b) letter of Geoffrey White to the PC, November 5, 1963; c) letter of Laurence Ireland to Dobbs, November 8, 1963; d) letter of Shane Mage to the PC, November 10, 1963; and e) letter of Lynne Harper to the NC, November 18, 1963. We urge the National Committee members to familiarize themselves with this correspondence.

9. The accusations of our indiscipline were originally put before the party by the Wohlforth-Philips "Re-organized Minority Tendency" in appendices to their document, "Party and Class" (1963 SWP Bulletin No. 27). We shortly replied with our "Discipline and Truth" (in SWP Bulletin No. 30). In our reply we stated that "Party and Class" lied, and we sought to show why its authors had been led into such action. With documents written earlier within the tendency, which we appended to our reply, we proved that we had been the object of false accusations. Moreover, to even the most superficial observer there is an insoluble contradiction in Wohlforth and Philips' accusations against us. If the charges were true that we were some kind of split-crazed wreckers, then Wohlforth-Philips should have taken far more decisive and prompt action than their act of waiting a year after first revealing within the then common tendency such heinous crimes, then simply repeating the revelations to the party as a whole. But if the charges were not true, they should never have been made in the first place. Instead they went ahead to publicize their accusations and then deprecated them by declaring them to be no valid basis for organizational action against us by the party leader-

ship!

Nonetheless, it is to the credit of the Wohlforth-Philips group that they have now come forward, first, in disassociating themselves from their earlier accusation that we had a split orientation. This had been the key point in all of Wohlforth's other charges. Secondly, it is to their credit that they oppose organizational action against us, thereby implicitly declaring that their own old accusations had been without real, actionable substance, but were rather their own interpretations.

10. It would be an enormous and pointless task to seek to pin down and dispose of very many of the irrelevances or wild distortions in the charges which the PC and CC have levelled against us: e.g., the abusive nonsense about "double" recruitment or the childishness of proposing to expell us because we are alleged to have a "split perspective." Indeed the core of the case against us collapses immediately upon examination because it depends upon one false equation, to wit: party members, even if organizationally loyal and disciplined (as we are), can be "really" loyal *only if*, in the course of carrying out party decisions, they agree with the leadership.

No matter from what side the Dobbsian interpretations given in the PC and CC material are approached, it

"HOSTILE AND DISLOYAL ATTITUDE!"

"After a serious warning was given to the anti-Party elements by the Fourth Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Party, Kao Kang not only did not admit his guilt to the Party, but committed suicide as an ultimate expression of his betrayal of the Party."

—Resolution on the Anti-Party Bloc of Kao Kang and Jao Shu-Shih Passed by the National Conference of the Communist Party of China, March 31, 1955.

always turns out that to the central leaders, "loyalty" to the party means loyalty to the leaders. Because our acceptance of discipline justifies and is justified by our inner-party struggle against the leadership policies, our carrying out of party decisions is dismissed as "cynical" and presumably then defective because it lacks sincerity. Thus, many of the "quotations," even in their selected and trimmed form, offered as the views of tendency supporters can have as their only purpose making the point that we don't believe in or agree with the party's changing policies and direction of recent years, nor do we respect the initiators and directors of those changes, either.

(Continued Next Page)

... RESCIND

It is elementary, but no longer obvious in the SWP, to note that discipline has meaning especially when there is disagreement. Democratic centralism is most fully called upon to regulate differences and mobilize the entire party for carrying out arrived-at decisions when there are sharp and deep-going divisions. To exclude from the party those who have sharp and deep differences, those who believe that the policies and course of the Majority leadership are part of a profound degeneration, is to amply prove the existence of that degeneration.

11. For our part, we have and do declare that our political loyalty lies exclusively with the Trotskyist program. It is as a derivative of this prime consideration that our tendency has always sought to abide fully by the discipline of the party, despite the rapidly advancing disease of degeneration in the party. It is in this sense and no other that the much-quoted phrase in the Robertson-Ireland document was advanced about avoiding "mistaken concepts of loyalty to a diseased shell." We would be peculiar people indeed should we find our loyalty resting with the cancer growing within the party! This should have been evident to any honest reader of the materials in question, for otherwise many other statements in these inner-tendency documents would be in flat contradiction and would reduce the entire set of opinions to a meaningless jumble. Notable in this connection is the statement in Comrade Harper's draft, "Orientation of the Party Minority in Youth Work" that "... we must act as disciplined SWP members at all times. ..." Again, in Comrade Ireland's "What the Discussion is Really About," is found: "But since our perspective is one of remaining in the SWP, we can hardly afford to violate 'party discipline or party statutes.'" (Incidentally, this latter document had been turned over to the Control Commission by Comrade Ireland to remove any possible ambiguities about his opinions on actionable subjects. However, the CC in its "Report ..." gave no acknowledgement of the receipt or very existence of this document, much less any mention of its contents!) Finally, to put this whole point another way, if the SWP has become centrist in character as we stated in our main resolution to the last party convention, "Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International" (that "... the centrist tendency is also prevalent among certain groups which originally opposed the Pablo faction"), then some organizational conclusions reasonably follow that justify our acting as disciplined

party members despite the party's centrist politics. Further, it necessarily follows that such a conclusion is no more or less incompatible with party membership than is holding the political analysis which led to it.

IV.

What Our Expulsion Would Mean for the Party

12. It may be that sections of the National Committee have not thought through the international implications of expelling our tendency from the SWP. Within the limitations of the Voorhis Act, the American party has been a prime mover in the recent reunification with the Pabloist forces of the International Secretariat. In an effort to draw into the unity as many of the scattered and divided groupings as possible, big promises were made to those opposed to the basis of the unification to convince them to come along anyhow. For example Dobbs and Hansen wrote in the article "Reunification of the Fourth International" (Fall, 1963, *International Socialist Review*) as follows:

"Groupings with much deeper differences than opposing views over who was right in a past dispute can coexist and collaborate in the same revolutionary-socialist organization under the rules of democratic centralism." ... and

"The course now being followed by Healy and Posadas and their followers is much to be regretted. Under the democratic centralism which governs the Fourth International, they could have maintained their political views within the organization and sought to win a majority."

Even more recently the United Secretariat of the Fourth International itself declared in its statement of November 18, 1963, in reply to the Healy-Lambert grouping, that:

"The fact remains, however, that they [British and French 'International Committee' sections] have demonstratively refused to unite in a common organization in which they would be in a minority. They demonstratively refused to accept the majority decision of the International Committee forces on reunification. They demonstratively refused in advance to abide by majority decision of the world Trotskyist movement on reunification." ... and

"As for our position, we stand as before for reunification—on the basis of the principled program adopted at the Reunification Congress—of all forces that consider themselves to be revolutionary socialists."

13. Our tendency opposed the projected unity move. Indeed the tendency itself was born in opposition to the political course which underlay the

projected unification. We stated our opposition and proposed an entirely different political basis for reunifying the world movement in our 1963 draft international resolution, "Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International." We also made it crystal clear in advance that should the pro-Pabloist unification win a majority and go into effect, then the dissident and opposing minority internationally who shared our general outlook should go through the experience of the falsely-based unity attempt. We stated our willingness "demonstratively" to accept the reunification in the entire concluding section of our recent international resolution which states:

"(19) 'Reunification' of the Trotskyist movement on the centrist basis of Pabloism in any of its variants would be a step away from, not toward, the genuine rebirth of the Fourth International. If, however, the majority of the presently existing Trotskyist groups insists on going through with such 'reunification,' the revolutionary tendency of the world movement should not turn its back on these cadres. On the contrary: it would be vitally necessary to go through this experience with them. The revolutionary tendency would enter a 'reunified' movement as a minority faction, with a perspective of winning a majority to the program of workers' democracy. The Fourth International will not be reborn through adaptation to Pabloite revisionism: only by political and theoretical struggle against all forms of centrism can the world party of the socialist revolution finally be established."

THE REASON WHY ...

"In the last analysis, comrades, the majority is the party. I'll tell you why."

Report by Farrell Dobbs to New York Local on Suspensions, November 7, 1963.

And we ourselves have more than fully met the conditions set forth by Dobbs-Hansen and by the United Secretariat. On top of abiding by discipline and accepting decisions, we have resisted abuse, disloyalty, calculated incitement, and outright provocation by the American leadership to force us to leave "voluntarily." Our tendency is therefore virtually unique in its ability to be the living test of the genuineness of the claimed democratic-centralist based and inclusive reunification. Several things will be clear should we be thrown out for holding opinions by no means more critical of the U.S. and international Pabloist leaderships than views held by others

who have been publicly and repeatedly invited to join in the unification. If we are excluded, then the *true* scope of the unity as an act of bad faith and deliberate fraud by its instigators will be definitely shown to all Trotskyists.

In a very practical and concrete way, the SWP-NC, by its action towards us at its December, 1963 Plenum, will go far in making final for this period both the shape of its own relations with the world movement as well as those of its international allies.

14. Are all sections of the National Committee prepared to take responsibility for the kind of developing internal life which our exclusion would formalize? We are by no means the only people in the party who believe that the SWP is degenerating apace or that the Dobbs regime is a disaster for the party. If these views become proscribed through the awful example of our expulsion, then such opinions would be driven into a fetid underground existence. Inevitably there would be a multiplication of the symptoms of organizational degeneracy—the flaring up of intensely hate-filled quarrels on the permitted secondary questions, cliquist plots, hysterical reactions by a leadership fighting dimly seen enemies. Such an atmosphere could only accelerate the rightward motion of the party's cadres and train the newer members in a caricature of Marxist party life.

These are some of the general considerations which have always kept the Trotskyists from proscribing opinions within the party, however obnoxious they may be to the leadership, or of expelling the holders of such views. Moreover, in the specific case before the NC, action against our tendency will not achieve its desired aim of turning the party into a docile machine. Others will continue as oppositionists within the party, and we will press our struggle from outside for readmission and for acceptance of our political viewpoint. It is within the province of the NC to prevent the demoralization and splintering of the party being brought on by a bureaucratically heavy-handed leadership.

15. For the NC to intervene to return the party to the revolutionary organizational practices of the past is to hold open the possibility of a revolutionary future for the SWP. If the NC permits the destruction of our party membership, it thereby acquiesces to the destruction of any chance for a reversal of the rightward, revisionist course of the party because those who opposed it would be excluded. By eliminating the content of party democracy, the degeneration of the party becomes irreversible. *This need not be!*

The SWP Majority reflects no im-

placable bureaucratic social layer. Its loss of a proletarian, revolutionary perspective, its eager search for substitutes and short cuts—idealizing the radical petty-bourgeois leaderships: the Castros, Ben Bellas, Malcolm X's—is not some inevitable automatic reflex based upon a position of privilege. Rather despair and ensuing degeneration have come through prolonged isolation, persecution, weakness, and aging.

The NC stands now at a last crossroads, at which it yet has open a conscious choice. Sections of the party leadership may already have gone much further in political revision or bureaucratic organizational practice than they ever intended. Although it would be idle to deny that it is very late, there is still a choice; the party does not *have to*, is not predestined to, continue down the road it is travelling at full speed. To repeat: to halt now is to leave open the way back so the party might again have a revolutionary future.

V.

Conclusion: Rescind the Suspensions!

16. In the normal course of seeking to rectify a mistake or an injustice within the party, one would normally turn readily to the NC as a resort, but under the extraordinary circumstances in which the central party leadership has plunged the party with the NC's acquiescence to date, we must offer a reservation. Presumably we are expected to appeal the disciplinary action of the PC against us. But how can we appeal against what has not been the finding of any trial; how can we appeal against accusations which have no relation to any alleged intended violation of the rules of democratic-centralism?

17. Despite the outrageous position in which we would be placed in appealing to the NC from a non-existent trial, we are prepared to send a representative to appear before the NC at its coming plenum to present our case and to answer questions the plenum may wish to put to us. Because of the grave defects in the present situation we do not turn to the NC with an *appeal* but with the demand: **RESTORE PARTY DEMOCRACY! RESCIND OUR SUSPENSIONS!**

18. Finally, we call upon all party members, branches, individual NC members, and political tendencies in the party to present letters and statements to the NC *calling for the lifting of the suspensions and restoration of our party rights as a vital interest of the party itself!*

WEISS RESOLUTION

(Presented by Myra Tanner Weiss to the SWP Political Committee, November 1, 1963.)

MOTION: To reject the report of one elected member of the Control Commission and a "representative" as unfair, factionally motivated, and a violation of the limited province of the Control Commission.

1. Comrades are elected to the Control Commission, not on the basis of their political maturity, to evaluate political positions and theories. They are elected as people who can be trusted to be fair, above temporary factional alignments, and scrupulously attentive to facts and their verification. This report presumes to examine and evaluate political documents, thoughts, opinions, and to characterize them as "loyal" or "disloyal." Such an undertaking is beyond the province of the Control Commission.

2. The "evidence" of "disloyalty" submitted in the report consists entirely of opinions, and no one in the history of the Socialist Workers Party has ever been punished for thoughts that differ with those of the majority—nor ever can be if we are to remain a revolutionary force.

3. It is impermissible for a ruling faction to use its majority power to pry into the written or oral work of an oppositional tendency. Any faction has the inalienable right to discuss freely and in private its point of view. Furthermore, the material presented by the report does not consist of faction decisions, but preliminary opinions expressed by individuals in the course of preparing for decisions.

To violate the right of a faction to its own internal life is to destroy the Leninist conception of organization. Democratic centralism not only places obligations on a minority to abide by the decisions of the majority, but it places obligations on the majority to protect the democratic right of organized dissension for minorities.

In an epoch which we have characterized as a crisis of leadership, in an era when socialism suffers from the monstrous tyranny of Stalinism, it is unthinkable for us to lower our own high standards of democratic procedures. The world revolution is united today in the struggle for socialist democracy. If we are not its champions in our own internal functioning, we have no right to occupy the revolutionary podium.

4. For two of the comrades cited for suspension by Comrade Dobbs, we are

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THE LEFT WING VIEWS THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION

The assassination of President Kennedy was an acid test of the class position of every left movement in the United States. Among the radical groups in America, a qualitative division may be perceived between those tendencies which turned resolutely to the working class for an independent alternative to bourgeois statesmanship, and those formations which joined their cries to the liberal threnody for the late president.

PROGRESSIVE LABOR

Nov. 27, 1963—"The assassination of President Kennedy, by a still unknown assailant, not only reflects the existence of serious political contradictions for the U.S. ruling class, but raises these contradictions to new heights. . . .

"While it is essential that revolutionaries evaluate all of the political aspects of the assassination, it is also necessary for revolutionaries to reject assassination as a conceivable form of political struggle. The killing of one man cannot alter the course of history. Only efforts by millions to change the particular political and economic system can be decisive. . . . Finally, assassination only tends to confuse the real issues that face the workers. It encourages the ruling class to step up the oppression of the people.

"Assassination and individual violence, however, is part and parcel of the Capitalist system. . . .

" . . . On several occasions our government has engineered or supported actual organized assassinations with great relish. The assassination of Patrice Lumumba was warmly welcomed by the Kennedy Administration. Furthermore, assassination has also been a way of eliminating friends who have outlived their usefulness to the Administration. Only weeks before the Kennedy assassination, the Administration (and many who now cry hypocritical tears for Kennedy) were laughing up their sleeves over the U.S.-inspired assassination of Diem and his brother in South Viet-Nam. . . .

"In the face of this continued ruthlessness and terror, the people and especially those who consider themselves fighters for socialism, should not be caught up in the whirl-wind of ruling class contradictions. The people should utilize every moment for pressing their demands. They should not wait for the Johnson Administration to resume the

offensive—as it will—against the people's fight for a better life. Johnson's record is part and parcel of the oppression of the ruling class—with a dash of Southern seasoning added for good measure.

"The People are still faced with racism, unemployment, poor housing and schooling, high rents and high-priced (or no) medical services. The People, if they are really to unite, should unite around programs dealing with their problems."

WORKERS WORLD

Nov. 25, 1963—"The United States of America came close to a fascist coup d'etat, and the establishment of a Right Wing, reactionary, totalitarian dictatorship.

"This is really the main and fundamental fact to emerge from the assassination of President Kennedy.

"That the coup d'etat did not actually come off can only be explained by the fact that the forces of political reaction, virulent racism and 'preventive war' militarism, had failed to coalesce at the critical moment and emerge with 'a man on horseback.'

"The trend to totalitarian dictatorship can only be reversed by the intervention of an ever larger mass of the millionfold working class movement, and of unity between black and white workers against the common oppressor."

(The Workers World deserves credit for reprinting excerpts from Fidel Castro's excellent statement on the assassination.)

RED FLAG

(British organ of the Posadas group, the Latin-American-based Trotskyist tendency.)

Jan., 1964—"The assassination of Kennedy is the result of a struggle between bandits. One faction has liquidated a member of the opposite faction.

"Within the heart of Yankee imperialism there are two tendencies. One tendency centers on what is called the Pentagon and is wrongly called 'right wing' (there is no left or right for capitalism but simply different positions in relation to the same policy) and the 'Kennedy' tendency. . . .

"Imperialism, the Kennedy tendency, tries to profit from the conservative interests of the Soviet bureaucracy to

prolong its own existence to the maximum.

"The so-called Pentagon section is aware of this situation and feels that the very time delay means a direct loss for its economic, social and ideological interests. That is the reason for the offensive that it has just carried out.

"The Pentagon killed Kennedy within the framework of a policy designed to launch the war by surprise at that

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. . . WEISS

(Continued from Page 7)

not even provided "disloyal" quotes, illegally obtained. Where is the evidence of their "disloyalty"? Association? Bourgeois law is at least formally more democratic.

5. Even with selected quotes of selected documents, the loyalty, not "disloyalty" of the minority tendency would be indicated. Surely these comrades know that the demand to see their internal faction discussion material is a violation of their democratic rights. Yet they show to a Commission member documents that member has no right to see. Will the repeated insistence of the minority comrades of intention to abide by the discipline of the party avail it nothing? If the majority is so anxious for a split, why not have the patience to wait for "subversive" thoughts to be translated into deeds?

6. If the minority surreptitiously recruits youth to the Party on the basis of its factional line, what is there to fear? Are we not confident enough of our point of view, and with full control of the public expression of it, to be certain that we can win the best to the majority? Since when did revolutionary Trotskyists have to resort to organization means to protect its liberating ideas? Are we afraid they will recruit so many that we shall no longer be the majority? That is unfortunately not very realistic; but if it were, we can hope that we have set a good example of how a majority should rule.

7. I propose that we apologize to the minority for the unwarranted investigation and express our desire to collaborate in comradely fashion in the future for the building of the Socialist Workers Party.

moment most convenient to itself."

From the publications of the three groups above, it can be seen that a basic class position was maintained during their discussions of the Kennedy assassination. A class line must not only continue to orient the working class against their class enemy, the bourgeoisie, but must provide a correct analysis for the workers in a period of confusion and consternation. The three groups above never lost sight of their ruling class enemy—nor did they hesitate to point this out to their readers.

There were exaggerations and mistakes, such as the Workers World's confusion between fascism and a coup d'état. Or the Progressive Labor group's referral to "our" government. And of course the Posadas tendency's conclusion that the Pentagon assassinated Kennedy can only be considered interesting speculation at this point.

These positions stand out in bold contrast to those periodicals and organizations whose "Socialism" and "Marxism" led them in the moment of panic to genuflect to the ruling class. Statements about "Loving (!) This Country (!)" and the like can only serve to confuse and misdirect socialist militants. Compare the following examples.

NEW AMERICA

Dec. 13, 1963—"I am writing this on the day of mourning under a profound sense of shock and loss and shame. We mourn a gallant President, sincerely interested in peace and freedom, who was growing in strength. . . .

"You will be reading this column after Thanksgiving Day, when we will be putting this day of mourning into perspective. For what can we Americans be thankful in this time of tragedy? We can be thankful for some enrichment of memory. We can be thankful for the general outpouring of grief and recognition of the shame at the atmosphere of hate in which the tragedy took place. We can give thanks for the orderly succession and the absence of bitter partisanship in President Johnson's accession to his high office."

—Norman Thomas

"The Socialist Party joins the entire nation in deeply mourning the tragic death of our President. The senseless and dastardly murder which took the life of John F. Kennedy was one of the greatest crimes and tragedies in the history of our country. To Mrs. Kennedy and the entire Kennedy family we extend our most sincere and heartfelt condolences."

Resolution of National Committee of The Socialist Party

THE WORKER

Nov. 26, 1963—"Nation in Mourning for Martyred Leader" (Banner front page headline.)

"We share—along with all other Americans—immeasurable grief at the monstrous and shocking assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

"We extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Kennedy, to his son and daughter, and to his entire family. . . .

"Although anguished in sorrow over the loss of the highest officer of our nation, the American people will not be panicked. They will rally around the constitution, defend its basic Democratic traditions and rights, and they will not be diverted from the determination that our nation shall trod the path of ever-expanding democracy, social progress and peace."

IN A MOMENT OF TRUTH . . .

"Let me then make clear as your President that I am determined upon our system's survival and success, regardless of the cost and regardless of the peril."

—Speech of President Kennedy to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 21, 1961. (Following the Bay of Pigs fiasco.)

THE MILITANT

Dec. 2, 1963—"If We Really Love This Country We Must Abjure Hatred" (Front page headline quoting Chief Justice Earl Warren as a "Voice of Sanity.")

"The American people have undergone one of the most traumatic experiences in its history. The staggering news that President Kennedy had been assassinated, followed so quickly by the unexplainable, televised murder of his alleged assassin in the Dallas city jail by a crony of the police, left Americans reeling with bewilderment and shock. A wave of apprehension ran through the world with the news of the Kennedy assassination as people of all lands attempted to decipher the cause and portent of the tragic event. . . .

"Before all others, it is the federal government's duty to block the attempt to use the Dallas tragedy for the staging of an even more devastating witch-hunt. Before all others, it is the duty of the federal government to furnish the people with a thorough-going analysis of the atmosphere of hate and violence which fostered that tragedy. Before all others, it is the federal government's duty effectively and fully to enforce the civil liberties of Americans of all political views, no matter how critical of those now dominant, and the civil liberties of all Americans, regardless of color. Only then can the cloud of violence and hate overhanging this country begin to be dispelled."

The Editors

"The Socialist Workers Party condemns the brutal assassination of President Kennedy as an inhuman, anti-

social and criminal act. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Kennedy and the children in their personal grief.

"The act springs from the atmosphere created by the inflammatory agitation and deeds of the racists and ultra-conservative forces. Political terrorism, like suppression of political freedom, violates the democratic rights of all Americans and can only strengthen the forces of reaction. Political differences within our society must be settled in an orderly manner by majority decision after free and open public debate in which all points of view are heard."

—Farrell Dobbs, National Secretary, Socialist Workers Party

And Now, A Breath of Fresh Air!

THE NEWSLETTER

(Organ of the Socialist Labour League, the British Trotskyists.)

Nov. 30, 1963—"This millionaire politician was destroyed by the very contradictions which he thought he could overcome smoothly and peacefully.

"Whether or not we ever learn the truth about the killings in Dallas, Texas, Kennedy's death was without doubt the result of angonising conflict within the American ruling class.

"On the issues of Negro integration and foreign and defense policy, Kennedy's programme, reflecting the needs of one section of US big business, aroused sharp hostility from powerful economic and political groups.

"The role of the Texas state authorities makes this very clear. If Oswald was framed, and this seems quite probable, the job was organized at a high level in the state machine. . . .

"We do not mourn John F. Kennedy.

"As international socialists we see him as the world leader of the class enemy.

"If he was far-sighted, it was in the interests of the continuation of capitalist exploitation everywhere."

—John Crawford

Dec. 7, 1963—"Marxists and the Kennedy Assassination" (Headline, page two.)

"The assassination of President Kennedy has given rise to a more than usual round of hysteria, tear-jerking and praise-mongering by the literary and political representatives of the middle class.

"Reading some of the articles in the so-called socialist and liberal press about his life, one might be forgiven for thinking that Kennedy stood for the freedom of the Negro people and was, in fact, a socialist in all but name.

"Thus do the hirelings of international capital endeavor to whitewash the most reactionary imperialist power in the world in its hour of crisis.

"Kennedy was, of course, a most able

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... KENNEDY

representative of his class. Everything that he did had but one objective, to strengthen American imperialism. . . .

"When he spoke about Negro rights, he was merely using high-sounding liberal phraseology so that he could all the better, on behalf of his class, continue to enslave the Negro people.

"Marxists express no sympathy whatsoever over Kennedy's death.

"We do not condone the act of individual terror responsible for his death, not because we are squeamish or humanitarian about how it was done, but because individual terror is no substitute for the construction of the revolutionary party.

Disorganises

"Terrorism is a weapon which in fact disorganises and leaves the working class leaderless. It creates the impression that the removal of prominent capitalist politicians and statesmen can solve the problems of the working class.

"But for every tyrant shot, there is another ready to take his place. Only the overthrow of the capitalist system in the United States and its replacement by working-class power and socialism can solve the problems of the American working-class whites and Negroes.

"Such a task cannot be accomplished by terrorists like Lee Oswald. The answer lies not with them, but through the preparation and building of a revolutionary party which, through mass action, will take the power. . . .

"The taking of power by the revolutionary party is not without terror. The ruling class will not hesitate to terrorise the working class, the Negro and colonial peoples. . . .

"The sympathy of Marxists, while not agreeing with the method of Oswald, must be given to the millions of Oswalds, black and white, who have been driven into pauperism by capitalism. The task of the American Marxist movement is to direct its attention towards these people, and not towards the sending of messages of sympathy to Mrs. Kennedy.

Fatal

"When Lee Oswald fired the fatal shot, he did something more than assassinate a president.

"He also destroyed utterly and completely the lie that the Socialist Workers Party of the United States is a Trotskyist party and that it continues the traditions for which it was founded in the struggle to build the Fourth International.

"*The Militant*, weekly organ of the SWP which, according to its masthead, is 'published in the interests of the

working people,' carried this news item in its issue of Monday, December 2, headed 'Socialist Leader Denounces Murder of the President':

(Here follows the statement of Farrell Dobbs which is reprinted above.)

"This nauseating report repudiates every principle that Trotsky and the Bolshevik Party fought for. It is a report written by cowardly liberals, whose eyes are turned solely in the direction of the American middle class.

"We extend," says Farrell Dobbs, 'our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Kennedy.'

"Indeed! And who is Mrs. Kennedy?

Reactionary

"She is the daughter of a Wall Street millionaire, and was the wife of the leader of the most reactionary imperialist power on earth. Marxists can have no sympathy whatsoever with Mrs. Kennedy and her class.

"Political differences within our society must be settled in an orderly manner," says Dobbs.

"Indeed! Tell that to the Negroes of Birmingham, Alabama, and the miners of Kentucky. Tell that to the millions of colonial people in struggle against imperialism.

"The settlement of class issues will not take place in an orderly manner, but in a violent way, because the ruling class will never give up its power peacefully. To the millions of working people in struggle against imperialism all over the world, Dobbs is just one more American liberal, who talks the language of 'order' so as to mask the brutality of his own imperialist government.

"How Trotsky would have loathed this statement of the leader of the Socialist Workers Party. He would have flayed its author alive in every language he could muster. This is cringing bootlicking of the American petty-bourgeois by a man who claims to be a Marxist!

Attack

"Dobbs sends his condolences to 'Mrs. Kennedy and the children,' but not a word about Mrs. Oswald, a poor Russian woman whose children and herself will be singled out for attack wherever she goes.

"Instead of taking up the cudgels on behalf of the poor in the United States, Dobbs turns his eyes to the representatives of the rich and mighty.

"There was, of course, a distinct possibility that anti-labour witch-hunters would utilise the Kennedy assassination in order to attack the left, but such an attack could not be answered by sending condolences to Mrs. Kennedy. The answer to any witch-hunt is to explain the class issues involved in the assassination, which can only be

done by a thoroughgoing exposure of Kennedy's role.

Betrayed

"Farrell Dobbs does not look to the working class as his only real ally in the fight against the witch-hunt. He looks in the opposite direction, towards the ruling class. On this question, as on all others, Dobbs has betrayed the Marxist movement. . . .

"His political degeneration is a warning to Marxists everywhere. It follows closely on the heels of the so-called 'reunification' with the Pabloites, who supported the brutal assassination by the hired thugs of the FLN of the Algerian trade union leaders in Paris in 1957 and 1958.

"This unification was an alliance of renegades from Trotskyism to turn from the working class to the radical do-gooders whose sole aim is to whitewash imperialism.

"We look forward to any news as to whether or not James P. Cannon, founder of the American Trotskyist movement, was prepared to sign the message of condolence to Mrs. Kennedy."

—Gerry Healy, National Secretary
Socialist Labour League

The acid test of any organization presenting itself as socialist takes place in periods of revolutionary opportunity or crisis. All such organizations were tested in their ability to maintain their principled positions at the time of the Kennedy assassination. To those for whom the concept of Trotskyism is synonymous with firm class positions under the most adverse conditions, the statement of Farrell Dobbs and the entire edition of the Militant on the Kennedy assassination came as a profound shock. At a calmer and more reflective moment, even the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party themselves must have been chagrined and surprised at their lack of stamina.

It is, of course, true that it is a perfectly principled tactic to carefully avoid the use of provocative phrases when the legal organizational existence, and possibly the lives, of revolutionaries are at stake. However, the words of Dobbs and the Militant were not those of a revolutionary Socialist, but rather of Social Democrats and bourgeois liberals, and richly merited the attacks of Gerry Healy and the Socialist Labour League.

The Revolutionary Tendency has repeatedly pointed out the attempt to convert the SWP into an appendage of petty-bourgeois radical formations. The abandonment of the concept that the working class and its vanguard must lead the masses, evidently and inevitably leads, at a moment of crisis, to the abandonment of the essence of all revolutionary working-class positions.

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... REBIRTH

bureaucrats play a reactionary role, the Marxists must oppose them immediately and openly. The behavior of the centrist tendency around the Belgian journal *La Gauche* in withdrawing during the general strike the correct slogan of a march on Brussels, in order to avoid a break with Renard, is the opposite of a Marxist attitude toward the labor bureaucracy.

8. The *objective* prospects for development of the Trotskyist movement in Europe are extremely bright. Large numbers of the best young militants in all countries, rejecting the cynical and careerist routinism of the Stalinist and Social-Democratic bureaucrats, are earnestly searching for a *socialist* perspective. They can be won to a movement capable of convincing them, practically and theoretically, that it offers such a perspective. The structural changes stemming from European integration pose the issues of workers' democracy and of the independence of the political and economic organs of the working class as the alternative to state control of the labor movement—and impel the working class into increasingly significant class battles. If, under these objective conditions, the West European Trotskyists fail to grow at a rapid rate it will be because they themselves have adopted the revisionist stance of a satellite of the labor leadership as opposed to a perspective of struggle around the program of workers' democracy.



SOVIET BLOC

9. Since the Second World War, the countries of Eastern Europe have been developing into modern industrial states. As the proletariat of the deformed workers' states increases in numbers and raises its living standards and cultural level, so grows the irrepressible conflict between the working class and the totalitarian Stalinist bureaucracy. Despite the defeat of the Hungarian workers' revolution, the Soviet-bloc proletariat has won significant reforms, substantially widening its latitude of thought and action. These reforms, however, do not signify a "process of reform" or "destalinization process": they were yielded only grudgingly by the unreformable bureaucracy, are under perpetual attack by the faction of "Stalin's heirs," and remain in jeopardy as long as Stalinist bureaucratic rule prevails. These concessions are historically significant only to the extent that they help the proletariat to prepare for the overthrow of the bureaucracy. Real destalinization can be accomplished only by the political revolution.

10. A new revolutionary leadership is emerging among the proletarian youth of the Soviet bloc. Inspired by twin sources—the inextinguishable Leninist tradition and the direct and tangible needs of their class—the new generation is formulating and implementing in struggle the program of workers' democracy. Notable in this regard is the point made recently by a long-time participant in Soviet student life. Regarding the fundamental character to much of the widespread opposition among Russian youth, it was

stated, "Because he is a Marxist-Leninist, the Soviet student is much more radically dissatisfied than if he were an Anglo-Saxon pragmatist." (David Burg to *The New York Times*.) The Trotskyists, lineal continuers of the earlier stage, have an indispensable contribution to make to this struggle: the concept of the international party and of a transitional program required to carry through the political revolution. Assistance to the development of a revolutionary leadership in the Soviet bloc through personal and ideological contact is a primary practical activity for any international leadership worthy of the name.



COLONIAL REVOLUTION

11. The programmatic significance of workers' democracy is greatest in the backward, formerly colonial, areas of the world: it is precisely in this sector that the program of workers' democracy provides the clearest possible line of demarcation between revolutionary and revisionist tendencies. In all of these countries the struggle for bourgeois democratic rights (freedom of speech, right to organize and strike, free elections) is of great importance to the working class because it lays the basis for the advanced struggle for proletarian democracy and workers' power (workers' control of production, state power based on workers' and peasants' councils).

12. The theory of the Permanent Revolution, which is basic to our movement, declares that in the modern world the bourgeois-democratic revolution cannot be completed *except* through the victory and extension of the proletarian revolution—the consummation of workers' democracy. The experience of all the colonial countries has vindicated this theory and laid bare the manifest inner contradictions which continually unsettle the present state of the colonial revolution against imperialism. Precisely in those states where the *bourgeois* aims of national independence and land reform have been most fully achieved, the *democratic* political rights of the workers and peasants have not been realized, whatever the social gains. This is particularly true of those countries where the colonial revolution led to the establishment of deformed workers' states: China, North Vietnam . . . and Cuba. The balance, to date, has been a thwarted success, either essentially empty, as in the neo-colonies of the African model, or profoundly deformed and limited, as in the Chinese example. This present outcome is a consequence of the predominance of specific class forces within the

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In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective

—A Statement of Basic Position by the Revolutionary Tendency. Presented to the June 1962 plenary meeting of the SWP National Committee.

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colonial upheavals, and of the class-related forms employed in the struggles. These forms imposed upon the struggle have been, for all their variety, exclusively "from above," i.e., parliamentary ranging through the bureaucratic-military. And the class forces involved have been, of course, bourgeois or petit-bourgeois. A class counterposition is developed out of the complex of antagonisms resulting from failure to fulfill the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The petit-bourgeois leaderships with their bureaucratic forms and empiricist methods are ranged against participation by the workers as a class in the struggle. The involvement of the working class is necessarily centered on winning workers' democracy and requires the leadership of the revolutionary proletarian vanguard with its programmatic consciousness of historic mission. As the working class gains ascendancy in the struggle and takes in tow the more oppressed strata of the petit-bourgeoisie, the Permanent Revolution will be driven forward.

13. The Cuban Revolution has exposed the vast inroads of revisionism upon our movement. On the pretext of defense of the Cuban Revolution, in itself an obligation for our movement, full unconditional and uncritical support has been given to the Castro government and leadership, despite its petit-bourgeois nature and bureaucratic behavior. Yet the record of the regime's opposition to the democratic rights of the Cuban workers and peasants is clear; bureaucratic ouster of the democratically-elected leaders of the labor movement and their replacement by Stalinist hacks; suppression of the Trotskyist press; proclamation of the single-party system; and much else. This record stands side by side with enormous initial social and economic accomplishments of the Cuban Revolution. Thus Trotskyists are at once the most militant and unconditional defenders against imperialism of both the Cuban Revolution and of the deformed workers' state which has issued therefrom. But Trotskyists cannot give confidence and political support, however critical, to a governing regime hostile to the most elementary principles and practices of workers' democracy, even if our tactical approach is not as toward a *hardened* bureaucratic caste.

14. What is true of the revisionists' approach toward the Castro regime is even more apparent in regard to the Ben Bella regime now governing Algeria on the program of a "socialist" revolution in cooperation with French imperialism. The anti-working-class nature of this petit-bourgeois group has been made clear to all but the willfully blind by its forcible seizure of control over the labor movement and its suppression of all opposition parties. Even widespread nationalization and development of management committees seen in the context of the political expropriation of the working class and the economic orientation towards collaboration with France cannot give Algeria the character of a workers' state, but leaves it, on the contrary, a backward capitalist society with a high degree of statification. As revolutionaries our intervention in both revolutions, as in every existing state, must be in accordance with the position of Trotsky: "We are not a government party; we are the party of irreconcilable opposition" (*In Defense of Marxism*). This can cease to apply only in relation to a government genuinely based on workers' democracy.

15. 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 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.

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16. In all backward countries where the proletariat exists as a class, the fundamental principle of Trotskyism is the independence of the working class, its unions, and its parties, in intransigent opposition to imperialism, to any national liberal bourgeoisie, and to petit-bourgeois governments and parties of all sorts, including those professing "socialism" and even "Marxism-Leninism." Only in this way can the ground be laid for working-class hegemony in the revolutionary alliance with the oppressed petit-bourgeois strata, particularly the peasantry. Similarly, for a working-class party in an advanced country to violate class solidarity with the workers of a backward country by politically endorsing a petit-bourgeois colonial-revolutionary government is a sure sign of centrist opportunism, just as refusal to defend a colonial revolution because of the non-proletarian character of its leadership is a sign of sectarianism or worse.

(Continued Next Page)

... REBIRTH

17. The inter-relationship between bourgeois-democratic and proletarian-democratic struggles in the colonial revolution remains as formulated in the founding program of the Fourth International, a formulation which today retains complete validity:

"It is impossible merely to reject the democratic program; it is imperative that in the struggle the masses outgrow it. The slogan for a National (or Constituent) Assembly preserves its full force for such countries as China or India. This slogan must be indissolubly tied up with the problem of national liberation and agrarian reform. As a primary step, the workers must be armed with this democratic program. Only they will be able to summon and unite the farmers. On the basis of the revolutionary democratic program, it is necessary to oppose the workers to the "national" bourgeoisie. Then, at a certain stage in the mobilization of the masses under the slogans of revolutionary democracy, soviets can and should arise. Their historical role in each given period, particularly their relation to the National Assembly, will be determined by the political level of the proletariat, the bond between them and the peasantry, and the character of the proletarian party policies. Sooner or later, the soviets should overthrow bourgeois democracy. Only they are capable of bringing the democratic revolution to a conclusion and likewise opening an era of socialist revolution.

"The relative weight of the individual democratic and transitional demands in the proletariat's struggle, their mutual ties and their order of presentation, is determined by the peculiarities and specific conditions of each backward country and to a considerable extent by the degree of its backwardness. Nevertheless, the general trend of revolutionary development in all backward countries can be determined by the formula of the *permanent revolution* in the sense definitely imparted to it by the three revolutions in Russia (1905, February 1917, October 1917)." (*The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International.*)



CONCLUSIONS:

18. The task of the international revolutionary-Marxist movement today is to re-establish its own real existence. To speak of the "conquest of the masses" as a general guideline internationally is a qualitative overstatement. The tasks before most Trotskyist sections and groups today flow from the need for political clarification in the struggle against revisionism, in the context of a level of work of a generally propagandistic and preparatory nature. An indispensable part of our preparation is the development and strengthening of roots within the broader working-class movement without which the Trotskyists would be condemned to sterile isolation or to political degeneration in the periods of rising class struggle and in either case unable to go forward in our historic task of leading the working class to power. Above all what can and must be

done is the building of a world party firmly based on strong national sections, the assembling of a cadre of working-class militants won and tested in the process of the class struggle and on the firm basis of the revolutionary perspective of the Fourth International, the program to realize workers' democracy—culminating in workers' power. A fundamental statement expanding on this perspective, its opposition to Pabloism, and its relevance in the United States is contained in the Minority's "*In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective*" (in SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 23, No. 4, July 1962).

19. "Reunification" of the Trotskyist movement on the centrist basis of Pabloism in any of its variants would be a step away from, not toward, the genuine rebirth of the Fourth International. If, however, the majority of the presently existing Trotskyist groups insists on going through with such "reunification," the revolutionary tendency of the world movement should not turn its back on these cadres. On the contrary: it would be vitally necessary to go through this experience with them. The revolutionary tendency would enter a "reunified" movement as a minority faction, with a perspective of winning a majority to the program of workers' democracy. The Fourth International will not be reborn through adaptation to Pabloite revisionism: only by political and theoretical struggle against all forms of centrism can the world party of socialist revolution finally be established.

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... CASTRO

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potential. Tactical considerations must be seen as a part of and subordinate to strategic ones. Flowing from the empiricism of the Cuban leadership the strategic aim (if it ever existed) of world proletarian revolution has been sacrificed to the narrow, short-sighted, "pragmatic" goal of stable prices for Cuban sugar. If it is still objected that Castro had no choice, then *we*, at least, do not have to apologize for his actions in Moscow. Castro indeed had no choice: he was the prisoner not only of his own policies, but also of his historical origin which was the basis for those policies. Suffice it to say that if *our* movement had come to power in Cuba it would have been out of a quite different historical situation. We criticize the Castro leadership as a part of the *process* of building the Bolshevik leadership that will be an integral part of such a situation. The historical game of changing places with various leaders is not one that Marxists engage in. Soviet economic blackmail techniques are, of course, well known to the people of Albania and China, and it is to Castro's credit that he held out as long as he did.

The vacillation of the Castro leadership between the positions put forward by the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies, and its adherence, more or less, to the line of the latter, has permitted many socialists to indulge in certain illusions as to the nature of the Cuban leadership—illusions which that leadership has itself begun to dispel.

Moreover, these same socialists are harboring an even more fundamental illusion in their belief that a proletarian-revolutionary outlook motivates the superficially revolutionary Chinese position. As long as the Maoist leadership speaks with a revolutionary vocabulary, many socialists are inclined to take it at its word. Nevertheless, it is clear from the whole history of the Chinese revolution that the attempt to build a following around the CCP line is only for the purpose of putting pressure on imperialism in order to force the latter to accommodate itself to the present Chinese state government.

The rightward shift of the Castro leadership has now posed the question of Marxist theory and its relation to practice before all those who consider themselves to be revolutionary communists. If the revolutionary workers' movement is to go forward it will have to come to grips with this and other questions, and arrive at a solution based on the independent action of the working class.

The Cuban leadership, while responding to the pressure of the masses, yet stands above and is organizationally

independent of them. This organizational independence is a consequence of its historical origin, in which it came to power as the leadership, not of workers' and peasants' soviets, but of a guerilla army. From this social basis flows the empirical and not Marxist nature of the Cuban leadership, as was stated clearly by "Che" Guevara: "In order to know where Cuba is going, the best thing is to ask the government of the U.S. just how far it intends to go."

If many socialists who supported the Castro government as opposed to the counter-revolutionary Khrushchev regime did not see the need for a dialectical view of society, trusting instead to the "natural" course of events, their idealistic impressionism has at least been dealt a rude blow by the empirical wanderings of the Castro leadership.

The strategy of Marxists in the epoch of imperialist decay flows from our comprehension of the *total* and all-sided development of the *international* class struggle, and thus from the needs of the *international* proletariat. This view, which grasps the interdependence and interrelatedness of all phenomena, has nothing in common with the empiricism of not only the Cuban leadership, but also, unfortunately, many communists as well.

The Cuban leaders have reacted empirically to all the pressures, not only of the U.S. imperialists, but of the Soviet bureaucrats as well, and have not only failed to carry out the essential tasks facing the revolutionary workers' movement, but have not even comprehended what these tasks are. And they have failed to comprehend these tasks precisely because of their incapacity, flowing from their social origins as a bourgeois democratic peasant movement, to think any other way except empirically. Empiricism, the ideology of the bourgeoisie after it has established its power, is necessarily the method of all tendencies which do not base themselves on the strategy of world proletarian revolution.

Even the most elementary bourgeois democratic reforms cannot be maintained in the backward countries except under the dictatorship of the proletariat. To depend on other, similar

movements leading revolutions as far-reaching in their social transformations as the Cuban revolution has been is to let the initiative pass over into the hands of imperialism. It was only the incapacity of American Imperialism to accommodate itself to a radical petty-bourgeois revolution that forced the Castro regime to go as far as it did—farther, indeed, than anyone in the July 26 movement had planned. The European imperialists have so far been more astute than their American confrères. The former have more correctly gauged the tide of the nationalist movement and have yielded much of their political and some of their economic power in Africa and Asia precisely to avoid what happened in Cuba. They permit the "socialist" Ben Bellas and Nkrumahs to rant against the imperialists; the latter would rather lose face than face the loss of areas for investment, even if such investment faces certain restrictions.

The justifiably tremendous tide of enthusiasm for the Cuban revolution has overflowed into the kind of uncritical adulation of the Castro leadership that is entirely unacceptable to Marxists. The causes of this are, however, clear: the smallness of the American communist movement; the relative quiescence of the American working class; and the success of a radical petty-bourgeois revolution that has defied American imperialism and stirred the imaginations not only of the oppressed colonial workers and peasants, but of Americans radicals as well. In the face of the tremendous tasks that face so few revolutionary communists in this country, some of us have looked elsewhere and have become worshipers of the accomplished fact—Fidel Castro and Mao Tse Tung, not to mention Jimmy Hoffa and Malcolm X. Those of us who do not harbor any illusions about these leaders are attacked as sectarians. However, our analysis, in the case of Castro, has been dramatically confirmed. It is necessary to face the truth unflinchingly, purge ourselves of all easy romantic notions, and get down to the critical task of building a Marxist party in this country. A party based on illusions will never lead the working class to power.

DEFEND

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION!

CASTRO IN MOSCOW

by P. Jen

Premier Fidel Castro, caught in the complex web of Washington-Peking-Moscow relationships, has begun to become more clearly enmeshed in the machinations of the Russian leadership. Statements made in both Castro's Soviet TV interview of January 21, and the Joint Soviet-Cuban Communiqué of January 22 reveal unmistakably that Khrushchev has begun to consolidate his grip on the PURS (the Cuban party) and its leader. Although there will undoubtedly be further vacillations, Castro has, without question, begun to trail behind the Soviet Union in foreign policy.

Castro, appearing on Moscow TV January 21, said, "At the same time [after the October missile crisis] there was a relaxation of international tension, a relaxation in the cold war. *All this was a result of the policy and the efforts of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp on behalf of peace.*" (Emphasis added.)

One of the "concrete" results of those efforts was, in the Joint Soviet-Cuban Communiqué of January 22, greeted favorably by the Cuban government: "The government of the Republic of Cuba regards the successes achieved by the Soviet Union in the struggle for the discontinuation of nuclear tests and the agreement on non-orbiting of vehicles with nuclear weapons as a step forward promoting peace and disarmament."

Giving further support to the policies of the Soviet bureaucracy: "Comrade Fidel Castro expressed his approval of the measures taken by the Central Committee of the CPSU to eliminate the existing differences and to consolidate cohesion and unity in the ranks of the international communist movement." (Joint Soviet-Cuban Communiqué.)

It is clear from this that in the context of the Sino-Soviet dispute Castro has unequivocally joined "the leaders of the CPSU," who, in the words of the Chinese "are the greatest of all revisionists as well as the greatest of all sectarians and splitters known to history." (Printed Feb. 4 in Jenmin Jih Pao, the Chinese CP daily paper.)

Not only Soviet policy, but Soviet political life in general, and the leader of the CPSU in particular, have received the approval of Fidel Castro. "I am very much interested in Soviet ex-

perience," Castro said on Soviet TV Jan. 21. "I am very interested in the role played by your Party, the role of the advanced detachment, the role of organizer and inspirer of all the activity in the Soviet Union. I am interested in the participation of the Party on all labour fronts—in agriculture, in industry, in cultural activities, in all spheres of production, in all spheres of politics, and in the army. My attention is attracted by the wonderful role which the Party has been playing in the Soviet Union for nearly half a century now."

For the last three—almost four—decades, however, "the wonderful role which the Party has been playing in the Soviet Union" has included Stalin's frame-up trials; the decapitation of the Red Army on the eve of World War II; the betrayals of the proletarian revolution in China (1925-27), Germany (1929-33), France (1934-36; 1945-present), Italy (1944-present), Iraq (1958), etc.; and the present strategic outlook of capitulation to imperialism.

"We have been able to appreciate," said Castro on Moscow TV, "the way in which the Party [CPSU] has trained specialists, has fostered the revolutionary way of thought in the people, trained astronauts, scientists, has produced the cadres who are today developing the economy and the entire life in the Soviet Union, has produced the cadres who are now building communism. *The Party is a symbol of revolutionary continuity and the people's confidence in themselves.*" (Emphasis added.)

Castro's evaluation of Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev, the leader of this so-called "Communist" Party which is building "communism" in a single country, is full of warmth and admiration. "I have full right to evaluate and admire this man, who combines in one person so many splendid qualities: intellect, excellent character, kindness and strength — the qualities which make him a great leader. And the more I know Comrade Nikita Sergeyevich, the more time I spend with him, the more warmer grow my feelings for him, the more I admire him, the higher is my opinion of him as a man." (Castro on Moscow TV, Jan. 21.)

Fidel Castro's words supply their own commentary. Those who want the full text of his interview on Moscow TV, as well as the Joint Communiqué, can find these in the supplement in the *Moscow News*, January 25, 1964.

For socialists who saw in Castro's militant stand a revolutionary communist leadership or some reasonable facsimile thereof, the recent swing to the right must come as a surprise and even a shock. Castro's perceptible yielding to Soviet economic pressure, while perhaps mistakenly understandable from one point of view (that of building the national economy), is inexcusable from another (that of the international proletarian revolution), and in fact strategically defeats the former. It is only on the basis of the proletarian revolution in the advanced countries that the Cuban economy can develop to its full

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