

# **VANGUARD** newsletter

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## **The Only Road to Peace in Indochina-- the SOCIALIST REVOLUTION**



**New Orleans and Brooklyn:  
the Politics of the "Shoot-outs"**

**Teachers' Strikes Sweep Country**

**The Equal Rights Amendment --  
The Great Hoax**

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THE ONLY ROAD TO PEACE IN INDOCHINA--THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

The following leaflet was distributed by members of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER and the CLASS STRUGGLE LEAGUE at various peace marches called to coincide with the inauguration of Nixon on January 20th.

The largest of these demonstrations in Washington, DC reflected the split in the "peace" movement. The CP-backed coalition, the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice, aligning itself with the position of the bourgeois liberals and the Moscow and Peking bureaucrats, has raised the slogan, "Sign the Treaty Now." This cowardly and capitulationist demand which adequately serves the needs of the "soft" wing of US imperialism is also being put forward by an unsavory amalgam called the National Coalition to Sign the Treaty Now, clearly the brain-child of the Workers World Party-Youth Against War and Fascism. A scintilla to the left is the Maoist-led November 4th coalition based on the NLF's original 7 point program.

The SWP, restrained by its ostensible "Trotskyism," has avoided swallowing so crude a slogan while, at the same time, trying to avoid a split in its precious single-issue movement. While the "Militant" goes through the motions of a polemic against the slogan, the SWP goes

out of its way to ensure "united" peace action. In other words, it gives the Stalinists a free hand at demonstrations, ensuring the domination of the Stalinists and their slogans in the anti-war movement.

The "popular front" coalition, built largely through the muscle of the SWP, has now, like Frankenstein's monster, turned its back on its creator and even threatens to destroy it. A definitive anti-Trotskyist tone was clearly evident in many of the speeches at the Washington, DC rally, while the "Daily World" has taken a particularly shrill tone against the SWP.

The way to counter the sell-outs of world Stalinism both in the US and internationally is through the intervention of a revolutionary Trotskyist world party.

It is the task of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER and the CLASS STRUGGLE LEAGUE to begin to build that party which will win the working class to its banner and will be able to destroy once and for all the Stalinist block to the world revolution.

# THE ONLY ROAD TO PEACE IN INDOCHINA

## -- THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

The "peace" marches and demonstrations to put "pressure" on the White House which have been organized by the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) and the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice (PCPJ), the "popular front" of the Socialist Workers Party, the Communist Party and assorted liberals, have not stopped and cannot stop the attacks of US imperialism on the workers and peasants of Indochina.

Only the anti-war program of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER and the CLASS STRUGGLE LEAGUE for a coordinated and revolutionary struggle of the international working class for the victory of the revolution in Indochina as an integral part of the international socialist revolution can achieve a real and lasting peace. We call upon the international working class to:

- 1) boycott US products and blacklist all cargo which can be used by the US imperialists against the Indochinese masses.
- 2) demand that the Soviet Union and China give the Indochinese sufficient military assistance for defensive and offensive actions against US forces there.
- 3) call upon the masses in Indochina for a revolutionary struggle which alone can end their quarter-century of bloodshed and suffering. A coordinated military offensive in all Indochina, not the limited defensive actions which wait upon a counterrevolutionary deal by Soviet and Chinese bureaucrats. Not guarantees to the "national" capitalists and concessions to the landlords in a government of national "concord," but the program of the socialist revolution--the overthrow of capitalism, socialization of the means of production and the land by the working class at the head of the peasantry. Workers power! The "dictatorship of the proletariat."
- 4) build a network of rank-and-file caucuses in the US trade unions on the Trotskyist transitional program to unite the workers and to link their daily struggles not only to the struggle against the US imperialist war in Indochina, but also to the socialist revolution.

For us, the revolutionary Marxists, the war is here--as well as in Indochina. The enemy is the same. The longshoremen striking for job security, the construction workers fighting against scab labor, the aerospace workers fighting against the wage-"price" freeze, the millions of unemployed workers and youth, a large part of whom are black and brown, are in the same struggle against capitalist oppression as our class brothers and sisters in Indochina. The pacifists and social-opportunists would prefer to omit this class question to make the peace movement bland and acceptable to the largest numbers of "respectable" middle class protesters with the blessings of the "soft" wing of US imperialism. Alarmed at the cost of the war to the economy in inflation, in radicalization of youth, the especially oppressed Black and Spanish-speaking people and in the increased militancy of workers in defense of their standard of living, the "soft" wing was ready to settle for the earlier guarantee by international Stalinism that the capitalist status-quo would be maintained in Indochina and throughout the world. Nixon and the "hard" wing, however, continued to rain billions of tons of bombs on North Vietnam to achieve a more secure guarantee for the US puppet regime in South Vietnam.

The Indochinese workers and peasants have suffered incredible hardships. But the last thing they need is another Geneva agreement which, in 1954, gave the capitalists and landlords six years to regroup their forces. This war will not be settled by another such compromise or by "neutraliza-

tion," as the Stalinist proponents of "peaceful coexistence" would have us believe. The Indochinese struggle is only part of the international class struggle which can end only in the victory of one class over the other.

The founding document of the NLF called for a, "...foreign policy of peace and neutrality....Industrialists and traders! A country under the sway of foreign sharks cannot be an independent and sovereign economy. You should join the people's struggle." This program betrays the heroic guerrilla fighters who have not fought against two imperialisms so that "native progressive capitalists" could develop the Vietnamese market! The NLF and North Vietnamese leaders share the same basic Stalinist politics as the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies which have refused to adequately arm them (the surface-to-air missiles are old models). It will not be a victory for the Vietnamese masses but a defeat if a "neutralist" capitalist regime is imposed on them as the NLF program proposes. Such so-called "neutralist" regimes are fine for issuing propoganda in militant "third world" language while murdering their own workers and peasants. In Ceylon, the "neutralist" regime of Bandaranaike, supported by Soviet and Chinese Stalinists as well as western imperialists, murdered thousands of revolutionary youth three years ago. In Egypt, the "neutralist" regime which --in contrast to the North Vietnamese--is armed with the latest Soviet weapons, shoots down students in the streets. In Peru, the "neutralist" military regime backed by the Communist Party has sent the army against striking miners and abolished the peasant unions. A "neutralist" regime of this stripe is what Kissinger and Le Duc Tho agreed to behind closed doors last October: the Thieu regime was to maintain control over its own areas, i.e., the principle cities, with its army and police. In these conditions, "neutral inspection monitors" were to supervise "free elections!" (One of the inspection teams was to be "neutral" Indonesia, whose army slaughtered 500,000 Communists and their sympathizers in 1965). Instead of a sell-out deal, US troops must be immediately and unconditionally withdrawn!

The refusal of the Australian dockers to unload US ships shows what can be done to stop US imperialism. Although the boycott has now been called off by the Australian labor bureaucrats, the fight must continue in every country for an international working class boycott of US products.

Within the US, we fight to build caucuses in the unions to oust the labor bureaucrats--including the Labor for Peace union leaders who, in response to the "soft" wing of imperialism, do nothing but buy newspaper ads--and to prepare the US working class for strike action to stop the war. Instead of the pitiful strategy of the PCPJ of supporting anti-labor Democratic Party candidates like McGovern, who supported the war until it began to cost too much, we fight to build a workers' party--a labor party which will fight for rank-and-file workers as well as for the unemployed, the racially oppressed Blacks and Chicanos and the youth of this country.

IMMEDIATE UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL OF US TROOPS AND ARMS FROM INDOCHINA!

NO SELL-OUT DEALS! ALL POWER TO THE INDOCHINESE WORKERS AND PEASANTS!

.....	.....
VANGUARD NEWSLETTER	CLASS STRUGGLE LEAGUE
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TEACHERS' STRIKES SWEEP COUNTRY by an AFT Local 420 member

In the first strike in St. Louis public school history, teachers of both St. Louis teachers' organizations, demanding union recognition and a contract providing for an 11% increase and other gains, joined teachers on strike in Philadelphia, Chicago and Superior, Wisconsin on January 22nd.

The St. Louis Board of Education failed in its attempt to divide the teachers in the St. Louis Teachers Union, affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and representing 75% of the 4,100 public school teachers from the Teachers Association, affiliated with the National Education Association.

It was revealed that the Board has \$3.9 million in surplus funds which it refuses to use to meet the demands of the teachers. The Board, which until now has also refused to engage in collective bargaining with St. Louis teachers, has responded to their demand to "open the books" by agreeing to allow the CPA auditing firm which gets all its business and which it controls to "examine" the books.

Throughout the US, the educational system and teachers especially are facing the prospects of four more years of "Nixonomics." The real meaning of Nixon's statement that the American people are "too pampered" is made clear by his veto of federal aid to education bills as well as plans for the elimination of even the token "War on Poverty" programs left over from the Johnson Administration. At the same time, it has been announced that the cost of bombing North Vietnam last year was over \$2 billion.

The expansion of the European Common Market threatens to heat up a growing trade war in which US capitalism must cut the wages and social welfare programs of the US working class.

On the local level, in city after city, school boards are "holding the line on teacher salaries" and reducing the quality of education in larger classes with fewer teachers, school aides, day care workers and also in reduced school facilities for sports and other educational programs.

Detroit schools recently were

faced with a threat of total closure for eight weeks beginning in November. The AFT's "More Effective Schools Program" to improve instruction in ghetto schools, has been slashed in NY, Detroit and Baltimore. Schools in a large area of East Harlem were boycotted recently to protest the reduction in teaching staff. Rank-and-file teachers in cities such as Philadelphia, Chicago and Washington, DC have found it necessary to strike in recent months in order to get meager salary increases in the face of a galloping inflation rate.

The Philadelphia teachers, who had gone on strike in September for 3 weeks and had returned to work under the old contract while negotiations continued, have now been forced to resume their strike after being refused any increase this year and a minimal 3% increase next year.

Particularly hard hit by the mammoth jump in living costs are members of St. Louis Teachers Union, AFT Local 420. There has been no increase in base salary of \$7,200 for the past four years. This salary scale is already 1 to 2 thousand dollars behind other major US cities.

This situation led to a militant rank-and-file revolt at the first local meeting last fall. A vacillating union leadership was forced by a binding motion from the floor to demand a \$1,000 a year increase from the Board to begin in January.

In spite of militant speeches, the conservative methods of Local 420 President Demosthenes DuBose can only weaken the struggle. To win their demands, the teachers must present them as part of the working class' defense against the ruling class' "Phase 3" wage "controls" and attacks on labor and youth. Strike support committees among parents and high school students must be organized in every district. The powerful forces of organized labor must

be mobilized to bring out teamsters, auto workers, etc., in solidarity demonstrations. The suggestion by Brother Ernie, a Central High School teacher, for a joint action pact with city workers' unions must be effected.

Plans are now being made for the establishment of a rank-and-file caucus in the St. Louis Teachers Union. Although the Socialist Workers Party has a fraction in Local 420, it has limited itself to calling for more teacher participation in NPAC's "popular front" peace parades. A real rank-and-file caucus would include elements of the following fighting program:

- 1) No retreat on the \$1,000 a year wage increase demand. A full cost-of-living escalator clause in every teachers' contract.
- 2) For a rapid merger with the St. Louis Teachers Association on the program of the rank-and-file.
- 3) Make the AFT's "More Effective Schools Program" and 20-20 (twenty teaching hours a week with a limit of 20 students per

class) major bargaining demands. Establish liaison committees for workers' control of the schools by teachers with other workers in the community.

- 4) Put the local on record for:
  - a) strike action by the labor movement against the Indo-chinese war and Nixon's wage "controls."
  - b) the building of a labor party, a workers' party independent of the Democrats and Republicans.

The last demand is especially significant in view of the vague call by Wells Keddie, a former member of the UAW, a present member of the executive board of Education Local 189 and a professor at Rutgers University, for discussion of a labor party in the December 1972 "American Teacher." Of course, such a labor party must be based on the rank-and-file of the trade unions and not on bureaucrats such as Selden, who spent \$30,000 of AFT money on McGovern, or that other rising star among teacher labor bureaucrats, Shanker.

#### NEW ORLEANS AND BROOKLYN: THE POLITICS OF THE "SHOOT-OUTS" by David Jones

In the present crisis of capitalism, when the bourgeoisie is engaged in rolling back the living standards of the working class, the especially oppressed and super-exploited sections of this class become singled out for special attention.

The same racist forces that precipitated the demonstrations of the sailors aboard the Kitty Hawk and the Constellation and of the students at Baton Rouge also brought Marx Essex to an act of individual terrorism at Howard Johnson's in New Orleans.

Giarusso, the New Orleans' Chief of Police, claims that Essex was not alone, but was only one member of a small elite militant group dedicated to racial murders. To support his case, Giarusso has supposedly discovered a chambermaid who reportedly overheard Essex claim that his actions were the "real revolution." The Chief has also managed to dig up some young reporter who supposedly witnessed an accomplice of Essex, in plain view,

shout, "Power to the People," shortly after Essex's death. What has not been explained, however, is the manner by which his supposed accomplice(s) managed to escape the 200 blood-thirsty cops armed with everything from "elephant" guns (Weather by 460 magnums) to fully automatic weapons (AR-15). The "escapees" would seem to be only the excuse for a witch-hunt.

As even the liberal bourgeois press has acknowledged, Essex's act was the end-product of racial oppression. In his hometown of Emporia, Kansas, Essex was considered a quiet and thoughtful individual, not likely to be attracted to terrorism. But, as his family has testified, the racism that Essex had experienced in the Navy "changed

his whole way of thinking." Essex had returned from the Navy with a social awareness, albeit influenced by the reactionary ideology of the Black Muslims. Having the courage of his convictions, he took matters into his own hands: suicidal individual terrorism.

As revolutionary Marxists, we can appreciate the heroic spirit of self-sacrifice in the struggle against racism which motivated Essex without condoning the act. Terrorism built upon individual frustration does not serve to promote revolution or revolutionary consciousness, but is an act that is manipulated by the bourgeoisie to alienate the proletariat from the revolutionary vanguard, imaginary or real.

In addition, Essex's targets were not only the police, who do represent the "law and order" of capitalist oppression and special oppression, but also firemen, who are workers, as well as other white occupants of the hotel.

By stoking the fires of racism, the ensuing search for the unknown "accomplices" will serve as the mask for a wholesale raid upon the Black community, whether it be to "finish off" the reformist Black Panthers, instigate a campaign against the right-wing nationalist Black Muslims, justify the murder of Black students at Baton Rouge and also against "revolutionists" in general.

Although complicated by a feud between the Hanafi Moslems and the Black Muslims, the "shoot-out" in Brooklyn by four Black members of the Hanafi Moslems and the police in the aftermath of an aborted hold-up of a gun store must also be seen by Marxists as a distorted expression of the struggle against racist oppression.

The Black Muslims have been able

to appeal to the most oppressed layers in the Black ghettos by presenting as an answer to white chauvinism, a Black separatism which, however, has no concrete national territorial focus and is put forth in religious guise. Black nationalism of this vague and mystical nature has been the stock-in-trade of petty-bourgeois opportunists such as Elijah Mohammed, Baraka and Matthews, who have been able to line their pockets with the profits of the ghetto businesses which have been created as an integral part of the process.

To an extent, Black nationalism provides an outlook to counter the hopelessness of a life of poverty, unemployment or dead-end jobs, miserable housing and schools in which lumpenization grows apace, and has thus succeeded in winning Black recruits, among the most prominent, Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali. With the recognition that the Black Muslims' "solution" to the misery of Black oppression leads nowhere, competing groups, such as the Hanafi Moslems, organized by disenchanting former Black Muslims have also grown.

The solution to racism does not lie on the roof-top of Howard Johnson's in New Orleans or in conversion to the various Islamic sects, but in organizing the proletariat for social revolution. It is because there is not as yet a Leninist and Trotskyist working class vanguard party able to show another road, that of the class struggle in opposition to individual terrorism and Black nationalism, that acts of despair such as Essex's occur.

It is the duty of all those who consider themselves Marxists to smash the racial barriers which split the working class, to unite Black and white on a class basis in struggle against special oppression and for the socialist revolution.

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THE CP'S ASSAULT ON THE YSA by Les Brown

Once again, the Communist Party (CP) and its periphery, confronted with the dilemma of having to defend bankrupt political positions in open discussion, "solved" the problem by resorting to their past practice of using physical brutality against their political opponents.

Reprinted below is part of a press release issued by the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) which found itself the aggrieved party this time:

"In New York City the Borough of Manhattan Community College Young Socialist Alliance has been denied campus recognition by the Student Government Association (SGA). The YSA charter was revoked after a campaign was launched by Richard Hoyen, a national leader of the Young Workers Liberation League, and supporters of the Third World Coalition at the November 22 SGA meeting. The YSA was charged with being 'agents,' 'provocateurs,' 'divisive' and a 'political threat' to all campus organizations. The SGA made it clear that the issue was the politics of the YSA. Because the SGA did not agree with the ideas of the YSA, the YSA would be denied a charter. During the meeting, Richard Hoyen argued that the SGA should see as its task the 'physical elimination' of the YSA, though, he added, 'the time is not right.'

" At the next SGA meeting, November 29, the YSA appealed this decision. After discussion, the SGA placed the question of the YSA charter into its Political Education Committee, whose chairman is Richard Hoyen.

" After the YSA members left the meeting, Richard Hoyen initiated an incident by attempting to force them to leave the building. When they resisted, YSA member Will Stanley was knocked to the ground by three SGA members and kicked several times."

Revolutionary socialists should be painfully aware that, historically, the most bankrupt organizations in the workers' movement have relied on violence to silence the voices of revolutionaries, from

small time hooliganism to outright Stalinist murders, in an effort to cover up their inability to defend political positions in the Bolshevik tradition of open discussion.

We condemn this act of hooliganism just as we have condemned every such act, including the hooligan attack by the SWP, the parent organization of the YSA, on members of Socialist Forum (SF), who were attacked for daring to give out campaign literature in critical support of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) at an SWP election campaign rally.

The following is an excerpt of an SF press release:

"New York, Nov. 8--Members and sympathizers of the Socialist Forum (SF) organization were physically barred, threatened, and assaulted by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) at an election rally of that tendency held Saturday night, November 4, at the Hunter College Playhouse.... A goon squad, headed by an individual who identified himself as the 'campaign organizer for New York' approached... clearly indicating that the failure of SF to leave 'voluntarily' would lead to physical violence against an opposing socialist tendency.... As Malcolm Kaufman, Corresponding Secretary for SF and a delegate in the Social Service Employees Union Local 371, began to verbally protest, the SWP's hooligans grabbed members of the SF contingent. Further violence was averted only when Kaufman made it... clear that SF would vacate the premises under protest, but would widely publicize the criminal act of the SWP...."

In an effort to bring this kind of hooliganism to a halt, VANGUARD NEWSLETTER has entered into a united front for defense with the SF and the National Caucus of Labor Committees which is open to all organiza-

tions in the workers' movement which will agree to physically and politically defend all organizations on our side of the class line from hooligan attacks and their right

SUPPORT THE LIRR STRIKERS!

[We print below a statement distributed by Harry Turner for VANGUARD NEWSLETTER at a press conference called by the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC) at the Community Church in NYC on January 12, 1973 in support of the LIRR strikers. The occasion was also used by the NCLC to promote the candidacies of Tony Chaitkin and Leif Johnson for Mayor and Comptroller respectively in 1973's NYC mayoralty elections. VANGUARD NEWSLETTER's statement is supported by the CLASS STRUGGLE LEAGUE.

[Cde. Turner introduced the statement by informing the four representatives of the press who were present that VANGUARD NEWSLETTER is published monthly by an organization of revolutionary socialists who were concerned to build a US section of an international Leninist and Trotskyist party able to lead the working class in a socialist revolution.

[In summarizing the program in defense of the LIRR strikers, Cde. Turner made clear that this defense had to be an integral part of a united struggle led by the organizations of the working class against ruling class attacks. He also

5,000 strikers in 12 non-operating unions--carmen, teamsters, clerks electrical and sheet metal workers--are demanding pay parity with the Long Island Railroad's (LIRR) trainmen of the United Transportation Union (UTU) who, in refusing to cross the picket line, have brought the LIRR to a halt.

The strikers are conducting a struggle, not only in their own behalfs, but also as part of the resistance of the US working class to the attack by the ruling class and its state upon the wages and working conditions of the working class as a whole.

The liberal "NY Times" and "NY Post," the conservative "Daily News," liberals and conservatives within and

to distribute and sell their literature. The united front is still available to the SWP, the YSA and, yes, even to the CP.

pointed out that a struggle had to be waged against the present labor misleaders within the organized labor movement.

[A few days later, construction labor bureaucrat now Secretary of Labor Brennan demonstrated his usefulness to the ruling class in rescuing the LIRR. Brandishing the club of compulsory arbitration, he "persuaded" the labor misleaders of the non-operating unions to call off the strike and to accept the original 6% offer of the MTA and the Presidential board/pending the negotiation of a final contract.

[Although Anthony F. D'Avanzo chief negotiator for the unions and the General Chairman of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen tried to convince the rank-and-file that, "all issues are still on the table for discussion." Ronan of the MTA had earlier stated that the acceptance of the 6% was "more than a temporary settlement."

[VANGUARD NEWSLETTER's judgement as to the present role of the "labor lieutenants of capital" in enforcing the anti-labor regulations of the ruling class is thus speedily confirmed.]

without the Democratic and Republican parties of big-business are united in calling for compulsory "arbitration" and an end to the right to strike, in demanding that Pres. Nixon resubmit the Crippling Strikes Prevention Bill--which he had temporarily shelved in order to win labor support in the last election--and in supporting bills in the NY State legislature which would place

the LIRR and other railroad workers under the jurisdiction of the Taylor Law.

The general crisis of world capitalism in the "epoch of imperialist decay" is now reasserting itself after a prolonged post-war period of economic growth. The fundamental contradiction of capitalism, between the still expanding productive forces and the limited world market, impels the capitalist in every country to attack the living standards of the workers. On August 15, 1971, in announcing the "solution" to US inflation on the backs of the workers through a "Phase 1" 90-day freeze on wages, Pres. Nixon also threw down the gauntlet in his "new economic policy" to US imperialism's rivals. US imperialism hegemony would be defended against its Japanese and West German (now European Common market) competitors; the US negative balance of trade and payments would be solved at their expense by revaluing their currencies; the billions of over-valued US dollars flooding Europe and Japan and worsening their inflation would no longer be convertible into gold; US big business would receive, at the same time, tax "incentives" to "stimulate" export trade.

Nixon's newly-announced "Phase 3" policy retains the iron hand in the velvet glove of "self-administering" and "voluntary compliance" with wage and price "guidelines." It reflects to some degree the improved economic conjuncture, the demands of landlords--federal rent controls are abolished--and of big-business for greater "flexibility" in setting prices and the new horse and rider "partnership" with "labor" first announced with the appointment of Peter J. Brennan as Secretary of Labor; the "labor lieutenants" of capital are now to be coopted into "all policy making posts" to directly enforce the ruling class' anti-labor regulations. Nixon retains the right to "roll-back unreasonable increases" in the event that his "lieutenants" fail in their "duties."

In spite of the temporary economic improvement, the US ruling class is aware that in this period a convul-

sive trade war--which leads to another more devastating world war--is on the agenda and that its dominance in the world market along with its imperialist power rests, in the final analysis, on the superiority of its productive forces, on its ability to produce more commodities at a lower price than its competitors. It is this understanding that makes it crack the whip for "productivity" and wage "controls."

Dr. William J. Ronan, the head of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), the State authority which owns and operates the LIRR, has adamantly held to his offer of a 6% increase--the same 6% offered by the Presidential emergency board acting under the Railway Labor Act--against the unions demand for a 14% increase in each of 2 years along with higher pensions to match those of the NY City subway and bus workers. Ronan, however, presents the strikers with the poisoned chalice of "productivity" improvements for a settlement beyond the 6%. But, the LIRR has been achieving greater "productivity," i.e., speed-up, by "attrition," by not replacing workers who retire or die--at the expense of safety and service for those who are forced to use it. The unions have estimated that the "productivity"-speed-up amounts to 9% of the 14% per year which they have demanded.

Frightening the 90,000 commuters and 80,000 one-way riders with horror tales that acceding to the strikers demands would necessitate much higher fares, would add \$36 million to the LIRR's present yearly deficit of \$46 million--in reality, it would cost \$6 million, the amount already set aside for wage increases--Ronan confidently stands pat while calling for the whip of compulsory "arbitration" to drive the strikers back to work.

The same whip is being prepared for the Penn Central railroad workers in the UTU when the 30 day postponement of the strike expires which Assistant Secretary of Labor W. J. Usery, Jr. requested. The UTU had called a strike in an-

swer to the announcement by Penn Central that, beginning January 12, 1973, the jobs of 5,600 conductors and brakemen would be done away with by "attrition."

At the beginning of the railroad era, the capitalist "robber barons" who were given the franchise were able to amass huge fortunes by looting the "public" treasury and lands. Today, when the railroads find difficulty competing with later forms of transportation, when their equipment and facilities have been allowed to deteriorate, the railroad interests again fall back on the "public" treasury. Although it was known to be without market value, the bankrupt LIRR, then a subsidiary of the Pennsylvania Railroad (now the bankrupt Penn Central)--which had milked it dry and then used it as a tax write-off--was bought by NY State for \$65 million.

The unity of the working class on the following program in defense of its immediate and fundamental class interests can defeat the ruling class attack:

- 1) Unity of all railroad workers and of all trade unionists in the fight for the independence of the unions from the state!
  - against the Federal slave-labor Crippling Strikes Prevention Bill.
  - against all attempts to place the LIRR and other railroad workers under the NY State slave-labor Taylor Law.
  - against anti-labor "controls." No labor representatives on Federal "advisory" committees, "productivity" commissions or

any other state post. Drive the labor misleaders who are helping the ruling class to hamstring the workers out of the labor movement.

- Fight the Federal and State slave-labor laws by organizing regional and national general strikes.
- 2) For a workers' party based on the trade unions independent of the parties of the bosses to stop the ruling class offensive against the wages and working conditions of the working class.
- 3) For the unity of the workers in the struggle against the special oppression of the Black, Spanish-speaking people and women in the interests of all workers.
- 4) For construction of rank-and-file caucuses within trade unions and a network of caucuses to fight for an alternative leadership which will unite the labor movement, the unorganized, unemployed and all oppressed.
  - Against "productivity"-speed-ups--jobs for all--a sliding scale of wages and hours without a cut in pay to end unemployment.
  - For the nationalization of all railroads without compensation under workers' management and control.
  - Expropriate the LIRR bondholders--no increase in the fare.
  - Financial and physical strike support by all of labor in the NY metropolitan area to the LIRR's strikers.

THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT--THE GREAT HOAX

By Marian Arnold and Susan Viani

Future bourgeois historians looking back on the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, if the workers permit capitalism to survive, will hail it as "a great victory of the Women's Liberation Movement" and "the final step in granting women complete equality with men in the United States."

More sober historians may add: "just as emancipation for the Blacks, free silver for the farmers, and the franchise for women did not prove

panaceas for these groups, so the Equal Rights Amendment did not solve all the economic and social problems faced by women." The second evalu-

ation is a distorted understatement; the first a blatant lie. The time has come to examine the Equal Rights Amendment not from the point of bourgeois feminism which dominates the Womens Liberation Movement but from that of communism.

Marxists understand that it is impossible to emancipate women, or any other oppressed group, under capitalism because of the essential inequality within the forms of bourgeois equality.

"So long as the power of capitalism and private property continue to exist, the emancipation of women from subservience to her husband cannot proceed further than her right to dispose of her property and earnings as she sees fit, and also decide on equal terms with her husband the destiny of their children." ("Work Among Women" Resolution of the 3rd Congress of the Communist International, 1921)

These rights, which have some significance for bourgeois women, offer no solution to the basic problems facing the vast majority of the female population. Proletarian women form a super-exploited layer in capitalist society. Most of the 42.7% of all women in the US who work provide surplus value directly to the capitalists' coffers.

As Marx has pointed out, the labor power of workers is sold to the capitalists--traditionally, the male "bread winners"--for a wage equivalent to the basic and socially determined necessities of life, i.e., food, clothing, shelter and education, for themselves and their families, thus enabling the next generation of workers to survive and replace them as workers. The labor of the so-called "housewife," historically, was "paid" by the capitalist in the form of wages to her husband. However, with the development of capitalism, the "housewife" also finds it necessary to work in order to acquire the means of subsistence for the family and thus, the labor of women in the home is now unpaid in essence as well as in form.

Women supply untold hours of

unpaid, tedious labor as household slaves, keeping house and rearing children. All of this labor time, for which the capitalists pay nothing isolates traditional "housewives" from social production and makes them largely dependent on their husbands. Working women in bourgeois society continue to bear the primary responsibility for the home and children. The "nuclear family" as an isolated economic unit is inefficient and cannot provide the best care for children. Women, as is the case with workers from the super-exploited minorities, form a disproportionate part of the reserve army of unemployed.

Only the proletarian revolution can free women from the drudgery they suffer under capitalism.

"Only under communism, not merely the formal, but the actual equalization of women will be achieved. The woman will be the rightful owner, on a par with all the members of the working class, of the means of production and distribution. She will participate in the management of industry and she will assume an equal responsibility for the well-being of society." (3rd Comintern Congress)

The activities of the isolated household in capitalist society will be replaced with public industries and the responsibility for the best rearing of every child will rest not with his or her parents but with society as a whole. Only under communism when the material needs of society are satisfied through the cooperative work of its producers will women and men be free to develop their personalities and their relationships with other people.

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), so widely hailed by feminist groups, is not a reform wrested by women from the bourgeoisie. It is a tool the ruling class is using to increase its exploitation of female and male workers in an attempt to get out of its current international financial difficulties. The fact that feminist groups and some trade unions are calling for the passage

of the ERA only makes it easier for the capitalists to pull off their cruel hoax.

Capitalism depends on the existence of a reserve army of the unemployed, or marginal labor force. These people, the last hired and first fired, are brought into the productive process only when needed. Because they are unorganized and in need of work, they will often sell their labor power more cheaply and work under worse conditions than their more secure brothers and sisters. They are often used as scabs and to drive down the living standard of the entire proletariat.

This logic is sometimes accepted by backward workers in the essential interests of the capitalist class as the basis for excluding women, Blacks, the Spanish-speaking and workers from other especially oppressed minorities from the organized labor force or to keep them in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. It is necessary for the revolutionists to fight for class consciousness, i.e., understanding that struggle against chauvinism of all kinds is an essential part of their own struggle for wages and working conditions.

In the earlier stages of the industrial revolution women also formed a large percentage of the labor force. Lenin emphasized that despite conditions in capitalist factories:

"...it must be stated that the drawing of women and juveniles into production is, at bottom, progressive....By destroying the patriarchal isolation of these categories of the population who formerly never emerged from the narrow circle of domestic, family relationships, by drawing them into direct participation in social production, large-scale machine industry stimulates their development and increases their independence...." (Lenin, The Emancipation of Women, pps. 13-16)

However, since the late nineteenth century in the advanced capitalist countries women have come increasingly to be part of the reserve army of the unemployed. Between the

Civil War and World War I through immigration, the developing Northern industry in the US had a seemingly inexhaustible source of cheap labor. The comparatively small Southern industry could likewise draw from a large mass of impoverished tenant farmers. During World War I a great number of Blacks moved North to escape the lynchings and harassment of the South and to get jobs in the Northern war industries. When the white workers returned from the war, the Blacks were thrown into the marginal labor force. Throughout this period, when the capitalists had a continually renewed supply of cheap labor, one of the major issues in labor struggles was the right of workers to organize and be represented by a union. Employers used every possible tactic: intimidation, black-lists, starvation, scabs, and the legislative, judicial, executive, and military branches of the bourgeois state to break strikes and destroy unions. Only the development of industrial unionism and the formation of the CIO in the 30's forced the capitalists to grant strikes a semblance of legality.

Women have played an important role in the history of the labor movement. In the post Civil War period they organized themselves but were forced to remain in local unions separate from the men. In 1881 the Knights of Labor admitted women. It was not until 1918 that the AF of L allowed women to join its national and international unions. Women's role has been significant, often decisive, in every major labor struggle whether they have been on strike themselves or supporting militant actions in predominantly male industries. However, the trend in this century, except during World War II, has been for men to replace women in heavy industry. Women have increasingly been relegated to the commercial proletariat and the service branches of the economy. Thus, although women have been militant fighters for the proletariat they today are largely unorganized. Less than 20% of union members are women although they con-

stitute almost 40% of all workers. One in seven working women is in a union while one in four working men is organized.

One major area of struggle throughout the history of the labor movement has been for protective legislation for women regulating: the hours they are forced to work, the rest periods they must have, the conditions under which they can work, the weights they should lift, etc. The labor movement did not fight for this legislation because it was made up of "male chauvinist pigs" who did not think women could work as hard as men but to lessen the amount of surplus value the capitalists could wring from women's labor. Each of these laws, won in struggle assures a slightly more tolerable work situation for women workers who are still responsible for the family.

It is not accident, and no victory for the Womens' Liberation Movement, that the ERA has reappeared today. The last time the ERA received serious consideration was during World War II when women were working in all branches of industry replacing the men who were at war. The capitalists found the protective legislation for women a hinderance to the super-profits they were making out of the imperialist war. The Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers were strongly behind the passage of the ERA. With the end of the war and the temporary stabilization of the capitalist economy the bourgeoisie no longer felt the necessity of ridding itself of the protective legislation.

Today, again, capitalists want to use their reserve army of unemployed to increase their exploitation of the proletariat. American capitalism is no longer competitive with its European and Japanese rivals. It can no longer afford to buy off the American workers with the super-profits it makes from the foreign proletariat. The bourgeois wage-"price" freeze of August 15, 1972 was but the first step in its attempt to stabilize its economic position and insure its profits on the backs of the American and foreign working class. The ERA is

another step.

Because such a large percentage of working women are unorganized the only defense they have is the state and federal protective laws. The ERA is intended to abolish all protective legislation. Many women's liberation groups, some trade unions and even some socialists say the ERA should extend all protective legislation to cover men. However, this is at best naivety and at worst out-right deception. Title VII of the 1965 Civil Rights Act has already been used to knock down protective legislation for women in many states. The same bourgeois courts which used Title VII to benefit the capitalists will not have a change of heart and apply the ERA to benefit the working class. The state is a means of class domination. In bourgeois society it is an instrument of bourgeois class rule. The ERA would, at best, benefit a small layer of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois professional and executive women, leaving the mass of proletarian and lower petty-bourgeois women at the "mercy" of the capitalists. With the passage of the ERA the capitalists will be freed to exploit women's labor to the fullest and to use them to threaten male workers and drive down the standard of living of the entire working class even further.

Maximum hours laws for women in some states have already been abolished by Title VII. The ERA would make them unconstitutional. This means that women are "free" to work as much overtime as they can. Although many workers need overtime to increase their income it is actually a capitalist tool. Through overtime capitalists are able to amortize their constant capital investments faster to partially counteract the falling rate of profit. Overtime also increases unemployment by working fewer people longer hours. Further, overtime holds wages down; the workers' paychecks are larger, however, this means that a 40 hour work week does not provide a decent standard of living. By giving workers "overtime," capitalists can pay less for straight time work, ~~women~~

who have to work overtime to support their families are condemned to 48, 56 or more hours a week of brutalizing, difficult, dehumanizing work on an assembly line, plus cooking, cleaning, rearing children...

Instead of hailing the "right" of women to work overtime, communists should put forth the demand for a sliding scale of wages and hours. We must show that the only way to end unemployment is to shorten the work week until everyone has a job. At the same time, no worker should make less money than she or he now does for forty hours work and wages should be increased to insure all workers a decent living and to keep pace with inflation. By putting forth this demand, which as Trotsky pointed out, is "the program of socialism in...popular and simple form," we can show the workers the real nature of overtime, expose the bourgeois government which claims it is doing "all that is humanly possible" to lower the unemployment rate and stop inflation, break workers from the union bureaucrats who congratulate themselves for getting minimal "escalator clauses" in their contracts, and demand that the capitalists who claim they cannot afford a sliding scale of wages and hours open their books, thus preparing the demand for workers' control.

Communists, understanding that the ERA is part of the capitalists' attack on the working class, must be prepared to fight its effects. We must demand that the unions organize the unorganized--women, youth and minority workers. Trade unions are not the revolutionary party and they cannot overthrow capitalism, but they are defense organizations of the proletariat, which are inadequate if limited solely to economic means of defense, but which can be transformed, as Trotsky also pointed out, into "the instruments of the revolutionary movement." The major industries are organized into unions for the protection of the workers against the capitalists. The entire working class should be organized into industrial unions where workers can best fight for their day-to-day needs and where their isolation will be broken

down and they will come into contact with revolutionaries who will be able to relate these struggles to the fundamental needs of the working class as a whole and to its taking of power.

It is also necessary that the unemployed be organized so the capitalists will no longer be able to use the reserve army of the unemployed as a threat over the head of the organized working class both here and abroad. A national network of rank-and-file caucuses can succeed in winning the organized labor movement to the Trotskyist Transitional Program and in providing an alternative and revolutionary leadership in the unions united to the unorganized, unemployed and all of the oppressed.

By explaining in the unions and union caucuses the nature of ERA and pointing out the need for the entire proletariat to be organized we can expose the labor fakers, many of whom have supported the ERA and whose attempts at organization are half-hearted at best. From this point we can explain the sliding scale of wages and hours and other aspects of the Transitional Program and win workers to communist politics. So-called socialists who hail the ERA as an important reform are deceiving the working class. Communists who do not fight against the ERA and explain its effects to workers are abandoning them to the bourgeois reformists.

Real equality of the sexes will only take place with the transfer of the means of production to the proletariat. The "nuclear family," an integral part of the system of capitalist exploitation which is also being destroyed by the contradictions within capitalist society, will then also disappear. With the end of commodity production, the "necessities" of life will no longer be the problem of the "nuclear family" but of society as a whole.

#### CORRECTION

We mistakenly identified Judy Stuart as Judy "Moore" in December.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE LEAGUE ANSWERS THE SL

The article by the CLASS STRUGGLE LEAGUE printed below was written in response to the continuing attacks by the Spartacist League (SL) on the CLASS STRUGGLE LEAGUE, and VANGUARD NEWSLETTER and on their decision to unite their organizations on the basis of a firm agreement on the perspectives and program for the construction of a Leninist and Trotskyist working class party.

A fusion convention is to be held shortly after a period of discussion in which the members of both organizations can fully participate in delineating and clarifying all existing differences.

The torrent of abuse loosed by the SL at the CLASS STRUGGLE LEAGUE, VANGUARD NEWSLETTER, and their fusion perspective is indicative of the sharp apprehension with which

the fusion is viewed by the SL leadership, of its fear that the fusion will indeed lay the foundations for a Leninist party which, by its theoretical and practical activity, will succeed in exposing the SL's fraudulent "Trotskyism" and in destroying every vestige of its credibility in the radical milieu.

The areas of principled agreement and tactical differences between the CLASS STRUGGLE LEAGUE and of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER which this article raises will be discussed at greater length in the March issue of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER.

The final installment of the series by Ed di Tullio, "The Spartacist School of Slander and Character Assassination" again has had to be postponed and will also appear in our March issue.

The December, 1972, issue of Workers Vanguard, newspaper of the Spartacist League, contained the statement of resignation of five comrades from the Leninist Faction.

These comrades went on to join the Spartacist League. The Leninist Faction is now the CLASS STRUGGLE LEAGUE, and preparing for fusion with VANGUARD NEWSLETTER as a step in building a world Trotskyist party.

The resignation statement, and the article accompanying it, attacked the CSL (LF) on two basic grounds. First it claimed that we had a Menshevik, anti-Trotskyist position on democratic centralism. Secondly, it claimed that fusion with VNL was totally unprincipled.

Almost every recent issue of Workers Vanguard contains some sort of pot-shot, if not a full-blown attack, at VNL or the CSL. This is in accord with the primary orientation of the Spartacist League toward what they call the "obstensibly revolutionary organizations"--the consciously Marxist groupings on the left. Thus even their "exemplary" trade union work is aimed at "workers" who are conscious socialists almost exclusively members of "ORO's."

The orientation of the CLASS STRUGGLE LEAGUE is different. Our orien-

tation is toward the advanced layer of the working class as it actually exists as a section of the class--concerned about social questions and perhaps beginning to generalize, but by no means conscious socialists. Thus to answer all the SL's attacks would be a waste of our time and would deter us from our orientation.

However, we consider it necessary to answer this particular attack because it is an attack on the upcoming fusion between the CSL and VNL. We consider the fusion to be an extremely important step in the building of the Trotskyist party, and we want to win as many Trotskyists as possible to participate in the fusion. We want to demonstrate that it is in fact a principled and important action.

The first part of the SL's attack centers on the CSL's position on democratic centralism. We do not have the space here to fully explain our position. We urge VNL readers to obtain and read the documents passed at the August, 1972, convention of the Leninist Faction. In-

cluded in these documents is one on "Democratic Centralism" which thoroughly explains our position. It proves that our position is the same held by Lenin and the Bolsheviks before, during and after October, 1917.

Briefly, our position is based on the conception of democratic centralism as "freedom of discussion, unity in action." This means that the party must have the fullest freedom of discussion possible without interfering with the ability of the party to strike as a closed fist. Thus minorities have full rights, including regulated public discussion of disputed questions which do not hinder the line of action decided upon by the party.

The SL objects to this position on four basic grounds. First, they claim that the Bolsheviks altered that position after 1912. However, they have never offered one bit of written proof that this was so. On the other hand, we can illustrate, as we do in our document, examples of the "pre-1912" position being carried out post-1912. When the SL comrades quote Trotsky to the effect that one reason for the Bolshevik's policy was the large size of the Bolshevik membership and the difficulty of organizing an internal discussion, they are being dishonest. For they know full well that that argument was never advanced by Lenin as a reason for his position.

Secondly, they claim that to say that minorities have a right to public discussion, subject to control by the central committee, opens the door to bureaucratic abuse. The question of whether or not to grant this right they say, will become a factional foot-ball. The "right" will be used by the leadership for its own ends. This is a specious argument. The same possibility of bureaucratic abuse exists with the SL position, which is that public discussion of differences is not the norm but is allowable in certain exceptional situations. Certainly the question of whether or not an "exceptional circumstance" exists is just as much subject to factional football as the application of the "right of public discussion." The

fact is that both positions depend on a thoroughly democratic organization; a membership well educated in Marxism, confident and capable of independent thought; and a democratically selected leadership, representative of and responsive to the entire membership.

Thirdly, the SL comrades object that you cannot separate discussion from action. Certainly, the line between discussion and action is difficult to find. This is where the possibility of bureaucratic abuse and the safeguards against it become especially important. But we all should recognize that the correct application of democratic centralism is one of the most difficult tasks facing the Leninist party. One cannot escape this difficulty, however, by ignoring it with formulas like "all discussion is action." We have developed a few guidelines on this question.

First, we confine public discussion of differences to the newspaper. Minorities cannot distribute their own leaflets, their own newspaper or anything else. That would be an obvious action separate and apart from the united action of the party. Secondly, the majority position is carefully explained, and the minority position is presented clearly as a position within the party, in opposition to the majority position. We cannot be any more specific than that because we have not as yet had the experience of developing and testing our position. Lenin once explained that a group within the party which advocates boycott of the elections in opposition to the majority line of participation, could argue publicly for its position right up to the day of the election, but then must vote. Whether or not we will take such a position will be determined by our experience and by particular circumstances. It is idealistic and, of course, a straw man, to demand a more specific answer from us at this point.

Finally, the SL comrades claim that such public discussion by a minority can only be an appeal to backward sections of the public

against the party. We say that this is not so. It was not so for the Bolsheviks, and it will not be so for us. We see public discussion of differences as a means of carrying out the fullest possible internal discussion while at the same time presenting a full, honest picture of the party to its periphery, and educating the periphery in all aspects of the disputed questions. The SL comrades say that we have a different notion of the relationship between the party and the class than they do, and that we want to appeal to the "backward workers" to correct the party. In one sense they are right. We do have different concepts of the relation between the party and the class. They see the party as composed of "declassed revolutionaries," standing above the working class, an exclusive and elite assemblage. Such a conception necessarily entails presenting a phony picture of the party to the "backward workers"--hiding differences, orienting to the slightly less elite in the socialist organizations, accepting into the privileged few an occasional worker-made-good who has stumbled onto Trotskyism. We conceive of the party as part of the working class, composed of worker-communists. Thus we orient to the workers, attempting to educate the class as fully as we can in all political questions, presenting as full and honest a picture of the party as possible.

What at first astounded us most about the SL's attitude toward our position on democratic centralism was their elevation of the question to a "principled" one. In their arguments against us, they quoted a section from the minutes of the Third Congress of the Comintern which contained the sentence, "Party organizations and committees also have the duty of deciding whether and to what extent and in what form questions shall be discussed by individual comrades in public (the press, lectures, pamphlets)." Our position was that we had a tactical difference with SL over "whether and to what extent." SL, however, maintained that the difference be-

tween public discussion as a "right" and as a "privilege" was a principled difference--one which is a life-or-death question for the party. In fact, SL's knack for creating "principled" questions is a reflection of the type of party they envision--a narrow sect concerned with minute, esoteric questions rather than with a popular approach to the class. This conception is also apparent in their attitude toward fusion with VNL.

As VNL readers certainly are aware, the original cadre of VNL were forced to resign from SL in 1968 after a faction fight in which the VNL comrades fought for a proletarian orientation. VNL has long characterized SL as a student-based and oriented sect around the central character of James Robertson. The SL leadership also sees the SL as a student-based and oriented organization. The program on paper of VNL is very close to the paper program of the SL.

At the August, 1972 convention of the Leninist Faction, we decided that on the basis of the closeness on paper of the programs of the LF, VNL and SL, we should explore fusion with VNL and SL. We maintained then, as we do now, that the Leninist party can contain within it a wide range of differences. We model our conception of the party on the Bolshevik party, which had very wide and deep differences, but which was based on agreement with general program and perspectives and democratic centralism. Because of the urgent need for the development of a revolutionary party in the working class, we want to cut across the splintering of the Trotskyist movement by fusing those organizations agreed on general program.

When we began our discussions with SL and VNL, however, we learned that similarities with SL did not go very deep. The SLers attempted from the start to create straw men and obstacles. They manufactured the "principled" question of democratic centralism and VNL. They sloughed off our "workerist" desire to orient to the working class as a secondary question. VNL, on the other hand,

wanted to discuss the correct strategy for a proletarian orientation. From the beginning, we realized that VNL was serious about wanting to build a party with a proletarian orientation. Program, of course, includes the words and actions of an organization. Thus there is quite a gulf between the program of the CSL and VNL, on the one hand, and SL on the other.

It is true, as the SL comrades claim, that we never considered a three-way fusion in the realm of possibility, because of the hostility between SL and VNL. However, when we made the proposal we felt and we still feel, it was a principled one. A Leninist party can contain far more differences than separate the SL, VNL and CSL. In practice, such a fusion would probably split apart because of the student orientation of the SL.

But, the SL comrades claim, it is still unprincipled for the CSL to fuse with VNL. They give two basic reasons for this. First they claim that VNL is an "unprincipled organization" and a "rotten bloc." Secondly they claim that we have principled differences with VNL.

On the first charge, they attempt to trap us by quoting from an internal LF report a passage containing the following sentence, "Our greatest criticism of VNL is their accommodationism, ranging from CRFC work to Turner's letter to Healy to their relations with us (they seem to agree with us too quickly on most questions.)" In addition, they list the Turner-Ellens bloc in the SL in 1968, VNL's relations with the Canadian Labor Action Committee and the membership in VNL of David Fender as examples of unprincipled action on VNL's part.

First, we should clear up our analysis of VNL. We did not apply the word "accommodationism" to VNL to mean unprincipled or opportunist, but to mean soft. We still maintain to the VNL comrades themselves that their approach to other tendencies and groupings is in some cases too soft. That, of course, is a manner of approach which, if consistent, can only imply the possible danger

of opportunism. All revolutionists, including Lenin and Trotsky, have been condemned innumerable times for being too hard or too soft. To make a principled question--an insurmountable obstacle--out of an approach is to sneer at building a party. The fact is that the VNL comrades have never sacrificed or given up principled politics for organizational gains. The so-called "Turner group" made clear their differences with Ellens while in the SL, and was never in a common independent organization with the Ellens group, because of basic political differences. The VNL comrades were never in and never asked to get in the International Committee of Healy, because of basic political differences. VNL broke off relations with the Labor Action Committee of Canada because of basic political differences which developed after their initial agreement. The record of VNL is clear and principled.

In addition, VNL has consistently expounded Trotskyist politics. It has analyzed developing situations and has formulated Trotskyist analyses and demands for all the key areas of the international class struggle today.

We're not exactly sure why the membership of Comrade Fender is included as an unprincipled action. We do know that SL tried to win Comrade Fender for several years. Poor sportsmanship, perhaps.

The SL comrades claim that the CSL has a principled difference with VNL on trade union work. This is not so. The VNL position is based on building a national network of rank-and-file caucuses which would serve as a transitional organization from the present state of the consciousness of the workers to the party. They feel that a sufficient basis for such caucuses at this time is a three point program of (1) independence of the unions from the state; (2) fight against all forms of special oppression; and (3) for a workers' party based on the rank-and-file. The VNL comrades propagandize in the class and caucus around the full Trotskyist transitional program and seek to win the class

to that program. They propose and initiate caucuses on a united front minimal demand basis, however, and do not propose that the caucus adopt the transitional program. They base their strategy on the concept of the caucus as a united front, formed on a minimal basis of common agreement. Within this united front, VNL propagandizes around its full program.

The CSL, on the other hand, does not see the caucus in exactly the same manner. First of all, we do not see the basis at this time for a national network of caucuses. Such a formation, like the now defunct CRFC, is totally artificial, because the rank-and-file caucuses are just not there yet on a national scale. It is more important to propagandize around the transitional program, to lay the basis for caucuses, than to create a national caucus on an artificial basis. Secondly, we seek to initiate caucuses on the basis of a full set of transitional demands, as explained in our trade union document. While we will work with trade union militants to initiate and build any caucus on the basis of minimum agreement, we always propose that the caucus adopt the full set of transitional demands. We make it clear that the class must adopt our program as a basis of action.

We feel that VNL's approach contains a danger of bending to the consciousness of the class, rather than seeking to advance that consciousness. (The VNL comrades, in turn, feel that our strategy exhibits a tendency towards sectarian abstention from the actual struggle of the workers.) Nevertheless, we are agreed on the basic perspective of propagandizing in and organizing the proletariat around the transitional program.

It may appear on the surface that the Spartacist League has more agreement on trade union strategy with the CSL than does VNL, since the SL stresses the need for caucuses based on the "full transitional program." However, a vast gulf separates us and VNL from SL on trade union strategy. SL does have a totally sect-

arian approach. SL will not participate with trade union militants in forming caucuses which are not based on the transitional program. We expect such activity to be the norm for our caucus work. SL will not grant caucus membership to anyone who does not agree with the transitional program. We look forward to workers joining our caucuses long before they accept the transitional program. SL never gives any support (in fact if not in principle) to non-radicals in union elections. We would give critical support to the MFD campaign of Arnold Miller in the UMW. (See our paper, CLASS STRUGGLE.) SL seeks to lecture the workers while standing apart from them, in "exemplary" caucuses. We seek to win the workers while fighting with them. If there is a "principled" difference, it is between us and SL, not us and VNL.

The second area of political disagreement was flippantly referred to in the January issue of Workers Vanguard. This is the fact that the CSL calls for a Fifth Trotskyist International, while VNL essentially shares SL's position for the reconstruction of the Fourth International. First, SL said they would fuse with us in spite of our position for the Fifth International. This is because they recognize (when it suits them) the fact that we have basically a tactical difference on the call for a new international. The CSL and VNL, for example agree that the Fourth International once existed as a revolutionary Fourth International. We agree that a new, Trotskyist International must be built. We agree on the basic political analysis and the tasks confronting us. The VNL comrades feel that the new international will be the reconstruction of the Fourth International since it will be based on the same program on which the revolutionary FI was based. We feel that it will be a Fifth International because the Fourth International rejected the revolutionary program on which it was based, and died as a revolutionary international, creating the need for a new, Fifth, International

based on the old program. In any case, the organization created by the fusion of VNL and the CSL will not have a compromise program. It will not be a united front. The new organization will have clear majority and minority positions, and will conduct its propaganda around the majority line.

The blind sectarianism of SL and the comrades who left the LF for SL

ROBERTSON WRITES AND IS ANSWERED

/In reply to the SL's James Robertson's and Cde. Turner's letters, Cde. Kaufman of Socialist Forum and Corresponding Secretary of CRFC requested for a second time that the SL

Brother Kaufman,

Thank you for your letter of 19 October to which we are herewith replying. Yes, we think you have avoided a confrontation on the question of your associate David Fender's precipitating police intervention into the Workers League St. Louis meeting. In the pages of the September issue of Workers Vanguard we publicly accepted your challenge to put to the test the truthfulness of this assertion.

A month then passed and we did not hear from you until after we sent Turner/Fender a prodding letter. At that point Turner declared that it was not you people but we who were not only evading the question but also we who had demanded a public ventilation of the issue in the first place, when he wrote to us about "your 'challenge'." Certainly you are making common cause with your bloc partners regarding Fender's conduct, Bro. Kaufman. We are interested to find out if it is limitless. Will you do the small thing, for example, of acknowledging to us that Turner is wrong in ascribing to us the initial demand for a public confrontation over the issue? This is a simple thing--you yourself in your letter to us of 10 July made the initial challenge to us. The record is there in black and white. If such a simple admission cannot be wrung from you, then we will know where we stand toward you as a pre-

notwithstanding, the fusion of the CSL and VNL will be a principled and important step. We encourage anyone interested in learning more about the fusion to contact VNL or the CSL. We also encourage you to read the documents of the CSL. The four major documents can be obtained by sending \$1.50 to: CSL, PO Box 48, Wollaston, Mass. 02170.

help select an impartial court of inquiry. We consider its failure to respond sufficient proof of the falsity of its charges against David Fender and a withdrawal of them./

New York, 21 November 1972

sumed socialist.

The point about who challenged whom, in addition to the elementary issue of honesty involved, also has significance as to who should exert themselves in seeking public redress. Fender and his co-thinkers and friends claim he is the injured party. Therefore the burden presumably is on you people in your presumed efforts to "clear his name."

We are of course satisfied as to the role of Fender in St. Louis. Numerous witnesses including four SL supporters watched his performance. We have stated in the public press what we saw. Turner/Fender and you declare this is a lie and a defaming slander and a denial of Fender's morality as a Marxian socialist. Very well, this is a matter for a commission of inquiry into the facts. In general a debate such as the "public forum" which you originally demanded necessarily centers on opinions, and that is not the issue here. Moreover what opinions? The SL has opinions, but the CRFC presumably has opinions ranging from nominal Trotskyism to "true De Leonism." (Is the left Maoist, Ross, still in your bloc?) The situation is further complicated by the lines of retreat which you and your associates seem to be opening up. Turner/Fender supporters in New York have been loudly declaring that there was nothing wrong in principle with entering the Workers League meeting under

police protection. This leaves us perplexed, then as to why you see anything wrong with invoking the cops' protection in the first place. And in your letter to which we are replying announce your intention to "expose the hypocrisy of the SL in its own relations with the police" (a wanton, self-serving lie on your part) which suggests that after all you believe everybody is a little bit of a cop/cop-lover so why jump on "poor Fender."

Having said all this, nonetheless, for the sake of preserving our own good reputation for meticulous truthfulness, we are prepared to present our evidence--witnesses and depositions--to any impartial commission of inquiry that you care to convene and to assist you in establishing such a commission by offering sug-

Dear Comrade Kaufman,

We are in receipt of a copy of the letter of 21 November 1972 sent by James Robertson of the Spartacist League (SL) to you in your capacity as Corresponding Secretary of the Committee for Rank and File Caucuses.

We note a considerable improvement in Robertson's letter writing manners in comparison with the impertinent letter which he addressed to us on the 29th of September 1972. Although improved in form, however, the essential content remains unchanged. Robertson continues to deliberately distort our positions and the facts to support his vicious slanders against VANGUARD NEWSLETTER. By stooping to such tactics, he inadvertently reveals that he considers VANGUARD NEWSLETTER to be his and SL's most dangerous political opponent. And so we are! We have exposed and will continue unmercifully to expose his organization as an unprincipled student-oriented personality cult unable and unwilling to build a Leninist and Trotskyist working class vanguard party.

As does any bourgeois lawyer with a poor case, Robertson concentrates on trivia in order to bolster it, thus, his eager pouncing on the word "challenge" in our reply to him, which you will note, has sub-quota-

gestions as to individuals who might serve and who are known to us as of good repute in the socialist and labor movement.

Fraternally James Robertson SL/US

P.S. The November VNL states that we are guilty of the "complete omission" of your letter to us of 19 October which we allegedly received "well before the deadline" in our November WV coverage of our exchange of correspondence. Well we close the issue around the 20th of the month (except for big stories like the Vietnam draft treaty--do you think your letter is of that calibre?). Moreover, your letter is date-stamped by us as received on 26 October. Don't you really have anything to say about Turner's even trivially malicious conduct?

November 30, 1972

tion marks, i.e., was set off by quotation marks in our letter. He tortures this word in order to make his case that we are "ascribing to the SL "the initial demand for a public confrontation" to air its charge that David Fender "called the cops" in St. Louis. We, of course, have done no such thing. It is abundantly clear that the Committee for Rank and File Caucuses of which VANGUARD NEWSLETTER is a component organization and with our full support initiated the demand for "a public forum--time and date to be set" at the convenience of the SL--to answer the SL's charges.

Why this vigorous and ludicrous display of a straw-man being valiantly demolished by Robertson? As he reveals, he desires the question of "the cops" to be enclosed within the narrowest possible legalistic framework shielded from the gaze of the working class and socialist public! This is the meaning of his counter-posing a "public forum" to a "commission of inquiry!"

In our reply of October 2, 1972 to his letter of September 29th, we made clear that "the entire malodorous tissue of dishonesties" which Robertson has concocted had to be "thoroughly aired" no matter what

form he chose--and we gave him the choice of "weapons"--whether a "public forum" or a "commission of inquiry." As we stated at that time, we are "equally amenable" to both. We, however, had and have no intention, as Robertson evidently has, of convening such a commission in a hall closet. We require that this commission hear the "facts" in a public place suitable for a large working class audience to attend and to also directly hear and weigh the "facts." We intend to attest at such a hearing to the character of the SL accusers and to relate the "fact" of the SL's vicious slander against Cde. Fender to its past and present organizational and political practices. We intend to make clear that the SL's self-proclaimed "good reputation for meticulous truthfulness" if it indeed does exist, does so only among the naive or those unable to view the SL at first hand and in any depth. It should be noted in this connection that while Robertson waxes highly indignant over our contention that the SL received your letter "well before the deadline" for the November issue of "Workers Vanguard," he has nothing whatsoever to say about the accompanying charge in our last issue of "the prudent trimming of the concluding section" of our letter by Robertson

Dear Comrade Robertson:

We have received your letter--diatribe would perhaps be a better adjective--of 21 November.

We do not need to be reminded by the likes of you, Comrade Robertson, who initiated the request for a public exploration of charges growing out of the St. Louis Workers' League meeting. I can assure you that I am not only an honest socialist but also possess a fairly good memory. Yes, it was I who commenced this increasingly absurd exchange. But, at the same time, my socialist morals and personal honesty compel me to let you know in no uncertain terms that your letter of 28 July was an obvious attempt to most definitely delay any forum or court of inquiry until you were in a posi-

and his editors to fit the thesis that we fear a public debate with the SL! "Meticulous truthfulness," indeed!

Robertson's statement that VANGUARD NEWSLETTER "supporters in New York" have declared that "there was nothing wrong in principle with entering the Workers League meeting under police protection" (our emphasis) is simply a lie. We tranquilly await Robertson's attempted proof and/or justification for it before the commission. We also and as tranquilly await your exposing before the commission "the hypocrisy of the SL in its own relations with the police," your throwing back of the charge of lying in this connection in Robertson's teeth, together with his "self-serving" interpretation that you accused the SL of hypocrisy because you believe that "everyone" is a "bit of a cop-lover...."

We hope that Robertson will agree to your suggestion that his and our organizations meet without further delay to consider individual recommendations for the impartial commissions and to pick a time, date and suitable place in line with our requirements as discussed above. The sooner, the better!

Fraternally, Harry Turner  
cc: SL, Class Struggle League

7 December 1972

tion to hawk your paper at such a session. Apparently sales would be enhanced by the inclusion of an article that would prove of interest to individuals attending such a gathering. We most certainly would not seek to delay a session of this sort for that kind of cheap organizational advantage.

We agree, as indicated earlier in our letter of 19 October 1972, to the format of a court of inquiry. You argue that such a format would be more objective than a mere forum--that the matter is not one of "opinions." Very well. We, too, prefer an objective atmosphere. But you then proceed to make a snide political attack against the CRFC--which really exposes your true motivations

which are precisely political in nature and in no way in the interest of mere "objectivism." It is for this reason that we will not hesitate to raise political considerations in the court and that we insist on public access to all sessions.

As indicated earlier, and discussed in this most recent correspondence of yours, we intend to raise the question of the SL's relationship to the police. No, this is not a "wanton, self-serving lie." It is a fact. Everybody is not a cop-lover, Comrade Robertson. But, at the same time, we will not let the practices of the likes of the SL pass for the "correct" approach when you turn around and accuse

others of behavior your own organization has engaged in. Perhaps deeds are not the criteria here, but rather the organizational affiliation. When a practice is committed by the SL it's "principled and correct." When the same practice is committed by others it's "class collaboration and treachery."

Yes, we too have witnesses and affidavits. But unlike yourself, Comrade Robertson, we do not have to rely on these primarily, or solely, from our own ranks. What kind of testimony can be expected from a SL member under discipline? To remove any doubt as to our integrity, we are

(Continued on p. 32)

#### NYRC: THE STRUGGLE FOR TROTSKYISM

by Henry A. Platsky, Susan Viani and Les Brown

In the summer of 1971, a group of revolutionists left the Workers World Party-Youth Against War and Fascism (WWP-YAWF).

The group represented a number of people who had various differences with the WWP's political positions and who thought that the structure of the WWP-YAWF was such as to prohibit internal discussion.

The "factional" struggle began when Henry Platsky, a member of WWP for over 5 years and a teamster and warehouse worker for over three years raised some important organizational differences at an internal meeting. It is interesting to note that this internal meeting had been originally intended by the WWP leadership to discuss the division of the New York local into small sub-cells, making it virtually impossible for any organized internal opposition to appear. After driving out this opposition, we have learned that this procedure was implemented and has no doubt enabled the leadership to atomize the rank-and-file and obtain complete control. The leadership immediately responded to Cde. Platsky's talk, branding it as "disloyal" (although no substantial political differences were raised). The WWP bureaucrats were stymied from an all out attack however by the strong sup-

port Cde. Platsky received from the rank-and-file at the meeting. The WWP leadership changed their tactical approach, organizing their unquestioning supporters first and lining up the membership in an underground assault against Cde. Platsky and those who agreed with him. Meanwhile, a number of those who agreed with Cde. Platsky's talk met together to decide what to do next. They could not come to a common policy as one comrade, Jerry Zilg by name, in disagreement with the other comrades wanted an immediate split perspective. The others, naive but sincere, recognized the fact that they had not developed substantial enough differences to necessitate a split and wanted to struggle within the WWP as loyal oppositionists. It was agreed that another meeting would be held to try and iron out the differences. But before that meeting could be held, Zilg, who has had a long record of unprincipled factionalism in SDS, decided rather than commit himself to a long internal struggle, would play ball with the WWP leadership and turn in his "fellow"

oppositionists.

The leadership, using Zilg as their trump card, began to go into action against the opposition. All known oppositionists were summarily removed from any positions of responsibility that they held. Within a week, another internal meeting was called, where Sam Marcy, the chairman of WWP, announced that the leadership had uncovered an "unprincipled, anti-party, secret faction." Marcy, using the fact that one of the oppositionists, Larry Levy, was a medical doctor branded the opposition as "petty-bourgeois." Other members, including leaders, got up to denounce their former associates as "racist," "anti-communist," "cynical," etc. Another internal meeting was called to facilitate the backlog of speakers, mostly rank-and-filers who wanted to parrot their loyalty to "their" organization. The substantial number of rank-and-filers who had previously been sympathetic to the opposition panicked under the hard blows of the leadership and either joined in the witch-hunt or maintained a discreet silence. Others, responding to the meeting in a manner that perfectly suited the leadership, voted with their feet. In between the period of the two meetings, three comrades had resigned and one was expelled from the Wilmington branch of the organization for having been in contact with the New York minority. Three oppositionists, Henry Platsky, Monique Levy, and Tanya Z. agreed that they would attempt to admit Bill Smith, the expelled Wilmington comrade, to the meeting to appeal his expulsion. The attempt, needless to say, was unsuccessful. Monique Levy was branded as a "stooge" of her husband Larry Levy, who had resigned, by Marcy and Co., and the witch-hunt atmosphere became so intense that the remaining comrades threw in the towel, seeing the impossibility of working as revolutionists in an organization like WWP. Cde. Les Brown, who had been on vacation during the third meeting resigned the week after and another resigned shortly after that.

In all, eight members resigned and one was expelled. Because of the swift maneuvers of the WWP leadership, the group had had no time to consolidate a political perspective or program while within the organization. WWP using this lack of clarity to its best organizational advantage branded the group as a bunch of malcontented, petty-bourgeois intellectuals. In reality every member of this group had been a member of the WWP for at least two years. Further the group included three trade unionists--a teamster and two communications workers, a non-union garment worker, an unemployed Vietnam vet and ex-army organizer, and a Puerto Rican revolutionist who worked as a printer on the party's paper and was one of the founders of the party's "third world" caucus.

Seven of the nine ex-WWPers met in September of 1971 to form the New York Revolutionary Committee (NYRC). Typifying the frictional losses suffered in most internal fights, the two communications workers left politics rather than join the NYRC. The NYRC launched its own paper, Common Ground, in January of 1972. The politics of the NYRC, well expressed in the first issue of the paper, were mostly those of the WWP with two important exceptions. The first was the deeply felt commitment it had towards the principles of democratic centralism, to the right of minorities to form and discuss and fight for their differences. The other important difference, developed mostly from an impressionistic reaction to the WWP's tailist politics was the understanding of the need for Marxists to use the weapon of criticism and analysis against nationalist, Maoist or Stalinist tendencies which the WWP refused on principle to do. While the NYRC still held illusions as to the "revolutionary vitality" of these currents, this was an important break from the WWP's political functioning. The NYRC held to the politics of WWP as originally stated in the first issue of "Workers World" published in March of 1959, believing that

the WWP leaders had "betrayed" their original intentions. It was not until much later that some members of the NYRC understood that the seeds of the WWP's accommodationism was contained within Marcy's politics long before he helped form the organization. To understand the road that we have travelled, we must re-examine the origins of WWP's politics.

Marcyism, along with Cochranism, was the well-deserved reaction by segments of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) to the inability of the Cannonite leadership to offer a firm Trotskyist analysis and perspective of the role of Stalinism in Europe and Asia after World War II and the failure of the leadership to prepare the ranks for the advent of the "cold-war" and McCarthyism. Marcyism, based in important trade-union sectors of the SWP (e.g., Buffalo, auto and steel, Youngstown steel) saw the McCarthyist reaction single out the Stalinists (in the unions especially) for its vicious attacks. Moved by a sincere desire to defend the Stalinist ranks from the witch-hunt and win them to the SWP, Marcy made his first recorded accommodation to Stalinism. He, along with others in the SWP, demanded that the SWP give critical support to the Stalinist-backed Progressive Party Presidential candidate Henry Wallace. Marcy saw this as an effective way to defend the Stalinists, then buried in the Progressive Party from attack and at the same time intervene in the Stalinist milieu with the SWP's program. While the SWP certainly could have afforded a more serious approach to the Stalinists during the witch-hunt (remember that the SWP confusedly supported Curran against the Stalinists in the Maritime Union, etc.) Marcy was blurring over the fact that the bourgeois-reformist program of the Progressive Party precluded any electoral support by Trotskyists. Marcy however, transformed this error into a world-view.

In his document, The Global Class War, issued in 1950 upon the outbreak of the Korean War. Marcy adopted

his own brand of Pabloism, bestowing upon the Soviet Union and the bureaucracy a "progressive" side due to its being based on socialized means of production which was coming to the fore in response to the aggressiveness of world imperialism. Thus Marcy saw the coming period as one of a "global class war" where the Soviet Union would be forced to play a progressive role despite its bureaucratic leadership. The big break between Marcy and the SWP came in 1956 with the Hungarian revolution. The differences that emerged can stand some re-illumination.

Marcy and his followers understood the Nagy regime to be essentially a bourgeois-restorationist regime. Therefore, the Soviet Union, forced by the "contradictory" nature of the bureaucracy to defend the Hungarian workers state, was playing a progressive role in invading Hungary, according to Marcy and Co. They, of course, blurred over the revolutionary implications of the workers' councils and in effect ignored the Soviet suppression of a real workers' revolution.

The SWP majority, under the influence of its own impressionistic politics blurred over the nature of the Nagy regime, accommodating in reality to the right-petty bourgeois wing of Stalinism. Illuminating their own confusion, one member of the SWP majority on the political committee made a remark to the effect that if the Hungarian workers wanted to support a capitalist restoration, that was their right. Of course, the Hungarian workers did not want to support any such restoration but statements like this and others coming from the SWP majority only added fuel to the Marcyites claim that the SWP had accommodated to the politics of bourgeois anti-Stalinism.

Because the SWP was well into the process of its own accommodationist slide, the Marcyites were often quite correct in their criticisms of SWP policy. For example, the Marcyites correctly saw the SWP regroupment policy as an accommodation to the Gates-wing of the Communist Party and to left-lean-

ing social-democrats. The Marcyites also correctly opposed the SWP's accommodation to the bourgeois state when it demanded that federal troops be called to protect civil rights workers in the South. After a series of overtly bureaucratic maneuvers directed against the Marcyites by the SWP majority, they left the organization in 1959, taking with them the primarily working-class branches in Buffalo and Youngstown, the Black SWP nucleus in the South and others from Seattle, Los Angeles, Cleveland, etc.

Once outside of the SWP, the WWP, faced with a hostile political environment began to de-emphasize (and eventually drop) formal Trotskyist politics, preferring to win Stalinist and ex-Stalinist workers and others to "Trotskyist politics without Trotsky's name." WWP, given its blatant tendency to react impressionistically to temporary shifts in the world scene, was quite unprepared for the next turn in world politics when the Castro regime socialized the means of production, thus clearly emerging as a deformed workers state. The Marcyites saw this as an indicator of the inherent revolutionary potential of every petty-bourgeois nationalist movement, a la Castro. With the development of the Sino-Soviet dispute, Marcy (who had criticized the SWP for accommodating to Titoism when Yugoslavia broke from the USSR in 1948) discovered the essence of Trotskyism in Chinese Maoist politics (even if the Maoists were unaware of it). From this point, one can easily determine the why's and wherefore's of every turn in WWP politics since.

The essence of these politics remained with the NYRC. For a time, while competing with WWP in the petty-bourgeois radical milieu, the NYRC was able to win a number of adherents. A number of former WWP members who had left the organization on their own for various personal-political reasons joined the NYRC. As the "movement" died away during the winter months of 1971-72, many of the unstable

elements in the NYRC began to drift out as they had drifted in. Committee members began to turn into themselves. Some became influenced by mysticism, drugs, or psycho-analytic fetishism. During this period one of the members of the NYRC, Henry Platsky, began to orient towards a serious re-evaluation of the NYRC's political past, as an answer to the stagnation within the committee. At the opposite pole within the NYRC was one Bob Ross. Ross had spent his entire career in politics as a professional factionalist. He split with the Young Peoples Socialist League to join, along with that organization's left-wing, the Spartacist League (SL). He split with the SL when that organization refused to support a Marcyite-led confrontationalist demonstration to form his own tiny group called the Revolutionary Communist League. That organization soon merged with Workers World but Ross left the organization by himself shortly afterwards. He left the Mayday committee where we found him, to join the NYRC. His politics were, and remain, a combination of anarcho-terrorism, "third-worldism," Maoism, and to this mish-mash he gives the name Trotskyism. The other leading figures who opposed any direction away from the WWP's politics were Larry Levy, one of the founders of the NYRC who had been the target of the WWP leadership, and Pete Anton, who had left the WWP a few years before for personal reasons and joined the NYRC in order to carry out a personal vendetta against the WWP. All this time he clung adamantly to the politics of the WWP, attacking the politics of Leninism-Trotskyism as dogmatic. The struggles within the NYRC revolved around a number of different issues that confronted that organization as well as politics in general. Platsky continually urged the NYRC to drop its "movement" orientation in order to begin a period of intensive internal discussion and education which would have hopefully resulted in a complete break with the WWP past.

The struggle in the NYRC culminated in a meeting following Nixon's decision to blockade Hanoi and Haiphong. Levy, Ross and others supported the idea of a "confrontationist" demonstration; the blocking of a main thorough-fare in NYC in protest over Nixon's decision. Levy defended his approach by stating that such actions "pressure" the bourgeoisie to reach a settlement, which he said, as long as it stops the killing of Vietnamese, would be progressive. Platsky attacked the idea of a confrontationist demonstration and pointed out that the committee had to clearly repudiate Levy's politics which were showing strong accommodationist impulses. Ross's contribution to the debate was to urge the NYRCers to read the works of the Vietnamese Stalinist Giap. Anton temporarily blocked with Platsky against Levy and Ross and the others. At the next meeting Platsky threatened to resign unless the committee made a fundamental shift in direction. Levy and others, intimidated by the threat of one of the NYRC's principal leaders to resign, voted for or abstained from a motion put forward which called for the NYRC to re-orient towards a serious study of Trotskyist politics. When the motion passed by one vote, Ross stormed out of the meeting, followed by three others. When he attempted to hold a factional meeting and invited outsiders of the NYRC to attend, his support quickly melted from under him. Ross then resigned from the group before charges could be brought against him. Two others returned to the committee, while one comrade, Bill Smith, terrified at the prospect of a serious Trotskyist orientation, ran all the way back to WWP. Peter Anton remained with the committee for all of two weeks until it refused to publish an article of his in the next "Common Ground" without an appropriate reply by the committee. The article was supposedly a history of the Puerto Rican independence movement but it praised the Puerto Rican Socialist Party as the "vanguard" of the Puerto Rican people.

At the next meeting Anton charged the committee with censoring him (although the committee agreed to print it as long as it could reply). He then went on to claim that he had been sympathetic to Ross all along, and that he had made a bloc with Platsky for what he called "opportunistic" reasons. He then announced his resignation from the committee and joined Ross to publish a mimeo-graphed newsletter that specializes in distorted attacks upon the ex-NYRCers who have joined VANGUARD NEWSLETTER.

The committee was left with five full members who then proceeded with a serious study of the Transitional Program, and other fundamental works of Trotskyism, along with a serious study of the programs and policies of the Spartacist League, VANGUARD NEWSLETTER, and others. The NYRC had come in contact with the VANGUARD NEWSLETTER COMMITTEES through its work in the Committee for Rank and File Caucuses.

However, for a time, the pro-Trotskyist faction of the NYRC was much closer to the Spartacist League. The committee had held a number of formal and informal discussions with SL members, along with a joint public debate on China. While we were impressed with the seriousness and seeming high political calibre of the SL cadre we had met, we held our distance because of serious reservations. What especially concerned the NYRC comrades was the sectarian position on the trade unions that the SL held. SL cadre had criticized Cde. Platsky for voting for a rank-and-file caucus in his union local solely on the grounds that the caucus had no political demands. On another occasion SL members told cdes. Platsky and Brown that unless they agreed with the SL's full program--they could not work with SL in the unions. When asked by one of the NYRCers what the SL would expect them to do if they could not agree with their entire program, he was told that he "could join the IS (International Socialists) caucus." On the other hand, the NYRC comrades found the VANGUARD NEWSLETTER posi-

tion to be a serious and correct one. Further, the pamphlet, Spartacist League Split provided us with useful insights into what type of organization Robertson and Co. were building. On this basis we seemed to be in closer agreement with VANGUARD NEWSLETTER and the NYRC began discussions with them. After a number of discussions, all of the NYRC members claimed that they held fundamental agreement with VANGUARD NEWSLETTER on most political issues. In the final meeting of the NYRC, the five remaining members agreed to publish a final edition of Common Ground, detailing the development of the NYRC's politics and Cde. Platsky, with the agreement of the NYRC, resigned on a fraternal basis in order to join VANGUARD NEWSLETTER. Platsky felt that he was now in sufficient agreement with VANGUARD NEWSLETTER, to be a member while the others wanted to continue to discuss a few remaining issues before finally merging with VANGUARD NEWSLETTER.

Within a few short weeks however Larry Levy and another comrade suddenly announced their resignation from the NYRC. The reason: they now felt that primal psychology therapy was the most important aspect of their lives and that they could no longer participate in revolutionary politics. The remaining two comrades, Susan Viani and Les Brown decided that they could no longer expect to publish a full issue of Common Ground by themselves and so they continued their relations with VANGUARD NEWSLETTER and eventually joined. We now feel that comrade Levy's break with

revolutionary politics was merely the qualitative break in the quantitative development of these comrades. While these comrades formally agreed with Trotskyist politics, in actuality they invariably expressed any reservations that they felt in the most subjective and personal manner. When faced with the question of turning their formal agreement with VANGUARD NEWSLETTER into an actual fusion, they broke. These comrades, previous to this had never expressed even the remotest interest in primal psychology. The sudden jump of these comrades left us somewhat relieved that such erratic personalities would no longer exist with us in the same organization. These people have since made a "dramatic" return to politics and have flitted from one tendency to another in an everlasting search for a "revolutionary home" that will satisfy their personal needs.

Those members of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER that have come from the NYRC feel that we are the only ones that have seriously carried out the perspective contained in our original statement published in the first issue of Common Ground. We wrote then:

"It is now our intention and duty to participate actively in the struggle in every way possible and when the time is ripe to play a vigorous role in the building of a revolutionary party in the true Bolshevik tradition--a party dedicated to the principle of democratic centralism, and committed to the total destruction of the capitalist system."

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  
- Part V

By supporting the struggle for national liberation as the first step to "a general struggle against capitalism" the Secretariat ends up tail-ending the nationalist and partisan movements in that the Secretariat projects "democratic demands" as "the most effective instrument for the mobilization of broad masses of the people against the bourgeoisie,.... (which in turn) opens the road to power for the workers and peasants."

As the Theses prepares for the revolutionary crises, everything is stood

on its head. Instead of the position that transitional demands become all the more necessary and decisive as the old and partial or democratic demands come more and more into conflict with "destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism," the Secretariat projects democratic demands as taking on a revolutionary quality in-and-of-themselves:

"Precisely because it (the Fourth International) knows that in the epoch of imperialism there is no room left for bourgeois democracy, the revolutionary vanguard transforms the struggle for democratic demands on the part of the masses into a powerful instrument against the bourgeois state."

The Theses even goes so far as to say that:

"In certain countries and under certain circumstances... extreme democratic demands, such as the demand for immediate elections or for the convocation of a constituent assembly, can become powerful means of mobilizing great masses of people around the proletariat."

As history has shown, democratic demands in imperialist countries in crisis have "become powerful means of mobilizing great masses of people around not the proletariat" but rather the bourgeoisie. History proved this very fact to the so-called "revolutionary base of the French section." As we stated above, the French section continued to follow a national-democratic position clearly using the political position outlined in the 1944 Theses. Tail-ending the CP and under the cover of fighting for democratic demands, the PCI called for a "yes" vote on making the National Assembly into a Constituent Assembly in the referendum of October 21, 1945. The PCI demanded all candidates for office be qualified and immediately recalled at any moment. It launched an appeal to form Defense Committees of the Constituent Assembly. And in the referendum of May 5, 1946, it again appeal-

ed to the masses to vote "yes" for a bourgeois constitution. To defend bourgeois democratic demands was to block the reaction. The capitulation of the French section was only a more gross expression of the capitulation of the European Secretariat as well as of the International.

The Fourth International was founded in 1938. Trotsky had wanted the International founded in 1936, but for many reasons, some mentioned above, it had been impossible to do so. The new International was small, isolated, mainly petty-bourgeois in composition and beset with many problems. Nevertheless, the strength of the International was to be found in its theoretical and political clarity on the historical and current questions of the day which was summed up in its founding document "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International"--drafted by Comrade Trotsky.

Trotsky was the all important figure in the founding of the International. It was the probity of Trotsky's theoretical work, and, based on this, his incisive political analysis, that put the International on a solid Marxist basis. Trotsky's theoretical analysis of the Soviet state, Stalinism, and Fascism, laid the basis for principled class-struggle politics, without which there would have been no Fourth International. Trotsky was the new International's theoretical and historical link to the Bolshevik Revolution which embodied Marxism's richest traditions.

On the eve of the war the International (with certain exceptions) found itself even more isolated than before. The cruel defeats of the French and Spanish proletariat set the stage for the imperialist war and our even greater isolation from the working class.

The declarations of war were almost everywhere accompanied by crackdowns on the Trotskyist movement. Several militants in France were picked up, and in September, 1939, Walter Dauge, secretary of the Belgian section, the PSR, was arrested by the Belgian police. The organizations of the Fourth

International were for the most part forced underground.

The Stalinists before the war had been able to murder some of the most capable young Trotskyist cadres, but after the war had broken out, the bourgeoisie, under the cover of war, carried out with the Stalinists' consent a wholesale slaughter by comparison. Hundreds of Trotskyists lost their lives by outright murder, firing-squads, or from internment in prison. Whole leaderships were destroyed and among them the young international's most capable and promising figures.

"We lost during the war a large number of the leading cadres of our movement, long-time revolutionaries, such as Comrade Marcel Hic, general secretary of our French organization, dead in a concentration camp in Germany, the Belgian comrades Lesoil and Leon, who suffered the same fate, the Italian comrade Blasco, victim of Stalinist repression at the moment of the "Liberation," the Greek comrade Poulioplos, executed by the fascists in Greece in 1943, the German comrade Widelin, and so many others." (Michel Pablo, The Fourth International, What It Is, What It Aims At, 1958, p.18)

"The only public trials attempted during the war and the only condemnations to death or to prison of revolutionary leaders and militants accused of opposition to the imperialist war, in both camps, had Trotskyists as their victims. It was thus that in Holland the Gestapo assassinated, after a public trial on April 12, 1942, nine well known leaders of the RSAP, Trotskyists and pro-Trotskyists, among them Comrades Sneevliet and Dollerman. In Vienna, Trotskyist militants were executed after a public trial, as well as in Germany." (Michel Pablo, "Twenty Years of the Fourth International: III," in Fourth International, Autumn 1958, No.4, p. 61.)

"In the United States, Britain, Ceylon, and India, countries on

the 'democratic' side, only Trotskyist leaders were imprisoned for their consistent struggle against the war and against imperialism." (Ibid, Fourth International)

The resounding blow, however, which shook the newly founded International, the hardest, was the assassination of Trotsky, August 20, 1940, by an agent of Stalin's GPU. The International would undoubtedly have been able to weather the storm with Trotsky at the helm, in spite of the tremendous losses and theoretical and political confusion resulting from the war. Without Trotsky, the theoretical and political helm of the badly battered, storm-tossed International naturally fell to the historically strong-section of the International, the SWP.

The SWP had worked closely with Trotsky during the last four years of his life. There were frequent meetings and discussions with the leaders of the SWP. Many of Trotsky's body guards and secretaries were provided by the SWP. Because of his closeness to the SWP and the potential it offered, Trotsky took a keen interest in the affairs of the party and gave it his theoretical and political guidance even to the point that a sort of division of labor was created. This, we can be sure, was not Trotsky's intention, but rather to teach and educate the party so that it could better stand on its own two feet as it grew older. Nevertheless, the division of labor existed-- Trotsky provided the theory and politics; the SWP leadership the machine to put them into practice. That this was the case can be seen in the fight with Burnham-Abern-Shachtman--Trotsky provided the theory and Cannon the organization. This division of labor is admirably reflected in the two books issuing from this struggle: In Defense of Marxism by Trotsky which deals mainly with the theoretical and political problems in dispute, and The Struggle for a Proletarian Party by Cannon which concentrates on the organizational problems raised.

In spite of all its short comings

the SWP remained the Trotskyist organization with a promise of great potential. Unlike most other Trotskyist groups the SWP had kept its leadership intact during the war. It was essentially a proletarian party with a proletarian leadership. It was a party that had gone through an important struggle at the beginning of the war with its petty-bourgeois layer which reflected the chauvinist whip. With the split of the petty-bourgeois Burnham-Abern-Shachtman opposition, which took about 45% of the ranks, the party became even more homogeneous, proletarian in composition, and experienced in serious political struggle. Trotsky himself expressed great hope in the American section when he complimented Cannon by saying that he was the only man outside of Lenin to have built a proletarian party. The years after international contact was restored (beginning in 1944) were to be crucial and were to prove whether Trotsky's hopes for the SWP had been well founded or not.

While the SWP did not break with revolutionary defeatism in the USA during World War II, it did bend somewhat to social patriotism. For example, the slogan "Turn the imperialist war into a war against fascism" which began to appear in the March, 1941 Militant, lends itself to some confusion at best. There is obviously a distinction being made in this slogan between fascism and bourgeois democracy. Otherwise the authors of the slogan would have stated: "Turn the imperialist war into a war against imperialism!" But this slogan is at best vague and nonsensical. Each imperialist power claims it is fighting imperialism, just as the Allies claimed to be fighting fascism. "Turn the imperialist war into a war against fascism" is not the same at all as the Leninist slogan of "Turn the imperialist war into a civil war!" In the latter there is no room for doubt as to who or where the enemy is, while the former gives some credence to bourgeois democracy's struggle against fascism. The slogan might have been acceptable

for our German comrades in Germany, but coming from the USA where there existed a bourgeois-democratic government, it meant to reflect in our political program the strong social patriotic atmosphere created by the bourgeoisie under the guise of fighting fascism.

It is one thing to have a revolutionary defeatist program against imperialist war and yet quite another to be critical of the war. But at times our propaganda came closer to the latter than the former. The party sometimes criticized American capitalism for holding back and sabotaging the war effort. There is nothing wrong with this, per se, if it is done in the right context of not criticizing but of opposing the imperialist war by exposing capitalism and the imperialist nature of the war. But if it is not done specifically in the context of opposing the war such an approach becomes, in essence, a formula for supporting the war since it only criticizes the capitalist government for not pursuing the war more efficiently. Even a teamster strike, for example, could be considered as holding back and even sabotaging the war effort, if not put in the proper context of a program in opposition to imperialist war. No one can deny that the party generally stood in opposition to the imperialist war. But so did Shachtman's Workers Party. The important thing is the nature of this opposition, that is, what political content filled this abstract slogan. (to be continued)

ROBERTSON... (Continued from p. 24)

ready to present affidavits from individuals outside our respective organizations.

To see that this court of inquiry is convened as soon as possible and that impartial parties are selected to sit on this body, I suggest that representatives of your organization contact me at once. May I point out that this is the second time we have extended such a request. You may reach me any evening, and weekends, at 428-7756.

Fraternally yours, Malcolm Kaufman