

SPARTACIST



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SOCIAL CRISIS DEEPENS

The deepening economic and political crisis in the U.S., part of the world capitalist crisis, flows not from superficial difficulties, wrong policies or mistakes, but from the fundamental contradictions of the system itself. The crisis must be analyzed with the tools of Marxism and confronted with a revolutionary program designed to exploit these contradictions to advance the struggle against capitalism as a whole.

The U.S.-Saigon invasion of Laos and Cambodia points up the sharpness of the political aspect of the crisis internationally. U.S. imperialism cannot win militarily, and the basic cadre of the Vietnamese revolution, despite rotten leadership and U.S. pounding, remains unbroken, but the U.S. administration is equally incapable of accepting a defeat. Thus they strike out wildly at Laos and Cambodia now, and in the near future may invade North Viet Nam or even use nuclear weapons against Hanoi-Haiphong, as Hanoi and Peking already fear. Equally desperately, however, the U.S. is searching for a deal with the Stalinist leaderships in Hanoi, Peking and Moscow, all of whom they know can be bought. The real question is: can the Stalinist bureaucrats deliver the Southeast Asian liberation movement to the imperialists for anything less than what would be seen as a clear U.S. defeat? The U.S. may have bombed itself into a position of such hatred by the masses that it is beyond the bureaucrats' ability to bail it out, although if there continues to be no alternative, revolutionary leadership in Southeast Asia, the present leaderships will eventually be able to sell out again, as they did in 1945 and 1954.

U.S. Hegemony Threatened

In the economic sector, the renewal of rivalries between the major capitalist powers, marked by the resurgence of European and especially Japanese capital, underlies the crisis and has led to a sharp decline from the U.S.'s previous position of unchallenged dominance in the world market, which was the economic fruit of victory in World War II and the basis of the U.S.'s role as the policeman of world capitalism in the post-war period. Now, as the U.S. spends billions to send its armies to Southeast Asia, Japanese capitalists follow in its wake gobbling up the Asia-Pacific market. In Europe, the Gaullist-led attempt of a section of the European bourgeoisie to resist the intrusion of U.S. capital, which lay behind the monetary crisis, was temporarily

set back by the May-June 1968 events in France, but the continuing economic strength of West Germany threatens U.S. capitalist dominance as well as French and British capitalist interests. The reappearance of trade barriers and protectionism in the U.S. are an early warning of what is to come. Inter-imperialist rivalries will continue to increase, and with them the threat of new inter-imperialist wars of aggression for a redivision of the world market.

Economic Bubble Bursts

The "American Century," the longest continuous boom in the reactionary period of capitalism, has come to an end. This phase was based on a permanent Cold War economy, under which the capitalist class' general staff could regulate economic ups and downs by carefully measured government transfusions.

The Vietnamese, however, had the audacity to start a real war in the outer reaches of the empire, and the further impudence to force the Pentagon to go way over the normal budget allotment for controlled war spending, thus distorting this delicately balanced economic policy. The war produced a situation of over-full employment while at the same time it failed to raise real wages or intensify the basic rate of exploitation. This contributed to a further falling off of capital investments, which were becoming less profitable as the rate of profit fell. In the post-war period generally, the rate of exploitation has remained relatively constant, while the rate of profit has fallen considerably, due to an increase in the organic composition of capital, as predicted by Marx. The "full" employment period improved labor's bargaining position while the inflation, resulting from the heavy government spending, slashed away at real wages. The capitalists, trapped within the laws of motion of their own system, have no solutions aside from stop-gap measures to attack the working class' living standards and raise the rate of exploitation. This has led to a renewal of defensive trade union militancy which continues unabated. The Nixon government's calculated creation of massive unemployment as a means of restoring a labor market favorable to capital has triggered the current economic crisis. The capitalists' increasing impatience for new ways to shackle the labor movement—such as wage-price controls—are eagerly expounded by labor's supposed "friends" the liberal Democrats and even some of the more traitorous union

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bureaucrats, including that arch-betrayer George Meany.

PL Interprets Marx

Although the U.S. left cannot help but be aware of the crisis, there has been much wrong analysis. For instance, the September 1970 issue of *PL* magazine, in "Crises Weakening the U.S. Economy," states that we are entering the "typical final phase of the crisis of over-production." A quote from Marx is given which describes exactly the opposite of *PL's* conclusions:

"The real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself. It is the fact that capital and its self-expansion appear as the starting and closing point, as the motive and aim of production; that production is merely production for capital and not vice-versa . . . these barriers come continually in collision with the methods of production, which capital must employ for its purposes, and which steer straight toward an unrestricted extension of production, toward production for its own self, toward an unconditional development of the productive forces of society." (Capital, Kerr Edition, Vol. III, p. 293)

What Marx was pointing out here was precisely that capital slows down production and hampers the growth of the productive forces, not that it overproduces and gluts the market with unwanted goods. This occurs because the capitalists produce only when it is profitable for them, i.e. "merely production for capital. . . ." The goods that are not being produced could be bought and used by the workers if the bourgeoisie sold at a suitable price, but the capitalists, in effect, want too high a price for the goods before they are willing to produce. In this way, as determined fundamentally by the falling rate of profit, capitalism acts as a brake on the development of the economy and prevents production for use by the mass of producers, the working class.

The Learned Empiricists

The end of the post-war boom highlights other errors of analysis, notably the contention of Huberman and Sweezy that the dominance of finance capital, analyzed by Lenin in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, was ended. Their analysis was based on the observation following World War II that major manufacturing corporations were very cash-heavy, and thereby appeared able to indefinitely generate their own financing. This bloated condition was caused by the war-period recovery from the preceding depression—a recovery based in part on a great upsurge of govern-

ment spending. True to form, these empiricists were so concerned to develop "new" theories to explain "new" realities that they were unable to comprehend the difference between temporary conditions and the underlying reality already analyzed by Marx and Lenin. The development of the current crisis—in which the debt structures of major corporations have expanded in classical fashion, to the point that long-standing and key industrial corporations (Penn Central, Chrysler, Lockheed and Rolls Royce to name a few) as well as countless smaller companies, are hovering near disaster or plummeting over the brink into bankruptcy, government receivership, etc.—shows the complete worthlessness of this method of analysis.

Program of Struggle

The crisis and developing class struggle situation place the question of program ever more in the forefront. The working class, attacked at once by lay-offs and an uncontrolled inflation of prices, rents, insurance rates, taxes, etc., is hamstrung in its ability to fight by irrational race and sex divisions, weak and moribund unions run by quisling bureaucrats, an increasing pool of unemployed workers with no economic power and no ties to the organized political force they can call their own. Workers in every sector of industry are in a fighting mood, but in strike after strike, the union bureaucrats compromise and betray. The liberal "friends of labor" condemn wildcat strikes and clamor for more government controls to "curb inflation" by shackling the class struggle.

How is the left to deal with this crisis? What kind of demands should be raised and what paths must be avoided? How, and on what political basis, can a revolutionary leadership of the class be built? Unfortunately, most of the left fails to grasp even the rudiments of an approach to this problem.

The fundamental attitudes of the now defunct New Left, which condemned program out of hand—along with theory, history, i.e. thought itself—are, unfortunately, alive and well. Most tendencies now pay lip service to the need for program, as they do to

Marxism itself. But underneath they still believe that theory and history are irrelevant and that program (the mere mention of which conjures up images of "sectarians" rushing into conferences with heaps of paper resolutions) is fundamentally a diversion from action. Thus the "mass character" of the anti-war movement is still seen as more important than its class basis or political character. But all political activity has a program, i.e. a basic direction of activity. Those who put "doing" first and thinking about it only as an afterthought are carrying out a program all right—one that will lead them up a blind alley into demoralization and political irrelevance.

Nationalization?

It is paramount that we prepare for the struggles posed by the crisis by consciously applying the tools of class analysis. An example is the issue of possible nationalizations of bankrupt corporations by a capitalist government. The aim of such nationalizations is, of course, perfectly clear: the bosses have gotten themselves over their heads into debt and the government, reluctantly, sees it must bail them out to preserve the stability of the system as a whole. The first step is simply to nationalize the debts, as the Nixon government has done with its Railpax company, which secures the credits to allow the privately-owned railroads to continue operating with only minimal government direction. A more complete step is outright government ownership. In either case, it is the workers who are made to pay for the capitalists' inability to operate profitably even on the basis of existing levels of exploitation. Some of the more far-sighted union bureaucrats, for example those of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks, call for nationalizations, no doubt wishing to find themselves a permanent niche in the new arrangement.

This, then, is the "solution" of the capitalists, their government and the reformist union leaders to deal with the crisis. But the working class must not choose among the alternatives of the oppressors and their agents, which is precisely the situation which allows capitalism to continue. The left must intervene with a program which ad-

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vances the struggle on the basis of the workers' interests, i.e. by rejecting the capitalist answers.

The core of the crisis is precisely that production for profit rather than for social use is unworkable. Only workers' control of production can solve this, and this means full nationalization without compensation and expropriation of the bourgeoisie as a class. At the same time, however, to simply reject the "nationalization" schemes of the bourgeoisie and the reformists in favor of the call for socialism leaves the workers with no immediate alternative to the lay-offs posed for them by capitalism. What is needed is a *transitional* demand—i.e., one that demonstrates how the socialist solution would apply in the specific case, providing both a focus for the immediate struggle and a genuinely revolutionary direction for it. The demand in this case should be *expropriation under workers' control*, without compensation. Thus we say to the workers, "Of course nationalization is the only solution, but for whose benefit and under whose control?"

Transitional Program

The concept of a transitional program, which is as old as the communist movement itself and an inherent part of Marxism, flows from the successes of Stalinism and social democracy in defeating workers' struggles and substituting in their place either dependence on reformist solutions within the system, or, occasionally, ultra-left adventurism. Thus the alternatives of the oppressors and their agents (especially in the U.S. where the witchhunt literally severed all ties be-

tween the socialist movement and the working class) seem all the more absolute and inviolable to the workers, while those alternatives which require and lead to the workers' struggle for power, though more than ever called for by the objective conditions of imperialism in decay, seem all the more unrealistic and remote.

The labor movement has suffered throughout the post-war period as a result of a large pool of unemployed workers, many of them racially excluded from some jobs and unions, thereby becoming a potential pool of scab labor. Yet because the only answer to unemployment is a struggle which has revolutionary implications—that is, a shorter work week with no loss in pay—no section of the "official" labor movement has dared to seriously approach this question. (Meany's call for a four-day week, which skirts the issue of hours worked, possible pay cuts, etc., is a despicable pretense.)

Similarly, the working class must raise its own answer to inflation, by demanding control of prices, rents, etc., not wages, and a sliding scale of wages to keep up with the cost of living. Yet here too the trade unions' discussions do not break from the trap of viewing "management" as somehow legitimate despite it all: if profits are not protected, say the liberals and labor fakery, the company will go out of business and then where will your jobs be? We must be prepared with a revolutionary solution. Workers don't care about the company's welfare, but they have a right to care about their own. Without leadership to organize a struggle which will literally put the companies out of business by replacing them with something better, workers are dependent on the choices under capitalism. The left must demand that the company open its books to the workers, and if it is actually in the red: expropriation under workers' control. There is no other road.

PL's Schizoid Approach

The middle road of Progressive Labor—which is to fight only for things "which can be won" (i.e. immediate

and partial victories obtainable under the system) while keeping up a general stream of propaganda calling for "the dictatorship of the proletariat" as the only solution—is no separate road at all, but an unresolved juxtaposition of two contradictory impulses, reformism and ultra-leftism. It is linked to what they think the workers will accept, rather than to the objective needs of the class, which is the scientific—i.e., Marxist—approach. But how is it possible to fight for something that "can't be won"? If the struggle is confined to demands that the capitalists can grant, they will give nothing, or very little. The more that is demanded, the more political and revolutionary the struggle, the more they will grant concessions, even concessions that hurt

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—because they are forced to, for fear of losing power. Thus a struggle over demands which "can't be won" will be more effective even materially than one kept within reformist channels. But much more important, PL's approach betrays not only its immediate struggles but its ultimate goal. PL calls for socialism, but then refuses to lead the struggle in that direction; it accepts the level of struggle that exists, out of which, no matter how many "victories" are obtained, socialism will not come.

Revolutionary Regroupment

No tendency which fails to understand the chief contradictions of the epoch of imperialist decay, and to exploit them with a transitional program which reflects the objective needs of the working class in its struggles, will remain revolutionary for long in the midst of this crisis; its internal contradictions, brought more to the fore as it attempts to seize upon the opportunities of the crisis situation, will drive it either into sterile ultra-leftism or opportunist betrayal. The continuing disintegration of SDS, and the spectacular explosion of the Black Panther Party, show what lies in store for all those who seek to build a revolution on the basis of Maoist and Black Nationalist mirages. We repeat once again our call for a revolutionary regroupment of all serious forces on the left which seek to fight around a working-class program for the key questions facing the class. ■

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BRUSSELS STATEMENT

We reprint here the brief statement we distributed to the United Secretariat's "Conference of European Revolutionaries" held 21-22 November in Brussels, Belgium. The statement, printed in French, German, English and Spanish, was produced jointly and signed by the four Trotskyist groups listed below.

Comrades!

You have come to this congress because you consider it necessary that the international problems of the struggle for the socialist revolution also be discussed and tackled practically in an international framework. What do the organizers of the congress have to offer in this regard?

In their announcement they have declared that it is to be a congress "of European revolutionaries," i.e., of all organizations, groups and comrades who regard the socialist revolution as the goal of their political work. They are to engage here in general discussions and come to common conclusions regarding the line their revolutionary activity should follow in the future. And the main slogans of the congress are likewise kept so general that in them there is to be found not the slightest suggestion as to the course to be followed.

However, comrades, the following must in any case be clear: If even on the national level the revolutionary struggle cannot be conducted through the mere coordination of the activities of the most diverse groups; If it is necessary even on the national level to construct the organization of revolutionaries not around the peculiar practice of the day but around a clear revolutionary program; If this organization must therefore be not a loosely confederated association but rather must closely supervise the individual activities of its subdivisions and develop a unified course of action; If, then, the revolutionary struggle even on the national level can be victorious only under the leadership of the *bolshevik party of struggle*; If, finally, for these

reasons the first strategic task at the present time in all countries and the one that must assume absolute precedence is the *construction* of just such organizations; then this is doubly and triply so on the international level! For the very heterogeneity of the conditions of struggle, differences which necessarily assume greater dimensions in a variety of countries than within a single state, renders necessary an *international centralization* of the national struggles in order to direct these in practice toward the *one* goal, the proletarian world revolution.

Struggle for the world revolution then means: struggle for the creation of the world party of the proletarian revolution, struggle for the *construction of the Fourth International*, whose program, in its essential features developed by Trotsky, alone embodies the lessons drawn from the failure of the first three internationals. If an international congress such as this is not to exhaust itself in fine speeches but rather to lead to practical results, then *this question must be placed in the center of the discussion*.

But why is this point not explicitly contained in the program of the congress, although by far the majority of the sponsor organizations belong to the "Fourth International" of the United Secretariat or are directly allied with it? Do the sponsors, in so far as they belong to this organization wish to maintain silence on this point? We do not think so. What they wish to avoid discussing with you is *how* the Fourth International is to be constructed, for they claim after all to already be this Fourth International themselves (or else its nucleus, which in practice amounts to the same thing). All that they have to offer is then the demand to join up with them. But to write *that* into the program of the congress was, however, just a bit too embarrassing for them.

And rightly so! For to what extent does this "Fourth International" live up to its claim of having preserved the continuity of the international left opposition and the Fourth International from 1938 up to the present day? Here are only a few points from the balance sheet:

1. In the 50's and early 60's this organization supported the concept of *entrism* into the stalinist and social democratic parties, a course that led in practice to the voluntary surrender of the organizations affiliated with it. This 'entrism' was carried out by complete submersion, the formation of centrist papers, and the abandonment of any open propaganda in many cases. This conception was abandoned without a

word, then, in just the moment when its correctness might have been confirmed, namely during the general upsurge of the mass movement a few years ago. The authors of this entrism have not, however, criticized it in retrospect but remain still of the opinion that its employment in the past was completely justified.

2. Today this organization is carrying out a *policy of complete tailending of the student movement*, which it bases on the completely unMarxist "theory" of the "dialectics of intervention-sectored," according to which priority of work in the proletariat supposedly does not follow from the perspective of the revolutionizing of the proletariat. But with this theory it cannot point the way to the proletariat for you, whose social position places you for the most part in all probability amongst the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, but rather can only hinder you in achieving this contact, once you accept this line.

3. In the colonial and semi-colonial countries it advocates *guerrilla warfare* and defends the concept of the *People's War*. Politically this means a totally opportunistic accommodation not merely to Maoism and Guevarism but also to the international petty-bourgeois student movement, which stands under the influence of these tendencies. Theoretically, however, it signifies the final withdrawal to the *Narodnik* line so strongly opposed by Lenin and Trotsky, which later was to find its continuation in Stalinism, and it signifies the completed programmatic *surrender of the theory of permanent revolution*.

All these points amount to one: to the *turning away from the proletarian class line!* An organization, however, that has so completely abandoned the leading role of the proletariat does not deserve to bear the name of the Fourth International. Do not let dust be cast in your eyes: at the present moment *the Fourth International does not exist!* It can be constituted only in a long and painful process of regroupment affecting *all* the organizations and groups, which today make up the Trotskyist world movement. The absolutely indispensable presupposition for a positive result of this already discernible process lies in the *restoration of complete programmatic clarity*. That is the task of the day.

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tack. Hansen's documents on China present a devastating analysis of the Chinese Revolution as deformed from its inception by the hegemony of the Stalinized CCP and the absence of the Chinese working class as a contender for power in its own right. Hansen's conclusions not only represent the "orthodox" position on China, but also by implication irrevocably destroy the cherished arguments of the SWP in its willful capitulation to Castroism! For if Hansen admits over China that a petty-bourgeois formation at the head of a peasant army can, under certain conditions, break with capitalism but cannot go beyond the repetition on new terrain of Stalin's anti-revolutionary, anti-internationalist "socialism in one country," then the Cuban Revolution, which in a Marxist sense was an essentially identical process, did not open any "new" path to socialism making the Trotskyist theory of the permanent revolution obsolete, and the SWP-U.Sec. capitulation to nationalist-limited, bureaucratically-deformed and non-proletarian "revolutionary" currents is revealed as just another revisionist abandonment of Marxism.

The European U.Sec. forces, by and large, have become disgusted with the SWP's extreme rightist line and practice as demonstrated especially by its merely liberal anti-war policy. The only weapon which remains to the SWP in its polemics against the U.Sec. innovators is an appeal to orthodoxy and the traditional Trotskyist positions both sides claim to share. Thus, the SWP is now compelled to defend the political revolution line on China in the face of challenges by diverse forces within the U.Sec., some of them wishing to be left apologists for the Mao regime, others seeking, in contradiction to all available evidence, to make of the Liu Shao-chi wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy a proletarian element deserving of critical support. Hansen convincingly demonstrates that both these impulses are a departure from Trotskyism, but he cannot indicate where they come from, for they are prime examples of the Pabloist method in which the SWP excels: having lost all hope in the working class as the decisive force for revolution, all these revisionists are reduced to casting around for a "lesser evil" among the petty-bourgeois forces and bureaucratic strata—like Mao, like Liu, like Castro and the U.Sec.'s earlier hero, Ben Bella—in order to give the "Fourth International" some justification for existing within a world-view which makes Trotskyism irrelevant.

New "Vanguard" Discovery

The Ninth World Congress discussion on the youth question was also a manifestation of the European U.Sec.'s turn

to the left within the confines of revisionism. In the period before the French general strike, the U.Sec., riding the crest of the popular anti-Marxist theories which wrote off the industrial working class and the advanced countries in general, had found a willing audience for their vulgar Third Worldism and capitulation to nationalism. But May-June 1968 put them in an acutely embarrassing position. The new-found interest in working-class struggles among student radicals and the vast influx of youth into the revolutionary movement in France—from which the Ligue Communiste benefited as did every left-of-CP organization—necessitated at least a facade of proletarian orientation.

Accordingly the U.Sec. hit upon the strategy of the "new youth vanguard." Pointing to the restlessness of young workers everywhere (and indeed young workers, like other specially oppressed sections of the working class, often show greater militancy and potential for radicalization than the class as a whole), the educational expansion which means more working-class youth are spending more time as high school and sometimes even university students, and the lack of integration of young workers into the traditional workers' organizations with their sellout leaderships, the U.Sec. is right to conclude that young workers are a fertile field for work by revolutionaries. But the U.Sec. proposes to win these workers not by work at the point of production but essentially through campus work through the time these workers spend as students and through some metaphysical kinship between the oppressed young workers and the restless middle-class students. The fact is, however, that "the youth" is *not a class*; student youth and working-class youth, although both in motion, do not act as a coherent section of society, but are radicalized by different experiences and over different issues. Glossing over this elementary Marxist proposition may enable the U.Sec. to congratulate itself on what is supposedly a turn simultaneously to both the working class and the radical intelligentsia, but it provides no way to accomplish the central task of revolutionaries: to win the working class from its established sellout leaderships to the revolutionary cause.

The dilemma facing the U.Sec. is that it cannot transcend the two opportunist poles of "proletarian" economism or "revolutionary" petty-bourgeois nationalism. Thus the Europeans' current left face requires an even more resolute turn away from the working class, exemplified by their renunciation of the Leninist theory of entrism (i.e., work by revolutionaries within the union movement and reformist workers' parties in order to discredit their class-collaborationist leaders and win

the workers to the revolutionary program). In order to better appeal to the radical students, who are distressed by the policies of the CPs and the fake-Trotskyists under the name of entrism—i.e., conciliation of left-talking bureaucrats and attempts to pressure them into somehow leading revolutionary struggles themselves—the European U.Sec., in reflexive reaction against its own past opportunism, now denounces entrism in general, thereby turning its back on the working class in the name of the uncorrupted "youth vanguard."

The SWP's own document on the youth question came under attack from the main authors of the Europeans' new perspectives, the Ligue Communiste. Simply a gloss on YSA practice, the SWP document is too blatant in its simple "student power" orientation, too smugly reformist in its overall thrust. The Ligue's fragmentary and rather incoherent critique is more an objection to the SWP document's self-satisfied rightist tone than a refutation of position.

U. Sec. Mini-Split

The basic driving force of the U.Sec.-SWP fight can be seen neatly in microcosm in the discussion and subsequent split in the British International Marxist Group. This struggle reflected the divided loyalties of the IMG, its core of Canadian colonizers—essentially SWP loyalists, well trained in its brand of politics—vs. cadres identifying mainly with the European groups and responding to the same student radical currents as the continental U.Sec. The main heat of the IMG discussion centered on the domestic anti-war movement, with the right wing pushing for this work to be the group's main activity around a narrowly student-oriented, single-issue reformist program, while the majority insisted on a more leftward face through slogans like "Victory to the NLF." The right wing, while being the most vociferous for a purely student orientation in anti-war and "youth" work, found itself compelled, in the context of the larger "orthodox" vs. "innovators" fight, to argue at length for the traditional entrism policy as well, at least in theory.

Politically, the most significant factor in the IMG fight is that it resulted in a cold split, which may presage more to come in the U.Sec. and conceivably even a total breakdown of the unholy alliance between the SWP and the Europeans. But whatever the consequences for this unprincipled unity of revisionists, there can be little doubt that groupings and individuals within the U.Sec. formation, forced by the fight to re-examine Trotskyist theory and the history of the Fourth International, will burst the theoretical shackles of Pabloism and make their

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way towards authentic Trotskyism. The unwilling isolation into separate national compartments forced upon the general tendency represented in the U.S. by the Spartacist League by the deliberate obfuscation of crucial issues by the rotten blocs masquerading as "internationals" has been shattered, and the vital process of clarification and polarization, splits and fusions, is proceeding despite the desperate efforts of the fake-Trotskyists.

The road to the rebirth of the Fourth International is paved with the corpses of many who set themselves to the task but fell by the wayside through an incomplete understanding of the process of its degeneration. The SWP itself, under the Cannon leadership, was at first a main bulwark of the world movement in the struggle against revisionism, but even as it resisted the encroachment of Pabloism on the American party, its theoretical shortcomings and the erosion of its internationalism were laying the stepping-stones for its own retreat from Trotskyism. The degeneration of the SWP followed a different pattern than that of the European groups, but reached the same point, and the current politics of the SWP now surpassed its international allies in anti-Trotskyism and outright betrayal of the class struggle.

The New Revisionism

An essential precondition for the conquest of the European Trotskyist movement by revisionism was a fundamental break in continuity of leadership and cadres as a result of World War II. During the war, through Stalinist terror and in the course of the Nazi occupations, the European sections of the Fourth International in effect ceased to exist, and were reconstituted after 1943 by new cadres thrust to the fore by the decimation of the movement and the physical annihilation of key leaders, including of course Trotsky himself, who was murdered by the Stalinists in 1940. The new leaderships were composed of young revolutionists who, lacking the living experience of the earlier movement, had only learned their Trotskyism from books. The re-stabilization of post-war capitalism, combined with the Stalinist expansion in Eastern Europe which seemed to contradict the Trotskyist analysis of Stalinism as an essentially counter-revolutionary force which opposed the extension of the October Revolution beyond the borders of the Russian state, posed new problems which a mechanical application of book-learned Marxism was insufficient to handle.

Thus the European Trotskyist movement was a fertile field for the growth of a revisionist current which appeared more in consonance with the realities of the moment. Exemplified by Michel

Pablo, himself one of the new leaders thrust to the fore by the break in continuity, the new revisionism reacted impressionistically to the stabilization of European capitalism made possible by the slavish counter-revolutionary conduct of the European proletariat's established leaderships, and the apparent strength of international Stalinism, by postulating a role for the Trotskyists as left "pressure" groups on the Stalinist and social-democratic apparatuses. Later this was combined with a turn away from the industrial working class as the decisive force for anti-capitalist overturns and a search for a new "epicenter" of world revolution in the underdeveloped countries. The European cadres, having only read polemics against earlier departures from Marxism but never having lived through their exposure in practice, and lacking real roots in the working-class movement, had no strong inner resistance to the petty-bourgeois revisionism of Pabloism.

Retreat to Orthodoxy

After the initial period of the 1952-53 faction fight, the American SWP in its majority was a mainstay of the anti-Pabloist faction and an ally of the European anti-revisionists centered primarily around the Bleibtreu-Lambert faction in France. The degeneration of the SWP, whose revisionism eventually outstripped that of the Europeans, cannot be explained by any destruction of its central leadership, but was rather the result of serious integral weaknesses, particularly in its international perspective, which enabled it to progressively succumb to Pabloism, although of course not in a simply linear way. The SWP's isolation from the European battleground, which preserved it from the leadership discontinuity which the European groups suffered, was also a cause of its own downfall.

After the death of Trotsky, the SWP gradually ceased to see itself as a section of an international party. In this period it no longer understood the world very well, and sought to replace its lack of grasp of Marxist theory by a simple determination to be orthodox. Lacking theoretical tools to fight Pablo politically, the SWP invoked orthodoxy while treating the organizational questions as primary. Despite some uneasiness, the SWP refused to align itself with the French anti-revisionists until it faced Pabloist liquidationism within its own cadre.

When Pabloism first manifested itself within the SWP itself in 1953 with the Cochran faction fight, Cannon mobilized the party leadership to fight Cochran primarily on the basis of a conservative organizational impulse. Cannon's main concern was maintaining a majority of the American section, not fighting inside the international movement. He

denounced the Pablo-dominated international leadership for "interfering" in the affairs of national sections—a fundamentally *federalist* premise which denied the crucial need for democratic centralism on the international plane. Armed only with defensive orthodoxy, the SWP itself was seduced by the revisionists' theories after the Cold War's onset had cut its ties with the working-class movement, so that it was no longer subject to the corrective of involvement in mass struggles. The lack of clarification on key political issues, facilitated by the SWP's preoccupation with organizational matters and its isolationist conceptions, paved the way for the American party's degeneration and its eventual reunification without discussion with the European revisionists of the then International Secretariat to form the United Secretariat in 1963.

Healy: Inverted Pabloist

Following the 1953 split in the world Trotskyist movement, the main alternative to the revisionists was the International Committee, whose main forces were the SWP under Cannon, a British group under Gerry Healy and the Bleibtreu-Lambert tendency in France. Healy functioned simply as Cannon's agent (in which capacity he earlier helped expel the French anti-Pabloists, his current allies). Following the break-away of the SWP, Healy's faction became the driving force of the IC, and his intervention was instrumental in forcing the deeply unprincipled rupture of the anti-revisionist forces inside the SWP (which gave rise to the Spartacist group and the group currently calling itself the Workers League). Healy's hegemony in the IC was never challenged by the French, although some serious political differences existed and emerged over the next period.

The Healy grouping, whose revolutionary competence was seriously called into question from the beginning by Healy's own tarnished political history, represented politically a reflexive reaction against Pabloism which never broke from its essential theoretical method. The Healy position accepts the revisionist analysis of the implications of the Cuban Revolution, concluding that the only way to avoid its abjectly liquidationist conclusions is to deny that any anti-capitalist social transformation took place in Cuba (a political absurdity which the U.Sec. constantly invokes to discredit all its opponents on its left).

Healy's analysis of Stalinism follows the method which is the very crux of Pabloism: the choosing of one or another fundamentally defective nationalist or Stalinist current to "critically support" on the grounds of the implicit rejection as irrelevant of principled Trotskyist politics posing an independent proletarian line. Thus the Healy-

ites supported the Mao wing of the Chinese bureaucracy in the "Cultural Revolution" intra-bureaucratic fight and purge, enthused over the petty-bourgeois nationalists of the "Arab Revolution" and abstained for years from the unpopular task of denouncing Ho Chi Minh and the NLF for their repeated Stalinist sellouts. The French have hung back from Healy's vulgar accommodation to Stalinism, and have a fundamentally counterposed line on the Arab-Israeli conflict which is perhaps not sensitive enough to the question of national oppression, but have thus far appeared content to defer to Healy.

IC: Rotten Block

The IC under Healy's domination has been of considerable assistance to the now problematical stability of the faction-ridden United Secretariat. But the IC is at this point no more a homogeneous political entity than the U.Sec. For years it has functioned as a bloc between the political bandits of Healy's Socialist Labour League and the more left-wing Organization Communiste Internationaliste of Lambert, emulating the U.Sec.'s fundamental abandonment of principle in matters of international organization. The operation of the IC's non-aggression pact has taken roughly this pattern: its two major sections, the British and French, arrive at their own positions and publish them publicly, but smaller IC affiliates are under discipline to uphold the line determined by one or both of the larger sections. Any such affiliates, while paying lip service to "the International," are the property of one of the dominant groups: thus, the U.S. Workers League belongs to Healy's SLL, the IC German grouping to Lambert's OCI. (There has been little competition between the major partners for these spheres of influence since Healy deeply believes in the insignificance of any group whose native language is not English.) In the past this federalist conception has been sufficient for political matters, but not for organizational ones which are—for centrists—more important and therefore require a common line. And here, Healy's SLL maintained the whip hand.

OCI Acquiesces

Thus the IC declares that it is the simple organizational continuity of the Fourth International, although the Lambertistes' *private* position is that the Fourth International has been destroyed by revisionism and must be rebuilt. The last international Conference of the IC, held in London in April 1966, was decidedly Healy's operation. When the Spartacist tendency raised its political disagreements with the IC (primarily, then, centered around the question of Cuba), it was Healy who launched the assault of vilification and distortion which culminated in our expulsion, while the French went pas-

sively along for the ride. (It turned out to be quite a ride, with Hansen of the U.Sec. using Healy's bizarre machinations to discredit the IC for his own purposes.) In their own lengthy published report of the Conference in their theoretical journal, the OCI mentioned *not one word* about the political fight and exclusion of our tendency, although the attacks on Spartacist and the absurd organizational pretext dreamed up by Healy for our expulsion monopolized two full days of a four-day Conference!

Healy Eclipsed?

The new factor in the IC is not the existence of serious political differences between the British and French, which is nothing new, but a developing threat to Healy's hegemony. The challenge of the growth of the OCI and decline of the SLL has been qualitatively augmented by the drawing toward the IC of a third significant group—the Bolivian Partido Obrero Revolucionario of Guillermo Lora. The POR's policy of conciliation of the left wing of the bourgeois nationalist MNR government following the 1952 Bolivian uprising places a question mark over its revolutionary capacity. The POR is roughly comparable in size to the SLL and OCI, but its considerable implantation in the Bolivian working class (particularly the tin miners) makes it of great importance. Lora's decision to affiliate with the IC was based specifically on political sympathies with the OCI, and in spite of strong reservations about Healy. Although the alignment occurred a year ago, the SLL appears unwilling to admit or acknowledge the POR as an IC section and its press has made virtually no mention of the POR. This new balance of forces, combined with the Lambertistes' apparent success in developing collaborative relations with others in Latin

Healy's disgraceful overtures to the United Secretariat leadership, as Healy casts around desperately for leverage and possibly even a new international alliance. The original IC motion authorizing the approach to the U.Sec. was so different in tone and intent from Healy's declarations that it is no surprise that it was printed only in the Lambertiste press, while Healy and his U.S. epigones shamelessly pursued what could only be termed a preliminary unity overture, thus rehabilitating the U.Sec. leadership's Trotskyist credentials at precisely the moment when they were beginning to be held accountable for their defection by young Trotskyists internationally. Healy's anti-revisionism has always had something of the character of a personal vendetta by a cast-off currently on the outs with his masters. Thus to Healy the SWP remained a "revolutionary party" with whose leadership left-wing elements should bloc as its left cover—despite its Cuba capitulation, its Black Nationalism, its Kennedy assassination condolences, its unstoppable and accelerating rightward motion—until after its 1963 breaking of the New York-London axis. Healy's much-vaunted "method" may well produce another international flip-flop if given half a chance.

Rebuild the Fourth International!

The deepening frictions within the various "internationals" provide a renewed opportunity for the Spartacist League to intervene in the world Trotskyist movement with its principled political outlook and program. Because despite our forced isolation from co-thinkers in other countries, we never abandoned our internationalist outlook and continued to wage a principled struggle against revisionism, our history and politics can serve as a guideline for newly emerging currents seeking to reconstruct an authentic Trotskyism out of the demonstrated bankruptcy of revisionist degeneration. The Spartacist League has entered into a process of discussion and political struggle with several groups of Trotskyists in Germany, England, New Zealand and elsewhere, and consummated a single-issue bloc on the question of the U.Sec.'s revisionism at the November 1970 Brussels U.Sec. gathering. Our aim since our inception as an organization in 1964 and our break from the IC in 1966 has been the crystallization of a cohesive democratic centralist *international tendency* to stand as the alternative to the political charlatanism and organizational rotten blocs of those who falsely claim to represent Trotskyism. We are confident that the theoretical battle against revisionism, which has never been fully joined, will proceed towards the goal to which we have dedicated ourselves: **FOR THE REBIRTH OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!**

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America, appears to be the reason for Healy's stalling in holding the fourth IC Conference (originally promised for late 1967!) for which the OCI has lately been strongly pressing.

The instability of the Lambert-Healy connection may also be what is behind

WORLD TROTSKYISM REARMS

The international Trotskyist movement stands before its definitive crossroads. The revisionist currents which have dominated world Trotskyism over the past period are in crisis. In the aftermath of recent developments, most particularly the May-June 1968 explosion of the French working class which stunningly demonstrated anew the bankruptcy of the impressionists who had abandoned the proletarian internationalist strategy for revolution, the revisionists find themselves as challenged by authentic Trotskyism as do the Maoists and other non-Marxist currents. Even the most ardent revisers of Trotskyist theory are now finding themselves compelled to argue on the terrain of Leninism grown rusty and distorted in their minds by years of abuse, abandonment and betrayal. The conglomerations which for years have masqueraded as international political tendencies are forced willy-nilly into reopening the disagreements which had long laid buried by mutual consent. New currents are seeking the answers to the questions: what went wrong with the Fourth International? how can an authentic Trotskyist politics be constructed over the theoretical ruins of revisionism? And such currents are emerging even within the very heart of the revisionist "internationals" themselves!

The arch-revisionist United Secretariat (which prefers to be known as "the Fourth International") has already seen splits from its sections in Germany, England, Argentina, Ceylon and Belgium. But more serious, in its terms, is the factional war exhibited at its "Ninth World Congress" in early 1969, primarily between the European groups, whose major force is the French Ligue Communiste, and its U.S. political associate, the Socialist Workers Party, between the Ligue's aggressive *centrism* and the SWP's deepening *reformist* impulse.

Livio: an Ersatz "Che"

The key dispute at that Congress revolved around the Europeans' draft resolution on Latin America, whose thrust was that the U. Sec. itself should seek to initiate guerilla warfare in a selected country in Latin America. This proposal was only the logical implementation of the U. Sec.'s long-time political and theoretical capitulation to Castroism. The U. Sec. maintained that Cuba, after breaking with capitalism under the leadership of a petty-bourgeois radical formation, had established an essentially undeformed workers state despite the lack of any conscious intervention by the Cuban working class as a class and without the revolutionary leadership of a Trotskyist vanguard

party. Cuba was, according to the U. Sec., a dictatorship of the proletariat lacking only the "forms" of workers democracy, and Castro was "an unconscious Marxist." The Europeans now propose to extend this pattern to the rest of the "Third World," and put forward peasant guerilla warfare as the new strategy for the "Fourth International." Livio Maitan, the leader of the Italian section and a main proponent of this turn, enthused over the advantages of the "Fourth International" having a state of its own to give it relevance and prestige. And this is perfectly logical, for what relevance can authentic Trotskyism possibly have for these revisionists who have at bottom despaired of *proletarian* revolution?

Hansen Heads Right Wing

A minority at the Congress, led by the SWP's Joseph Hansen, opposed the proposed turn. Resorting to a rediscovery of "orthodoxy," Hansen maintained that any form of armed struggle must be seen as a tactic subordinate to the building of a Trotskyist vanguard party. But the Hansen-SWP initiative in the U. Sec.'s capitulation to Castroism, and the class-collaborationist and "Third World" nationalist politics of the SWP domestically, reveal the fundamentally reformist impulse driving the SWP to oppose the guerilla warfare line under the rubric of orthodoxy. Just as the Communist Parties counter the confrontationalist urgings of impatient petty-bourgeois radicals with quotations from Lenin opposing adventurism, for the purpose not of upholding Leninism but of practicing reformism, so the SWP now makes use of its formal Trotskyist tradition while opposing its factional antagonists from the right.

The European U. Sec., which competes with the left Maoists and radical syndicalists in the more radical and class-conscious European milieu, is impressionistically chasing after a more "left" line. But the SWP aims at a different constituency: a base of middle-class youth recruited on the basis of the SWP's "success" in building a reformist, single-issue Popular Front against the Viet Nam war. In the long run, the SWP's competitors are not the other erstwhile Trotskyists, nor the Maoist and semi-Maoist confrontationalists, but the ghost of American social-democracy. Its Young Socialist Alliance in effect fills the niche previously occupied by the YPSL-SP, but is unencumbered by the latter's arid anti-communism which is now a detriment rather than an aid to becoming America's mass reformist party. With such a perspective, more or less consciously recognized by at least a section of the SWP leadership, what could be more disastrous than to threat-

en its precious legality and respectability by the undertaking of anything so illegal as guerilla warfare?

China Dispute Revisited

The dispute over the Latin American resolution was not the only evidence of the widening breach between the SWP and the European U. Sec. At least as much space in the SWP's internal bulletins around the time of the Congress was devoted to the question of China. Although it was the 1965 "Cultural Revolution" which precipitated the U. Sec. discussion, the fundamental issue—the nature of the state issuing out of the 1949 victory of the Chinese Revolution—had been a carefully suppressed bone of contention within the U. Sec. since its 1963 inception and before. The SWP was unable to arrive at a position on the Chinese Revolution until 1955, when it finally characterized China as a *deformed workers state* run by a bureaucratic caste which monopolized political power and control over the nationalized economy. Only implicit but unmistakable in the 1955 document was the need for a *political revolution* to oust the Maoist bureaucracy and open the road to socialist development and proletarian democracy. When the SWP "reunited" with the International Secretariat forces (long led by the arch-revisionist Michel Pablo) to form the U. Sec., it blurred its earlier stand to placate its new allies who maintained an agnostic position on China, capitulating to the Pabloist position that Stalinized Communist Parties could, under pressure, be forced to play an essentially revolutionary role, thus eliminating the need for Trotskyist working-class parties to lead socialist revolutions. At the 1963 "reunification" Congress, both sides shelved the difference—with its fundamental implications regarding Stalinism and the entire character of the colonial revolution—in favor of an unprincipled unity.

But the difference over China refused to lie down and play dead. The SWP, threatened by the current left turn of the U. Sec. forces and their non-proletarian but would-be-revolutionary strategy projected for Latin America at the "Ninth World Congress," found itself compelled to fight on the Chinese question as well. Directly challenged by the U. Sec.'s rewriting of the SWP's draft resolution on the "Cultural Revolution," and perhaps also goaded by a desire to cut some theoretical ground out from under Livio Maitan, a leading advocate of the new confrontationalism on Latin America and a long-time "soft" on Maoist China, SWP theoretician Hansen launched a counterat-

(Continued on Page 5)