

VANGUARD newsletter

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LESSONS OF THE TELEPHONE STRIKE

The 38,000 striking workers of the New York Telephone Company have now been on the picket line for more than six months.

In all this time, "Ma Bell" has not essentially budged from the terms of the national contract which President Joseph Beirne of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), AFL-CIO had negotiated. Beirne, in a crass bureaucratic maneuver to ensure that the contract would be accepted, first ordered the strikers back to work and a mail ballot ratification afterward.

The repair and installation workers of Local 1101 and 1103, the largest of the 24 craft unions on strike, rejected the national pact as a sell-out of wage, working conditions and fringe benefit demands and voted to continue the strike. The workers demand, among other things, wages commensurate with those paid to craftsmen with similar skills in other industries and an increase which will keep them ahead of inflation, a regional cost-of-living differential, an end to compulsory overtime, overtime pay for Saturday and Sunday work and improved vacation and health benefits.

The prolonged struggle has not dimmed the fighting spirit of the strikers. As the demonstrations in midtown Manhattan against the importation of out-of-state scabs has shown, they are as determined as ever to win an improved contract.

The arrest of ten strikers and the police club inflicted injuries to others has begun to bring home the lesson that the primary purpose of a police force is the enforcement of capitalist law and order, the preservation of capitalist property relations and the "right" of the corporations to starve out workers in order to continue exercising its "right" to exploit them at the highest possible rate.

And they are learning other lessons as well. They are learning that the narrow craft union outlook which separates workers in the same company from each other and from the rest of the labor movement is not only hopelessly inadequate in struggle against big business in general, but against the mammoth

Bell system in particular. They are learning that if victory is to be won, especially in this period, the solidarity of labor in NY City and State and throughout the country will be required.

Vital communications equipment has deteriorated from lack of service at a future heavy cost which the "public utility" will undoubtedly pass on to the "public." An enormous backlog of installations requests has also been created which will mean long service delays for the same "public" for many months after the strike has been settled. However, the phone company has been able to continue providing service by importing supervisors and scab repairmen, some of whom are even CWA members, from out-of-state telephone facilities.

In dealing with this problem, the workers have also had to contend with CWA Local 1101 Pres. Carnivale's narrow outlook and reluctance to fight Beirne on the grounds that the national Defense Fund might be cut off. Beirne has had no other recourse, faced with the large and militant NY CWA membership, but to agree to renegotiate a contract for the NY area. He evidently hopes that, given the long strike, the workers will be sufficiently worn down to accept some minor concessions which he can wangle. He is as fully opposed to real improvements in the NY contract as the phone company because the membership of every other CWA local would then demand the same terms in a new national contract, and perhaps, Beirne's hide at the same time.

It is only recently that, as a result of rank and file pressure, "flying squads" were dispatched to picket out-of-state installations. The pickets received warm support from these workers, some of whom are members of other unions. This tactic promises to cripple the phone company's scab-running activities, and at the same time, increase the dissatisfaction of other sections of the CWA with the national contract and the Beirne bureaucracy.

The failure of the CWA to conduct a serious campaign to bring the

telephone operators--predominantly Black women--into its union, and to win their active support for the strike, has been an important factor in keeping the phone company in business.

As the leaflet "Toward a Strategy for Victory!", distributed to the strikers by the newly organized Committee for Rank and File Caucuses (See page 3) pointed out, the operators are "represented" by a company union and have the worst wages and working conditions of all phone workers.

The workers are learning that aristocratic, white and male chauvinist attitudes are harmful to all workers, that it is necessary to carry on a struggle against the super-exploitation of minority and women workers and thus unite the workers against the bosses in their own immediate interests.

They are also learning that, in this period and in dealing with the large corporations, the economic cannot be separated from the political struggle.

The crisis of world capitalism, now acknowledged even by bourgeois economists, sharpens the class struggle in every country. American capitalism, whose world hegemony is now under siege by its European and Japanese rivals, has opened up a monetary and trade counter-offensive designed to improve its world competitive position. As an integral part of this struggle, the state, the "executive committee" for American capitalism, has, under the banner of "anti-inflation", directed an attack on the workers with the help of the labor bureaucracy. The wages of the workers are directly under attack through the Pay Board and, indirectly, by tax give-aways to the corporations which will be shifted to the workers. It is seeking to handcuff the militant union ranks with anti-labor and especially anti-strike legislation. By these means, the ruling class expects to increase its total profits, its rate of profit and export the crisis to its imperialist rivals and thereby to foreign workers.

Both Democratic and Republican

politicians support and defend the fundamental interests of the ruling class. The liberals among them want to ameliorate--put "band-aids" on--some of the capitalist system's worst ulcers, improve the system's functioning. Both parties fully supported the policies for which they now blame each other and which have become demonstrably bankrupt in the present crisis, in inflation and unemployment, and in the long, bloody and costly imperialist war in Indochina. The liberals, moderates and conservatives of both parties call for wage "controls" and anti-strike legislation in transportation and in other nationwide industries.

In NY City, compulsory "arbitration" for municipal workers has been voted by the predominant Democratic City Council and signed into law by the Democratic presidential candidate and liberal Mayor Lindsay. The NY State legislature is preparing to vote for the demand of the Chamber of Commerce echoed by the "NY Times" and "Daily News" that unemployment insurance payments to striking workers be abolished, thus dealing a blow at the ability of workers to withstand lengthy strikes.

The "labor lieutenants of the bourgeoisie" have bowed their heads to their real masters while trying to wheedle a less strigent anti-labor package from the Democratic representatives of the ruling class. They have been occasionally forced to make militant noises to try to

placate the ranks, but they are careful to avoid mobilizing the working class for a struggle against the ruling class offensive.

Victor Gottbaum, who heads the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, District Council 37, AFL-CIO, the exponent of the "sloppy" strike from which the overwhelming mass of municipal workers are excluded, had nothing to say either before or after the compulsory "arbitration" law for municipal workers was passed. But he has endorsed Muskie for President! The NY State AFL-CIO has had nothing to say about the drive to abolish unemployment insurance for strikers, but it is also preparing to endorse a Democratic "friend of labor."

Workers, and not least telephone workers, are rapidly learning that working class unity against the ruling class offensive has become an urgent necessity. They are also becoming increasingly aware of the need to keep the unions independent of the state and to oust their misleaders. The revolutionary Marxists who have roots in the working class are finding there an increasingly receptive audience for the demand for a working class political party.

They will find that the struggle for these positions of the Committee for Rank and File Caucuses will enable them to win workers to the Transitional Program of Trotsky and to build a Leninist and Trotskyist working class vanguard party in the process.

THE COMMITTEE FOR RANK AND FILE CAUCUSES

Workers organizations and worker militants were called to a meeting by SOCIALIST FORUM and VANGUARD NEWSLETTER to discuss joint activities and the formation of a "broad united front...on a non-exclusionary basis" against the anti-labor drive by the ruling class.

The meeting, held at Academy Hall in NY City on January 25, 1972, concluded with the formation of the Committee for Rank and File Caucuses. The two organizations had proposed that the united front against the ruling class and its "labor lieutenants" take the organizational form of "an industrial, regional and national network" of rank-and-file

caucuses on a two-point programmatic basis: the "independence of the unions from the state" and an "independent workers' party based on the rank-and-file."

Representatives of the International Socialists, the National Caucus of Labor Committees, the NY Revolutionary Committee, Proletarian Review of Philadelphia and the Spar-

tacist League attended the meeting.

Trade unionists, including members of the carpenters, construction workers, painters and case workers unions from New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania were also present in addition to a number of students and independent revolutionists.

Cdes. Robert Davis, editor of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER and Tom Lowy of SOCIALIST FORUM gave the political arguments for building an alternative leadership in the organized working class linked to the unorganized and unemployed in the form of a committee of and for the construction of rank-and-file caucuses.

Cde. Davis posed the objective need for a united front of workers' organizations under the conditions of: a ruling class anti-labor offensive, the fractured state of the working class movement and the readiness of the working class to struggle in defense of its standards.

Drawing upon the historical experience of the International Working Men's Association, the First International, constructed and led by Marx and Engels, Cde. Davis pointed to a similar need in the present conditions for organizations which identified with the working class to work together on the basis of the broad, principled two-point class program proposed.

He emphasized that, as in the First International and in any principled united front agreement, all organizations would retain full freedom to criticize and to fight for their entire political line.

Trotsky's "Transitional Program" had again become, as in the 1930's, vitally necessary to the mobilization of the working class, said Cde. Davis, and both VANGUARD NEWSLETTER and SOCIALIST FORUM intended to struggle within the united front for its application in the new conditions to construct revolutionary trade unions.

Referring to Trotsky's draft article, "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," Cde. Davis pointed to the congruence between the two key demands which Trotsky had raised, the struggle for revolutionary trade unions and the pro-

posed two-point program.

Cde. Lowy focused on the arena of working class political struggle in dealing with the need to construct rank-and-file caucuses. He brought home the relationship of economic to political power by pointing out that the ruling class which owned the means of production, had been able through its Democratic and Republican parties and with the support of its Liberal, Conservative and racist Wallace parties, to undermine the contract gains won in struggle by many millions of workers.

SOCIALIST FORUM and VANGUARD NEWSLETTER, stated Cde. Lowy, called for a party of the workers created by a struggle within the unions by the rank-and-file and directed against the agents of the ruling class within the unions, the labor bureaucracy. Other socialist tendencies ignored the difference between the trade union ranks and the bureaucrats at the top, and propagandized for a party organized and led by the bureaucrats. This inability to understand the role of elements such as Meany and Woodcock, said Cde. Lowy, was illustrated by the characterization of the Pay Board by the Workers League's "Bulletin" among other socialist publications as stacked "two to one" against labor. In reality, said Cde. Lowy, the forces arrayed against the workers were "fifteen to nothing."

The rank-and-file caucuses were the building blocks of a united economic struggle at the point of production and the political struggle for an independent workers' party. SOCIALIST FORUM and VANGUARD NEWSLETTER would fight for their socialist program within the proposed organization and to build a network of caucuses which, in the present period of world capitalist decline, could become the factory committees and workers' councils which could lead the working class to power at a revolutionary moment.

The floor was then thrown open for discussion by the chairman, Cde. David Fender, Organizational Secretary of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER.

The Spartacist League's (SL)

representatives at this point made clear that they had attended the meeting only to oppose the purposes for which it had been called. They took full advantage of the meeting's completely democratic procedure, not only to present their point of view --as they had a right to do--but also to involve themselves in both the discussion and organizational phases of the meeting. It was only after Cde. Fender and others had repeatedly pointed out the unprincipled nature of their continued participation in the organizational aspects of the meeting that the SL delegates announced themselves to be participating as "observers" and subsided, allowing the organizational part of the meeting to proceed.

VANGUARD NEWSLETTER, on a number of occasions, has characterized the SL as a not very serious student-oriented personality cult built around James Robertson. This quality was clearly in evidence at the meeting. Although its formal politics do not appear to differ qualitatively from those of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER, especially to the petty-bourgeois student milieu which it attracts, its functioning discloses essential differences in class orientation and application.

Marxist politics, as Trotsky emphasized, take their point of departure from objective conditions--the nature of the epoch, the movement of classes, etc. The party, in all its stages of development, the subjective factor in history, as Trotsky also stated and as we have previously pointed out, is, in essence, a program from which flows "strategic, tactical and organizational methods..."

The SL's opposition to the meeting was based, however, solely on subjective criteria. The purpose of the meeting, according to the SL, was not the construction of a united front, but an "ersatz", undefinable and unprincipled organization. It was unprincipled in that it attempted to by-pass the construction of the Leninist party. First, the party is built, then the party creates the caucus. In any case, the SL wanted no association with the

"unprincipled, unstable and opportunist" VANGUARD NEWSLETTER.

Independents reacted to the attack on the meeting by charging the SL with sectarianism and recommending that its delegates leave. An older revolutionist stated that the SL's sectarianism was fully in consonance with its "elitist" character, which he had personally witnessed at a meeting at which Robertson had presided like "King Tut."

Malcolm Kaufman of SOCIALIST FORUM exposed the chasm between the SL's "theory" and actual practice in caucus work. The SL's argument that it was "unprincipled" for two or more revolutionary organizations with political and theoretical differences to agree to a limited program for joint work within a caucus was shown to be hypocritical. The SL had invited SOCIALIST FORUM into a joint caucus with it in the Social Service Employees Union on just this basis.

Cde. Turner, referring to Trotsky's statement that the soviet was the highest form of the united front, reminded the audience that caucuses were seen as the first stage of a developing working class organization and consciousness which could result in soviets. It was the entire purpose of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER and SOCIALIST FORUM to build the vanguard party in this process.

Cde. Lowy charged the SL with a conception for the building of the vanguard party divorced from the class struggle, in effect, a sterile outlook which could never achieve a working class vanguard party. The SL seemed to be mainly concerned to confront other revolutionary groups for a "quick killing", to "slice off a member here and there."

The narrow partisan and mechanical organizational focus of the SL was additionally illuminated in the informal discussion which followed the meeting. Al Nelson, National Organizational Secretary of the SL, acknowledged that the First International which trade union, Proudhonist, Bakuninist, Lassalleian and Marxist organizations had joined, was a united front. "Yes, but it was a mess!" said Nelson. The

enormous organizational and theoretical accomplishments of the First International in uniting the young, disoriented and largely leaderless international working class, its historic role in the Paris Commune of 1871, is evidently, of slight importance to the SL, compared to the sharp internal struggles which also inevitably took place.

In its next issue, VANGUARD NEWSLETTER will evaluate further the contradictions in the past and present practical, political and theoretical functioning of the SL which derive from the appreciation of and identification with orthodox Trotskyism of an essentially petty-bourgeois organization. In the process, the SL's criticisms levied at VANGUARD NEWSLETTER at the meeting which only served to disclose the SL's essence will also be discussed.

Cde. Davis, in summation, made clear to the representative of the

International Socialists that the meeting had not been organized as a step toward regroupment as he believed, but was a serious commitment for a united front on the basis of the two points proposed.

Before concluding, the meeting voted to adopt rules of organization and procedure which would afford all workers' organizations in the New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania area who agreed with its principles and program, voice, vote and equal representation on the Executive Committee, to also afford unattached worker militants voice and vote as a bloc at meetings and auxiliary membership to student organizations and individual students.

The meeting, in addition, voted to organize a demonstration in support of the telephone strikers, against the attack on unemployment insurance for strikers and in furtherance of its general program.

"TOWARD A STRATEGY FOR VICTORY!" - A Leaflet to Telephone Strikers

The first effort of the Committee for Rank and File Caucuses was the distribution of the leaflet reproduced below to the mass meeting of telephone strikers at Manhattan

Center in NY City on February 2nd. The meeting overwhelmingly voted against compulsory "arbitration" of the strike. 7

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In more than six months of determined struggle, New York telephone workers have failed to win virtually anything from Ma Bell. The telephone company is holding firm to the terms of the national sell-out pact of CWA President Joe Beirne. Unless a new strategy and tactics geared to an even more militant struggle are adopted, our strike can be defeated. The full half year of sacrifice invested in the strike must not be allowed to go down the drain.

CWA Local 1101 President Rickie Carnivale is essentially limiting the fight at this time to flashy full page advertisements in the dailies, on the one hand, and pleading with Rockefeller, on the other, to end the strike on favorable terms. But Rockefeller, himself worth billions, represents a government committed to the protection of corporations like Ma Bell. Now that "good times" have ended, these corporations are trying to squeeze their workers harder. Rockefeller can be expected to stay out of the strike as long as Ma holds its own. But should the ranks begin to beat it down, Rockefeller will intervene and bring the full fury of the state--including the courts and police (remember the recent midtown demonstration?)--to bear against the union. Rockefeller is not going to help us. We must prepare to fight him just as he is prepared to defend the phone company.

Victory can come, not by looking to Democratic or Republican politicians, but by relying on our own strength and forces. Specifically:

Mobilize to Stop the Attack on Unemployment Insurance for Strikers

The Chamber of Commerce is calling for the abolition of these payments at the same time that Carnivale fills the coffers of the very newspapers that are aggressively pushing this proposal in their editorial pages. Where is the state AFL-CIO? All of New York state labor must be mobilized against this attack which, if successful, would undercut the ability of any and all workers to conduct a prolonged fight against the bosses for decent wages and working conditions. Build support for the idea of closing down the state if the legislature tries to take away this valuable right.

Send the Scabs Home--More "Flying Squads"

Rank and file initiative has done more in a month to deal with the problem of out-of-state scabs than Carnivale has been able to accomplish during the whole course of the strike. Roving picket lines sent to out-of-state phone company buildings and offices have received a warm, enthusiastic and effective response from workers in those areas. Increasing use of the tactic will make Ma Bell pay a high price should it continue to import scabs.

Organize the Operators

The largely women and Black operators are the lowest paid and most overworked and abused of Bell employees. Their union is in fact nothing more than a company union. Their fight is our fight. If our wages are inadequate, theirs are absolutely abominable. One union in phone! We need the operators! Bring them into CWA. Bring them out on the line. The absence of operators from the switch boards will deal Ma a crippling blow.

What is the lesson of the phone strike? We need to build unity with the workers in other unions! We of the Committee for Rank and File Caucuses are committed to just such a task. We are also working to free the labor movement of its bankrupt leadership (as shown most recently by its participation in Nixon's Pay Board) and to build an independent political party representing the interests of all workers in opposition to the twin parties of big business--the Democrats and Republicans. If you agree with our idea of what a labor movement should be and do and/or want to hear more about our program mail the coupon below.

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BOLIVIA AND INTERNATIONALISM

An Exchange With the Labor Action Committee of Canada

Dear Comrades,

23 December 1971
(Received January 22, 1972)

We were disturbed to note the article "Bolivia and the Split in the International Committee" which appeared in the November 1971 issue of the VANGUARD NEWSLETTER.

The article, representing the opinion of the VANGUARD NEWSLETTER Committee, charts a political course which in our opinion leads away from a perspective that was jointly agreed to by the VNC and the Labor

Action Committee of Canada.

We are writing this letter in the hope of opening up a discussion by North American Trotskyists on the question of Bolivia, and the serious political differences raised by the

OCI and SLL in the ranks of the International Committee. We would hope that such a discussion on our parts would lead to our joint participation in a conference of the International Committee, which would include the OCI and SLL. It is clear that VNL holds a number of serious political disagreements with the POR. On this question the LAC does not share common ground with you comrades.

Throughout the article, "Bolivia and the Split in the International Committee", you comrades treat the question of Bolivia as if it were among the metropolitan countries, wherein the essential democratic tasks had been completed. This is not the case. Bolivia not only has been held back from bourgeois development by the dominance of the United States, it has historically fallen prey to the junior grade imperialism of Chile, Brazil and Argentina, all of which in their turn tend to fall into the US "orbit of influence."

The fledgling attempts of the Torres regime to make a break with US imperialism could only have strengthened the working class through the strengthening of democratic institutions in which the legal workers organizations, including the Popular Assembly, could thrive. For the POR to rely on Torres to consummate the bourgeois revolution (a task that could only be carried through by the working class dictatorship) would have been incorrect and would have amounted to a rejection of the Permanent Revolution, the theoretical underpinnings of Trotskyism. To reject the position that the working class has a legitimate interest in the exclusion of imperialist interests (whether they take on a "national" coloration, or represent the direct intrusion of imperialist troops) is to reject Trotskyism.

Throughout the article runs the misconception that at the time of the Bolivian right-wing coup it was possible that the working class of Bolivia could assume and hold power. Given the overall situation in Latin America, we feel that this would have been, and still is, an incor-

rect evaluation of the situation.

While the overall curve of world capitalism continues in a downward direction, it does not preclude reversals and retrenchments for the working class. In the major Latin American countries, such a development has occurred. Because of the wretched status of Bolivia under the thumb of imperialism, the needs of world capitalism dictate that even the weakest democratic elements (such as Torres) must be crushed. The spark of the bourgeois revolution kindles the flame of the proletarian revolution. This, long known to imperialism, does not seem to be perceived by Trotskyists in New York City and London.

The development of the Bolivian soviet in the form of the Popular Assembly represented the embryonic dual power that could have led to the dictatorship of the proletariat on a continental basis. Of necessity, because of the unfavorable objective situation, this was a struggle that would be of a protracted nature.

Because of the political immaturity of sections of the Bolivian working class, there existed wide-spread illusions concerning the ability of the Torres regime to insure independence from US imperialism. This the POR fought against concretely by taking up the fight to alter class relations. The POR fought for the creation of the Popular Assembly, as well as the independent arming of the masses. These were concrete steps that prepared the way for the socialist revolution in Latin America by taking such a course, the working class through its own experiences could leave the bourgeois nationalists such as Torres in the dustbin of history. It is only by the fight for working class self-interest that the consciousness of the working class can be altered.

At no time did the POR seek to tie the working class to the government of Torres, to place the working class under the leadership of the bourgeois nationalists, or to spread illusions that Torres could lead a democratic (by necessity working class) transformation of the country.

All the POR did was to realize that the Torres government to a limited degree could carry out democratic tasks, but because of its bourgeois nature could not consummate the bourgeois revolution. What's so awful about that? Is it different from saying that the working class has an interest in the defeat of US imperialism, and its Saigon allies, even at the hands of the NLF, which pledges a capitalist government? Would we imagine that the Chinese working class had no interest in the defeat of the Japanese even by the army of the Kuomintang? This comrades, has nothing to do with capitulation to the Kuomintang, to the NLF or to Torres.

It is the POR, and the OCI which supported it, who are the true internationalists. The POR opposed the adventurism of the Pabloist guerrilla war perspective; fought the ultra-lefts who would have led the Bolivian working class to a blood bath with the calling of armed insurrection; sought to protect the democratic conditions under which the Popular Assembly thrived, and was developing as an organizing central of the Latin American socialist revolution.

Following our article on Bolivia in the October issue of LABOR ACTION we have concluded that the essential political approach of that article was incorrect. We urge you comrades to make the same assessment.

We urge you comrades to consider these questions we have raised and

to join with us in a fraternal discussion leading to our joint participation in a united conference of the International Committee.

For you comrades to publish a statement attacking the OCI and POR, violates our previously arrived at agreement on a perspective toward the International Committee. You comrades seem to believe in making statements first and discussing them later with your fraternal organizations. All we have done thus far is to express disagreement with VNL's unilateral actions, and continue to affirm our previously stated perspective toward the IC.

We are carrying out a discussion with the organizations and supporters of the IC. This we hope will include the SLL. This does not violate our fraternal relations, as at one time this was your perspective. Obviously you comrades have serious differences. We would urge you to raise them in the context of a discussion in the International Committee. To do otherwise would be criminal. If following the discussions the differences still cut deeply, a split might be justified. Not until then.

Even from your comrades' viewpoint, a discussion in the ranks of the International Committee could draw elements in your direction.

We really don't understand why you have made this unilateral move, if you claim to be internationalists.

Fraternally, Labor Action Committee

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Dear Comrades,

February 9, 1972

Any organization which designates itself as "Trotskyist" must attempt to deal with political realities if it is not to forfeit its credibility as a "revolutionary" organization.

It is clear, however, that the Labor Action Committee (LAC) of Canada has permitted the organizational question to dictate its politics. It evidently hopes to obtain a franchise from the Organiza-tion Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) to become a Canadian section

of the OCI-led portion of the now divided International Committee (IC) of the Fourth International. The LAC has elevated the organizational side of politics above the essentially political. We, in contrast, have drawn the political lessons from the Bolivian fiasco

in determining our relationship with other organizations. A review of our past relationship with OCI is in order.

Cde. Turner met with certain leaders of the OCI for informal discussions in Paris in the summer of 1970 and presented them with all of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER's published material. These discussions, correspondence that immediately followed and articles in OCI publications, "La Verite" and "Informations Ouvrieres" established that the OCI had serious political differences with the Socialist Labour League (SLL) of England and the Workers League (WL) in this country. The OCI gave sympathetic consideration to our position on the Negro question and on the Canadian national question. It took a position, closely approximating our own, that the so-called "Arab Revolution" was in reality a petty-bourgeois nationalist movement. It refused to subordinate the Indochinese revolution to Stalinist betrayal, as did the WL and SLL under the slogan of "Victory to the NLF". (We, of course, are for the military victory of all forces of an underdeveloped country which struggle against imperialist oppression.)

Aside from an exchange of publications and correspondence in this connection, we heard nothing further from the OCI until a few months ago, as you are well aware. We kept you completely informed of our dealings with OCI by letter and telephone. As our correspondence to you and others will affirm, we considered the OCI leaders to be "organizational opportunists" in that they refused to conduct a struggle against the ruinous politics of the SLL and WL for their own political line and for a democratic-centralist IC. We also made clear to you that the OCI's opportunism on the organizational question--which you are now emulating--its light-minded attitude to political issues, meant that, even in the event of an organizational realignment, a continuing struggle against its opportunist tendencies would be required.

The possibility that the LAC and

ourselves would be able to attend the Fourth Conference of the IC on the basis of our essential agreement with the 1966 IC perspectives document and on the need to reconstruct the Fourth International, originally broached to Cde. Turner, was once again raised a few months ago. At that time, we looked forward to a struggle at the Conference for our politics, a split between the SLL and OCI and a possible unity with the OCI and its adherents in an international organization on the basis of a clear and sufficient programmatic agreement. It was this and only this perspective which was "jointly agreed to" by the LAC and ourselves.

You accuse us of "making statements first and discussing them later" with you. What are the facts? In September and October both organizations were in political agreement on Bolivia. Our September issue reprinted the LAC's analysis and followed it in October with an article by Cde. Davis which did not fundamentally differ from the LAC's position. But then the November issue of "Labor Action" arrived. You had used two of its four pages to reprint Lora's apologetics for the sorry role of his Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR). You had embraced him as a comrade without a word of criticism and without disassociating yourselves from his position.

We then called and informed you of our profound dissatisfaction with this action which undermined your and our position on Bolivia. At that time, we also informed you that we considered Bolivia to be a watershed between the revolutionary Marxists and the opportunists. In a similar way the German debacle of 1933 illuminated the bankruptcy of the Communist International. We told you then that a tactical silence on Bolivia would make us accessories to a betrayal, that we could no longer consider attending the OCI-organized conference save as observers, and then only on the possibility that we would be able to present our case against the POR and OCI for having, through

their opportunism, ruined a promising proletarian revolutionary opportunity. When you informed us that a majority of the LAC members now leaned to Lora, we volunteered to send a delegate to Canada to fight for our position on Bolivia. And then silence! No further communication from you for a full month!

On December 12, 1971, you finally made a collect telephone call in response to our several calls only to inform us that the LAC was now in full agreement with Lora and the OCI! The facts demonstrate that it is you who have changed your position--after first determining what would be acceptable to the OCI--without discussion with us. Your decision to unite with the OCI, whatever its politics--as if this had been our position--is in actuality a "statement first" by you to be discussed "later."

The Bolivian defeat was a severe setback, not only for the Latin-American working class but also for the world proletariat. We believe that the centrist politics of Lora's POR played a fatal role there. Its strong base in the working class and especially among the miners is attested to by its having won 20% or more of the representation in the Popular Assembly which it had been instrumental in creating. But it held and sowed illusions, as we have shown, that the military Bonapartist regime of Torres would move left ala Castro under the pressure of the masses. Instead of fighting for a proletarian revolutionary policy which could unite the workers it became a brake on the revolution.

You now try to "explain" this behavior on the basis that Bolivia is a backward instead of a metropolitan country and that the Bolivian working class, in view of the overall situation in Latin America, could not "assume and hold power."

Read Trotsky's The New Course. You will find there his conviction that had Zinoviev and Kamenev succeeded in preventing the Bolshevik party from leading the proletariat to power in October, excuses very similar to those now given for Bolivia would have been made for

Russia--about its backwardness, weakness and isolation and, therefore, of the unreadiness of the proletariat to "assume and hold power."

As Cde. Davis pointed out, the key to a workers revolution in a backward country is the alliance with the peasantry. As the "NY Times" dispatch of January 28, 1972, indicates, the situation of the peasants, given land in the 1952 revolution, had greatly deteriorated. The army, representing the bourgeoisie and landowners, must be won to the cause of the working class. But Lora and the POR, not having the "misconception that the working class of Bolivia could assume and hold power" did not function as revolutionary Marxists in either case. Yes, they called for the arming of the masses, but only to protect the Torres regime from Banzer. And then, logically, and as Lora himself testifies, Lora and the POR waited as prayerful supplicants for Torres to arm them. The working class was disoriented because the POR did not fulfill its responsibility to give revolutionary leadership to the workers. This failure of Lora and his POR is placed on the workers--a majority of whom it seems did not follow it--or on "objective conditions."

If Lora had been a revolutionist of the school of Lenin and Trotsky, he would have won the workers by differentiating the POR from the Communist Party and other social-opportunists and exposed them by calling upon them to take the power, to form a workers' government. Instead, Lora followed policies which encouraged these opportunists to embrace the POR.

Now the Lora POR has organized a "united anti-imperialist" popular front with sections of the Bolivian bourgeoisie on the basis that "fascism" now rules in Bolivia. A strange sort of fascism! In 1965, the Indonesian ruling class, using Moslem religion, unleashed petty-bourgeois and lumpen elements against the Communist Party, the world's third largest, its mass organizations and against the left in general. Estimates on the resulting

slaughter range from 500,000 to a million. In Bolivia, however, the same "NY Times" report indicates that the trade unions are intact, that the Banzer regime, fearing the reaction of the miners, cannot denationalize the tin mines. Banzer, fearing a reaction of the peasants against higher prices, cannot devalue the currency. On December 12, while informing us of your political flip-flop on Bolivia, you also stated that you still agreed with our analysis that a right Bonapartist and not a fascist regime ruled in Bolivia. But the latter conclusion is the theoretical justification for the popular front! Even had fascism conquered, Trotskyists would have fought it with the weapons of the proletarian revolution and not by a bloc with the bourgeoisie for "democracy" first, as Lora does. He repeats the policies of Menshevism which ruined the Chinese and Spanish revolutions: unity with the "national" bourgeoisie for "democracy" or against "imperialism" first, the socialist revolution later, i.e., never!

It is a fundamental axiom of the Permanent Revolution that, although the working class of a backward country can lead the peasantry in a socialist revolution, it cannot retain power without the victory of the revolution in the advanced countries.

The socialist revolution in Bolivia would not have been isolated. The Chilean workers and peasants "next door" with the example of Bo-

livia to follow would also have broken through the confines of the Allende popular front to the socialist revolution. As things now stand, the hopes of the Chilean masses in the Unidad Popular are being dissipated. Instead of the socialist revolution, the overthrow of the Allende regime by reactionary and fascist elements is on the agenda.

The military Bonapartist regime in Peru, which claims to be making a new kind of "national" revolution, would have also been quickly toppled given a Bolivian example.

All of Latin America would have followed and sparked the revolution in other underdeveloped and advanced countries. US and world imperialism and its compradore elements would have tried to stop the revolutionary process as they did at the time of the Russian Revolution. But, imperialism, now considerably weaker, would never have succeeded, given a revolutionary leadership.

It is imperative that "internationalists" work to create just such a leadership against all the opportunists who are assembled in so-called "Fourth Internationals." We shall win their healthy elements in this way, not by adapting to and joining the opportunists, as the LAC is now doing.

Fraternally, VANGUARD NEWSLETTER

The next installment of our series, "Fundamentals of Capitalist Crises", will appear in our March issue.

IN DEFENSE OF TROTSKYISM

A Revolutionary Opposition at the SWP Convention - by David Fender

The following are two speeches given at the convention of the Socialist Workers Party on August 9, 1971, by myself, the delegate of the Communist Tendency (CT).

It was at this convention that the struggle of the CT against the right-centrist politics of the SWP came to a culmination. This struggle had its origins at least back to 1967 when I myself wrote a document, "Remarks on the Antiwar Movement," criticizing the party for making "an

adaptation to certain petty-bourgeois currents" in the antiwar movement which was the party's main area of activity at that time. This document, in spite of its limitations, seemed to have scratched a major political nerve in that it drew a venomous response from one of the

party's top leaders, Tom Kerry. The politics of Kerry's document, to which I replied in the pre-convention discussion in 1969, served only to further show the SWP's departure from Marxism. This combined with Kerry's total light-mindedness--outright distortion, unprincipled political amalgams, name calling, and phrasemongering, the old standbys of all political hacks--demonstrated the extent of the SWP's degeneration and again the absolute incorrigibility of its leadership.

Here it is not necessary to repeat the analysis of the degeneration of the SWP made in the CT's documents: "Historical Roots of the Degeneration of the Fourth International and of the Centrism of the SWP--For a Return to the Proletarian Road of Trotskyism" and "The International Situation: An Initial Assessment." Here, suffice it to be said, the inability of the CT to win the leadership of the SWP at the last convention and the CT's subsequent expulsion, did not consummate the degeneration of the SWP. This degeneration took place many years before even my first salvo at the 1967 convention. Unlike most tendencies, we of the CT did not think that the sun rose and set for the SWP with our coming and going. Our understanding of the nature of the SWP was, at the outset, not only that its leadership was incorrigible, but that the SWP itself was unreformable. In fact, we had predicted our early expulsion from the very beginning of our existence and did so openly on the branch floor as well as on the floor of the convention. In other words, there was no doubt in our ranks that the SWP could not and would not become the Bolshevik party of the USA and that that party would only be built outside the ranks of the SWP.

But coming to such a conclusion does not permit a simple minded "see you later" attitude. Whether inside or out, the SWP--and the Fourth International of the United Secretariat (US) which the SWP supports--would be a political opponent. Therefore, we had the obligation to use every lever at

our disposal to politically expose the bankruptcy of the SWP's leadership and attempt to win as many forces as possible to our ranks. For the CT the SWP convention provided us with such a lever.

Because of the nature of the SWP then, our continued existence inside had to be calculated as if we were carrying out an entry tactic. How long one should remain inside and the manner in which one chose to leave were then tactical questions, but very important ones inasmuch as they could mean the difference between remaining in isolation for some time or breaking out of the isolation and laying the basis for an effective political struggle in the future. The majority decision of the CT on when and how to leave the SWP, unfortunately, did not lay the basis for any effective political struggle but, on the contrary, played right into the hands of the SWP leadership.

In light of this crucial error and the subsequent refusal of the majority of the CT to fuse with VANGUARD NEWSLETTER, in spite of basic political agreement, an assessment must be made of the nature of the CT and its struggle.

Most of the comrades who would comprise the CT joined the party only a few months before the pre-convention discussion opened up in May, 1971. They had been active in the YSA and had become critical to one degree or another of the YSA's--and therefore the SWP's--politics and had even waged a fight on several questions in the YSA. For this reason they were attracted to some of the comrades who were to form the Proletarian Orientation Tendency (POT). But the future CT comrades became disillusioned with the would-be leadership of the POT for their lack of seriousness toward program and undemocratic procedures.

The POT leadership in attempting to limit their tendency to the single, essentially apolitical issue of proletarian orientation--the actual physical placement of comrades in industry--tried to exclude certain individuals who they feared would raise political ques-

tions with which they were not in agreement or with which they were incapable of dealing. Therefore, they attempted to exclude arbitrarily certain comrades--including myself--in spite of the existence of essential principled political agreement with the basic "program" of the POT.

In 1967 and 1969 most of the future POT leaders agreed or expressed some sympathy with the documents I wrote criticizing the party. Nevertheless, from 1967 on, they rejected my proposal to organize a political tendency. They preferred instead to pretend to be party loyalists and line people up behind the scenes.

After the 1969 convention, however, things began to change, and I looked forward to the 1971 convention--somewhat naively as it turned out--with the perspective of participating with them in a nationwide tendency that would challenge the SWP on the major political questions. But the future leaders of the POT refused to break with their essentially organizational approach to politics and proceeded to arbitrarily organize an apolitical tendency around a tactical, organizational question, some of them even going so far as to rescant their support of the documents I had written. They sought the image of hard working, party loyalists and wanted nothing to do with those comrades the party had ostracised and branded "incurable sectarians," "wild adventurists," etc. They feared that these comrades would, by raising the political questions, frighten away elements to the right of the POT as well as the politically uninitiated whom the POT leadership was trying to woo. They not only acquiesced to the slanders of the party leadership but used them, as well as a few of their own, to justify their arbitrary exclusion of certain comrades from their tendency.

The adaptation to the party leadership on both organizational and political questions exposed a streak of opportunism in the POT leadership. The attempt to form

as large a tendency as possible resulted not only in an undemocratic structure, but a mishmash of diametrically opposed political orientations which could only characterize the POT as an unprincipled bloc.

In contrast to the POT leadership, the cadres that were to form the CT took a serious attitude toward the political questions facing the party and the organizational problems that were posed in carrying out a politically responsible and principled struggle.

The comrades of the CT at first attempted on several occasions to form a bloc with the comrades of the POT on the principled basis of agreement with the basic tenets of the POT's first document, making clear all the while our specific and general differences with the document. We wanted to fight for our ideas inside a common tendency and to win the tendency as a whole to our ideas. This was our approach up and until the POT made its formal declaration, defining itself as "clearly supporting the positions taken by the SWP on the developing mass movements." At this point, we had no choice but to disassociate ourselves completely from the POT's open political capitulation to the SWP leadership. We, therefore, submitted the document we had been working on as a counterresolution to the resolutions of both the party leadership and the POT.

The late appearance of this document has to be considered as one of the prime reasons for the weakness of the CT, the responsibility for which must fall squarely on my shoulders. Without our ideas on paper, the POT and the party leadership were able to avoid and plead ignorance of our ideas. In political struggle, time is of the essence. If the opportune moment is not seized or if one is unprepared to take the initiative when the moment presents itself, a struggle can be lost, regardless of how correct or powerful one's political position is. Herein lies one of the major factors in the isolation and small size of the CT. By the time our document appeared, the battle lines had been

drawn, trenches dug and major battles concluded. Our document as well as our presentations at the convention, regardless of their merit, appeared only as a minor secondary front of the political war raging in the party.

The enforced isolation had its effect. The isolation combined with the inexperience of most of the CT cadre transformed what began as a healthy bit of irreverence on the part of this cadre into a self-defeating cynicism toward not only the party but the cadre of the POT as well. This developed even to the point that one comrade opposed sending a delegate to the convention. The CT and its determination to struggle began to be turned into its opposite, that is, the CT began to become a sect, an in-group, self-righteous and self-satisfied. This was evident in many ways even at the convention where, for example, the alternate delegate refused to take the floor but once out of a possible four or five opportunities.

This growing malignancy in the CT was reflected in an internal struggle that broke out before the convention between myself and some of the other comrades. At the very beginning of our collaboration, I projected the perspective--without objection--that we should use our position as a recognized minority--delegate status at the convention--as a stepping stone to the launching of a struggle in the International. This perspective was based not only on our need to establish international contacts but also to aid the development of revolutionary parties in the crucial arena of Europe. That the SWP leadership would not allow our participation in the pre-World Congress discussion which had opened up and that the leadership would take punitive measures, i.e., expulsion for any attempt to do so, was of little doubt to any of the comrades. If the attempt to submit the international document, however, brought about our expulsion, so be it, inasmuch as such an expulsion would provide us with the best possible grounds for continued political struggle against both the SWP

and the "Fourth International" it supports. (That the SWP leadership was prepared to move against us on this score, proved to be the case, as can be seen from the first part of the major address which follows, in which I answer Kerry's attempt to censure our participation in advance. Kerry's remarks were in answer to an extemporaneous speech I gave at the convention prior to the two speeches printed here and a document of the CT in which we declared our intentions to participate in written form in the International discussion.)

As the end of our struggle in the SWP approached, the cynicism of certain comrades began not only to be reflected in our political struggle but also in our perspective. A position began to be put forward to get out of the party regardless. This was based mainly on personal wants and desires, and no alternative political analysis was presented as a justification for the change in perspective. Getting out became the overriding personal concern as can be seen from a question one of the comrades posed, "But what if they don't throw us out for submitting a document to the International discussion; what do we do then?" The international document was seen not as an instrument of further struggle but only as a method for forcing our expulsion. But even this was not insurance enough nor quick enough for the impatient comrades who finally won a majority. Thus was drawn up and presented the statement of the CT which led to our expulsion. While the statement might have been viewed with some curiosity by a Bolshevik organization, it would not have been the basis for expulsion. In the SWP, however, it was enough to get the response from the officialdom of the SWP that the authors had consciously tried to elicit.

I ardently opposed the statement and characterized it as "foolish and childish." With the presentation of this statement, the political struggle we had led up to then was abandoned, and the

growth of the self-righteous and purist attitudes of the in-group continued unabated and insured the ultimate death of the CT.

The cynicism even found its reflection in the administrative functioning of the CT. The comrades outside of Boston, for example, were merely informed of what the majority had decided if they were informed at all.

To the above must be added at least two more ingredients: the milieu in which the struggle in the SWP took place and the background of the CT cadre. The milieu was almost 100% petty-bourgeois. If the SWP recruits a worker today, it is entirely by accident, since all of the SWP's work is done in the petty-bourgeois milieu, and therefore, the petty bourgeoisie make up the overwhelming percentage of its cadre. It is from this same petty-bourgeois milieu that the CT cadre themselves were recruited. A struggle in this milieu is distorted from the very beginning. No one loves or can better toot his own horn than the petty bourgeoisie or aspiring petty bourgeoisie, and the petty-bourgeois milieu reinforces such traits all the more. Personal ambitions become the determining factor for the political line and not the objective necessities of the working class struggle. The primacy of political program is replaced by the infectious petty-bourgeois disease of megalomania, and the organization becomes his vehicle for an extended "ego trip."

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August 9, 1971, A. M.

In the discussion on the branch floor back in Boston, Comrade Camejo claimed with self-righteous indignation that Comrade Maitan was out to "lynch" the Argentinean grouping of Verdad at the coming World Congress.

We must disagree with this estimation. The Verdad grouping of Argentina along with the group of Samarakkody in Ceylon, a group in Germany that now calls itself the IKD [International Communist of Germany] and two groups in England --one around Ken Coates and another that now calls itself the Revolu-

The CT was not immune to this disease, and as one of the comrades remarked at a CT meeting, "There is enough ego in this room to sink a battleship." Indeed there was, and it is proving to be more than enough to sink the CT "Titanic."

The refusal of the majority of the CT to unite with VANGUARD NEWSLETTER, after basic political agreement had been reached, characterizes it as a petty-bourgeois tendency, the leaders intent on inflating their own egos by attempting to set up their own shop. But even petty-bourgeois shopkeepers need some capital. The personal ambitions of the present leadership of the CT, however, will never let the remnants of the CT get out of debt to their own egos. It is hoped that a few of the comrades will learn from their experience and make their way back to revolutionary politics.

The POT will not be able to find any consolation in the demise of the CT for the very same fate awaits it and for basically the same reasons. Here too it is hoped that many of its cadres will correct their course and take up the proletarian road of Trotskyism.

The following speeches that were given on behalf of the CT at the SWP convention, then, represented the last healthy struggle by the CT for a revolutionary program and party. After the convention the CT abandoned serious political struggle to deal in the small change of personalities.

tionary Communist League (RCL)-- were all lynched at the last World Congress in 1969 with the considered help of the SWP.

All these groups had one thing in common. They were, to one degree or another, in disagreement with the International leadership. They disagreed and they were lynched!

The Verdad group was reduced to a so-called sympathizing group, because, it was somehow decided, that it was not the majority grouping in Argentina. In Germany, on the other hand, the International leadership attempted a maneuver to keep the majority of the section from being able to take over the leadership of the section. At a national congress of the German section, there was almost a deadlock, and so the congress disbanded without coming to any concrete decisions in order to continue discussion. In the meantime, the faction led by the Berlin comrades gained a majority. The comrades supported by the International, now in the minority, refused to allow a re-election of delegates in order that they might retain the leadership--later even resorting to expelling some comrades of the Berlin faction in order to regain a majority.

In Ceylon, Cde. Samarakkody wrote such a scathing criticism of the personal character and political wheeling-and-dealing of Cde. Bala Tampoe that the International has yet to release its contents to the comrades of the International. It was printed in an International Discussion Bulletin for leaderships only. Cde. Samarakkody was reported to have made some organizational mistakes and was, therefore, reduced to that familiar status of sympathizer.

The lynching of the English comrades was even more blatant. Both groups referred to earlier had been expelled bureaucratically from the IMG [International Marxist Group]. First was the Ken Coates grouping mainly in Nottingham and then a minority mainly concentrated in London and Bristol. This latter group was expelled--not long after a national convention at which they put forth a counter line--on trumped up charges, which were never proven and didn't have to be proven according to the leadership of the IMG. They were not running a bourgeois court, and circumstantial evidence was sufficient.

These two groups tried to exercise their democratic right by sending a common delegate to the World Congress to plead their case.

After traveling from England to Italy, this comrade was met at the train station by several of the leaders of the International and after a couple of hours was told to take the next train back to England. Not only was he not allowed to attend the Congress, he was not even allowed to represent the two expelled groups at the British commission set up by the Congress. This is the same World Congress that went on to declare the IMG the official section in England!

The IMG becoming the official section in England was in itself the result of a lynching which had occurred at the previous World Congress. The group known as the RSL [Revolutionary Socialist League] was at that time the official section and a good four times larger than the group which was to call itself the IMG. The comrades of the IMG could not get together with the RSL and refused to be a disciplined minority, splitting shortly after having fused with the RSL. At the Second Congress since reunification in 1965, the RSL attended as the official section from Britain. It also had the distinction of being the only minority with a counter-line document to that of the International leadership. The RSL, in spite of its disciplined attitude, huge majority and historical claim to the right of being the official section, was dropped to the status of sympathizer along with the IMG. The maneuver consisted of having no official section, then working hand and foot with the IMG and then recognizing the IMG as the official section.

Such maneuvers were really no different from those carried on by the International leadership under the direction of Pablo.

August 9, 1971, P. M.

Cde. Kerry's remarks here are not in the least surprising. The SWP, as we pointed out in our document¹, has, since WWII and as clearly stated by Cannon in the speech² referred to by Cde. Kerry, continually and consistently opposed the idea of a

democratic-centralist International. But Cde. Kerry objects at the same time to the idea that the SWP leadership maintains a position of federalism for the International. Then what kind of purebred, mongrel structure do you propose for the International? Cde. Kerry says we oppose a democratic-centralist International at this time, in this situation, under these conditions. But he refers to Cannon's speech of 18 years ago and says the SWP's position has not changed. We are continually told about how the whole world has changed and how the new world reality is closing in around us from all sides, but as far as the structure of the International is concerned, nothing has changed--the SWP stands adamantly against any democratic-centralist structure.

But what, Cde. Kerry, has changed from the founding of the world Trotskyist movement in 1938 to 1948 to justify dropping the democratic-centralist character of the International? The Fourth International was founded on a democratic-centralist structure--a cornerstone of its foundation. Cde. Trotsky spent the latter years of his life showing how the democratic-centralist structure was the touchstone of the difference between real internationalists and centrists. Cde. Kerry you have only proven once again our characterization of you and the present leadership as centrists.

What is it that changed between 1938 and 1948? At the Second World Congress the International was larger than it had ever been. The size and strength of our own party at the time can attest to that. Why is it that Cde. Trotsky argued for a democratic-centralist structure for the Fourth International that was even weaker and faced even greater problems and isolation at its founding than the International did at the Second World Congress, where the SWP opposed--and has continually done so since--a democratic-centralist structure? Cde. Kerry, it is you who has some explaining to do on this question, not Cde. Pierre Frank.

I have no love for Cde. Pierre

Frank--personally and politically Cde. Frank and myself get along like two roosters in a gunny sack--and I resent that such a character along with Mandel and Maitan can demagogically defend the position of democratic centralism in the International. And their defense is just that--demagogy! Their record of bureaucratic centralism in the International would make even Jack-the-Ripper shudder.

Under the point on the agenda, International Discussion in the World Trotskyist Movement, I showed how these bureaucratic maneuvers have not ceased in the least in the International since the days Healy, Pablo and Co. roused the majority of the English section and then went on to expel the majority of the French section--both of which were supported wholeheartedly by the SWP, just as they supported the lynching of those groups I mentioned at the last World Congress. And dear Cde. Frank just happened to be Pablo's choice to inherit the leadership of the rump French minority left in the International in 1952. Pablo, Frank and Co.'s centrist politics went hand in hand with their bureaucratic centrism, and things have not changed to this day.

Even after the SWP started unity feelers [1957] with the IS [International Secretariat] the IS leadership was busy dealing with dissenters on an organizational level. Japan is a typical example. The RCL [Revolutionary Communist League] according to Yamanishi, the founder of the Japanese section,

"sent Ota to the 5th Congress [1959]. Pablo used this chance to organize his own private faction in Japan through Ota... Returning from France, Ota assumed a very high-handed attitude, especially towards those comrades who took a critical attitude against the IS position on the French crisis. Then he split away from the Trotskyist League (now RCL) and formed a small group... starting slanders and falsifications of IC and 'Cannonites.' Despite the fact that RCL kept its

contact with IS very faithfully, Pablo systematically kept trying to help the Ota faction, neglecting or stopping the mailing of correspondence and materials to RCL."

The only difference between the Japanese experience and those of the comrades of Argentina, Ceylon, Germany and England at the last World Congress is that the latter had the official sanction of the World Congress. But the criteria has remained a constant--disagreement with the leadership of the International means "lynching", majority or no majority, and in the cases of the last World Congress mentioned above, the SWP was part and parcel to the lynching party.

There was one attempted lynching at the last World Congress, however, that the SWP couldn't even tolerate, since the SWP itself risked getting rope burns in the process. This was the attempt to remove Cde. Peng Shu-tse from the IEC / International Executive Committee / of the International. No doubt they will try again at the coming World Congress.

But Cde. Kerry--like Cannon--does not oppose the bureaucratic machinations of the International leadership; he opposes democratic centralism. Cannon gave as one of his reasons for opposing democratic centralism at this time, under these conditions, etc., the fact that minorities cannot be represented at international gatherings as they were in the Third International. Cde. Kerry uses this weakness to give warning to the present minorities that they will not even be allowed to be represented in the International in writing. You, Cde. Kerry, turn Cannon's objection based on an ostensibly democratic consideration into an excuse for a bureaucratic suppression of the rights of minorities.

We, Cde. Kerry, will not recognize you as the "highest body." For us the cadres of the International make up the highest body of our movement, and I, as a representative of the Communist Tendency, stand here and from this podium of the convention of the Socialist Workers Party make

an appeal to the rank and file of the Fourth International to defend the right of minorities in the Socialist Workers Party to intervene and make alliances on an international level as we see fit in the International.

I urge the comrades of the International who are here attending the convention to note carefully how, on the one hand, the SWP calls for the formation of an international tendency that will, no doubt, include minorities of sections such as the British section, while, on the other hand, any and all organized minorities of the SWP are proscribed in advance from any international collaboration.

Just as Cannon was a representative of a minority faction from the CP (USA) to the Third International, we expect to at least be represented through a written contribution, and we demand that right and will submit such a document to the leadership of the SWP for publication in the International discussion.

You, Cde. Kerry, will be forced to accept our contribution as within the norms of internationalism and thereby be embarrassed by its political criticism or to deal with us organizationally for submitting such a document, thereby exposing your inability to answer us politically and forcing you to deal with us in a bureaucratic way.

At the beginning of our resolution, the Communist Tendency stated that:

"The major contradiction expressing itself inside the party today is the discrepancy between the party's claim to represent the heritage of Lenin and Trotsky, i.e., Marxism, on the one hand, and the crass opportunism represented in its day to day political program, on the other."

We also stated that:

"Every political activity the party enters into is done on a multi-class basis, be it the women's liberation movement under the guise of 'sisterhood,' the Black

liberation movement under the guise of 'nationalism,' the anti-war movement under the guise of 'non-exclusion,' the struggle of the Chicanos and other minorities under the guise of 'third-worldism,' etc. These non-class categories have nothing in common with Marxism."

Here is precisely the problem. Unlike the PO [Proletarian Orientation] Tendency, we do not say that the party does not have a proletarian orientation because it is not working in the working class, although we think the party should be in the working class. We say that the party does not have a proletarian orientation because it does not make a class analysis of the movements it is participating in, and hand in hand with this it does not struggle for a working class line in these movements.

If the party did make a class analysis of these movements and if it worked in these movements struggling for a working class line, there would be no question about the party attempting to integrate itself into the working class today.

But the party will, as we predict, eventually turn to the proletariat--it cannot avoid it forever--but the party will do so on the very same basis that it now participates in the present movements. The party will turn to the proletariat with a multi-class approach--trying as Mandel in his neo-economics tries to do--to redefine the proletariat, incorporating within it not only petty-bourgeois elements but also elements that actually participate in the exploitation of the proletariat.

The party, in Cdes. Barnes' and Sheppard's document, now formally endorses the economic theories of Mandel. While this comes as no surprise, it is the first time the party has openly declared its support for Mandel's neo-capitalist theories. These theories lay the basis for the party's future multi-class approach in the labor movement. This can be seen from the present discussion where some comrades sup-

porting the leadership talk about making a turn to the proletariat once we have accumulated enough cadres, while other comrades supporting the leadership argue that our party is already working class in composition.

Our multi-class approach will also take the form--as it has already--of blocing with the labor skates. We have already withheld our criticism of many first-class bureaucrats who have entered the antiwar movement on the heels of their bourgeois masters. The alliances these bureaucrats are making today and those we are making with them, will only serve the future by containing the working class as the radicalization of the class begins to take place. As this radicalization deepens in the working class, the tendency of the party will be to "extend" this radicalization, not by rank and file action, but by continued blocing with the bureaucrats in order to "reach" the workers as we have done in the antiwar movement. The formula for the bloc with the bureaucrats is already laid out in the present NC resolution in that we must "first" fight the bosses. This algebraic formula is undoubtedly to be filled with the content of a bloc with certain labor leaders in the fight against the bosses. Once the bosses have been licked, we will be able to turn our attention to the labor bureaucrats. But this is utopia and can only lead the working class to defeat. The bureaucrats are totally incapable of leading any successful struggle, and any effective struggle against the bosses runs automatically headlong up against the labor skates. A struggle by the workers necessitates our warning and preparing the workers from the beginning against the devious machinations of the trade union bureaucracy. Anything else would be a dereliction of our revolutionary duty.

The multi-class approach to the existing movements has been justified by the idea that these movements are "independent." How these movements are "independent" is never explained. Are they "independent" because of their class character?

If they were working class in composition, the party might be able to answer yes. But since these movements are made up predominantly of students--a social layer in transition according to Mandel's economics--the party would be hard put to claim that such a movement as the antiwar movement was independent because of its class character. The only other criterion for declaring these movements "independent" is on the basis of their program. But the party has claimed that these movements are "independent" in spite of their program. For example, the women's liberation work is being organized at the present time around the purely bourgeois-democratic demand of "repeal all abortion laws." What then is meant by the label "independent"? Since these movements have neither a working class composition nor a working class program, the only thing they seem to be "independent" of is the working class. This is far closer to the truth than what the party would have us believe, i.e., that these developing movements are somehow "independent" from capitalist politics, especially since no small share of capitalist elements are participating in these movements.

The party tries to claim or merely assert that these movements are "objectively" anti-capitalist simply because they presently have found expression outside of the normal institutions of the capitalist order. To be in the streets or to have an extra-parliamentary character is enough to give this or that movement an "independent" character and transform it into an "objective" struggle against capitalism. Such impressionism, devoid of any class approach, defies the history of all reform movements. Almost all great reform movements under capitalism have started outside the existing institutions, some exploding onto the scene in a flurry of violence. But history has proven that they will eventually either die of their own accord or from suppression or will be accepted and integrated into the capitalist structure, unless a revolutionary leadership

can intervene with a working class program. These movements for reform can only become "independent" when they are fused with the class-struggle program of the working class, and it is the job of Marxists to go into these movements, not to be the best builders and foot-soldiers for these causes, but to raise the Transitional Program and struggle for the Transitional Program. Instead, we go into these movements to merely propagate to the masses the democratic slogans raised in these movements, many times even regressing, that is, adopting even more innocuous demands so that we can reach even greater and greater masses.

This has been the case in the antiwar movement, where we have gone from organizing committees in 1966 for immediate withdrawal to the present organizing of committees for "peace". (Here we would like to point out that the line of the organization is not determined by what it says it stands for but by the actual line it puts into practice.)

Another example of our regression--in order to appeal to even greater masses--was the watering down of the bourgeois-democratic demand of free abortion on demand to merely repeal all abortion laws. Not only do we not enter these organizations to fight for a class line, that is, the Transitional Program, but we capitulate even further to the alien class pressures in these movements in adopting the most undesirable demands being raised in these movements. This is why we say that the party's day to day program is marked by crass opportunism.

How, or in what fashion the existing movements are "independent," we are never told. We are just told they are--regardless of class criteria--"independent" and "objective" struggles in their own right against capitalism.

The new found or discovered "independence" of all these movements has found its expression in a new Marxist concept--"the combined character of the coming American revolu-

tion." What on earth is the "combined character of the coming American revolution?" In Boston we were told by Cde. Camejo that this was the same thing Trotsky talked about about in the History of the Russian Revolution when he discussed the combined character of the Russian Revolution. But the combined character of the Russian Revolution flowed from the fact that Russia was a backward country where two different revolutions, the bourgeois and the proletarian, of two different historical eras were combined due to the unevenness of Russia's development. The combined character of the Russian Revolution flowed from the theory of uneven and combined development which is characteristic of all backward countries. Surely the leadership does not want to claim that the bourgeois revolution has not been accomplished in the United States! But that is, nevertheless, the gist of their politics. The whole thrust of the day-to-day political program of the SWP revolves around democratic slogans.

Democratic slogans--often called democratic demands, in order to equate them with transitional demands as the SWP leadership does--are rapidly becoming the be-all and end-all of our practical work. Transitional demands are reserved, because of their "too advanced" character, for some future date when they will somehow come into their own. It is true generally, today, that most transitional demands can be only propagandistic and not agitational; but they can never become agitational unless there has been solid propaganda work done beforehand in preparation for events in which these demands will be the program of the coming revolution.

What is the correct way in which democratic slogans should be posed? First of all, we are not against democratic slogans. They express the gains the masses have made in struggle, and we never abandon a position once it has been achieved. Freedom of speech is absolutely necessary for the political organization of the class. These demands, therefore, have a primarily defensive charac-

ter in the imperialist countries, fascist or democratic.

In the backward countries they represent the undone work of the bourgeois revolution which must be carried out by the proletariat in a socialist revolution. Here they are clearly combined with transitional slogans in the combined character of the revolution in the backward countries. Here democratic slogans take on themselves a transitional character since they are an integral part of the Permanent Revolution.

In the advanced countries they have a totally different character, since they are designed to secure past gains for the proletariat, in order that it may pass over to the offensive more easily later on. The party's line is, however, that democratic slogans are very important in-and-of-themselves and acquire an equality or even superiority to transitional demands. This is the perspective only of petty-bourgeois radicalism which sees no need for transitional demands and the conquest of power, but only for an ever growing amelioration of present conditions. This was why the old slogan of "free abortions on demand" was so often mislabeled "transitional." Transitional to what, nobody knows. If you are incapable of raising transitional demands, then you simply decide that partial or immediate or democratic slogans are transitional.

This is the easy way out. This permits us to adapt ourselves with great ease to the petty-bourgeoisie and still be "revolutionists." Thus "free abortion on demand" proved to be unacceptable to our feminist-liberal allies, so we found a new "democratic demand"--repeal of abortion laws.

These democratic demands, with their mysterious transitional character, represent the re-incarnation of the old minimum program of the Social-Democracy on a new lower level. The Transitional Program represents in this case the "maximum program," which is continually being put off to a better day.

Treating "democratic demands" in this unique way was the hallmark of

the German emigre-"Trotskyists", who dreamt up the "Three Theses", and saw "democratic demands" as being the content of the European Revolution, which could not even raise the ideas of socialism. It was also the policy of Shachtman, Goldman and Morrow. These precedents apparently hold no interest for the NC, which proceeds on its merry way down the primrose path of "democratic demands."

Trotsky, on the other hand, approaches this question in a totally different way. Defense work has been in the past a treasure garden of purely democratic demands, where we get everybody to accept our right to free speech, etc. No further political questions are raised since they would remove the democratic character of the case. In the instance of the Trotsky Defense Committee which sought, totally correctly, to involve the maximum number of bourgeois liberals, etc., Trotsky proposed--in a letter to Shachtman and Novack which was totally ignored--the establishment of supporting committees among the workers as an area of political work to build our party and put pressure on the weak-kneed liberals, without compromising necessary political relations with them. This perspective was not adopted and never has been, which is why our defense work today is so sterile and routine.

Trotsky wrote in one of his last letters that we defend democracy "by our own means," that is, by the methods of the class struggle. Can anybody say that our defense work today uses the methods of the class struggle? Our defense work is on an exclusively democratic basis.

To use another example from the Transitional Program, it speaks of support for even "limited" demands such as the 18-year old vote, but only as a step in the "political mobilization of the youth," not as a means to adopt a legalistic electioneering attitude in every campus town.

Or take the referendum on the war, which Cde. Hansen mentioned. Our whole perspective should be to weak-

en the bourgeois state when giving this demand "critical support." It should not be our perspective, as it was last year in Massachusetts, to adapt completely to the liberals in the hope that they might "approve" our demand. The reason we support this slogan was totally forgotten in order to effect a bloc with the friendly liberals over this now contentless slogan. When John Kenneth Galbraith can see no contradiction between supporting our referendum and the McGovern-Hatfield Bill, one wonders how "critical," that is, political, our support is. In this instance, due to the liberals' disapproval of independent initiatives in an election year, even this adaptation was a wretched failure. The referendum was greatly weakened, with our consent, and even then it failed to win a majority for immediate withdrawal. This illustrates our inability to use democratic slogans correctly, and our use of them can illuminate no real long-term perspective. Democratic slogans when advanced correctly can be of great use, but when exalted to an all important status, they fall short--every time--of making any real gains. By themselves they are a dead end. If you want to get somewhere you need a different approach, a class struggle approach, the approach contained in the Transitional Program.

We too, like Cde. Hansen, find a lot of confusion over the question of democratic demands. In fact, we find his own explanation of democratic demands and their role a bit of a confusion. The slogan of self-determination for the Vietnamese, given as an example of a democratic demand by Cde. Hansen, shows clearly the confusion. In Vietnam this would be a bourgeois-democratic demand which Marxists would advance and fight for as in any backward country like Vietnam. But in the USA this demand does not have the character of a democratic demand. The struggle is merely to recognize the democratic right of the Vietnamese for self-determination which must be realized in the USA by a revolutionary defeatist program, and the slogans of revolutionary defeat-

ism are a long way from the bourgeois-democratic demands of the SWP.

It is false, as well, for Cde. Hansen to attribute the present guerrilla line of the International leadership as having been the result of a turn on the part of the International leadership. It is equally false that the International leadership was able to win a majority in the International for its line on guerrillaism due to the huge influx of ultra-left radical youth after May-June 1968.

The line being carried out today by the International leadership was formulated as early as 1957 and passed at the "Fifth World Congress" in 1958. Again this was after the SWP began to attempt reunification. The line of the SWP from reunification in 1963 up and until almost 1969, was no different from that of the International leadership. In fact, they, the SWP, voted for the present line at the 1968 Plenum of the International at which Cde. Peng was a minority of one. The cadres in Europe were recruited to that line, even to the point of themselves carrying out commando raids in Paris before May-June 1968.

It was the SWP that changed its line on guerrilla warfare. But it has not been a qualitative change in any sense. The SWP claims to support guerrilla warfare as a "tactic" in building mass revolutionary parties. But guerrilla warfare cannot be a "tactic" in the strategy of building a revolutionary party any more than any form of terrorism can be considered a "tactic" in the strategy of building the revolutionary party. Guerrilla warfare can only be considered a tactic in the strategy of seizing state power.

The SWP's alternative to the guerrilla warfare line of the International is not in any way a valid alternative. Just as the ultra-left program and tactics of the English section go hand in hand with their support of ultra-leftism for Latin America, so our super-legalistic, multi-class approach in the USA goes hand in hand with our student struggle alternative for Latin America.

We can agree with Cde. Hansen that "The Transitional Program is a burning actuality." But we disagree that the SWP is attempting in any way, shape or form to implement the Transitional Program, either in the USA or the rest of the world. A typical example is the Middle East, and all we can say to Cde. Horowitz is that if he doesn't think Fatah represents the Palestinian Kuomintang, then he is treading a Menshevik line. This is a political line that will lead to a similar disaster as in Algeria where we failed to implement the Transitional Program, twice supporting, instead, bourgeois-democratic nationalist movements on the order of Fatah.

In closing let me make an appeal to the cadres of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency. You must begin to see the thread of the class collaborationist politics which runs through every position of the SWP. You must begin to see the historical roots of that thread. You must break with unprincipled combinationism which characterizes your tendency and makes it so vulnerable to organizational attacks, thereby letting the leadership off the hook from answering you politically. Again we appeal to you to consider the general line of our document as the only counterresolution. If you have differences on this or that question, you will be allowed the democratic right of a minority in our faction. In this way we can struggle for the life of the party.

1. "Historical Roots of the Degeneration of the Fourth International and of the Centrism of the SWP--For a Return to the Proletarian Road of Trotskyism." This was the counter-resolution submitted by the Communist Tendency. Photocopies of this document and two other discussion articles are available from VANGUARD NEWSLETTER at the nominal price of \$1.50.

2. "Internationalism and the SWP" (Report at Majority Caucus Meeting, New York, May, 18, 1953). See Education for Socialists: Defending the Revolutionary Party and Its Perspectives.