

Marxist Bulletin No. 10



DOCUMENTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
COMMUNIST WORKING COLLECTIVE OF LOS ANGELES

Published by

SPARTACIST

Box 1377, G.P.O.

New York, N. Y. 10001

\$4.75

PREFACE

The Communist Working Collective originated when a small group of Maoists came together in Los Angeles to undertake an intensive investigation of the history of the communist movement in order to develop a strategy for the U.S. socialist revolution. Its study of the essentials of Stalinist and Maoist theory led the CWC to the inescapable conclusion that the theory of "Socialism in One Country" is in irreconcilable opposition to revolutionary internationalism. The consolidation of the CWC around Trotskyism and its systematic study of the various ostensible Trotskyist international tendencies was culminated in the fusion between the CWC and the Spartacist League in September 1971.

The brief history of the CWC which appeared originally in the first issue of Workers Vanguard (see page viii) alludes to the splits of the CWC's founding cadre from the Revolutionary Union (RU) and the California Communist League (CCL). To convey the genesis of this process, we have included a number of forerunner documents going back to the original split from the CPUSA on the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution. The original resignation of comrades Treiger and Miller began the "floundering about for three years... seeking in Mao Tse Tung Thought a revolutionary alternative to the revisionists." Treiger went on to help found the CWC; Miller continued to uphold the dogmatic tradition and declined to even answer the "Letter to a Maoist" (see page 30).

Why the Critique of "Two Stages"?

The lynchpin on which all variants of the Maoist "two stage" theory of revolution rest--whether applied to the advanced countries or to the colonial world--is collaboration with the ruling class or a section of it during the initial "stage." Early in its development the CWC had rejected the conception as it was applied to the United States, but believed it remained applicable to the colonial revolution. It was recognized at least for the advanced countries that a strategic alliance with capitalist politicians was in opposition to--not in preparation for--the "undivided rule of the proletariat." Such an alliance invariably leads to a governmental coalition with bourgeois parties, or a so-called "workers' government" which in fact rests upon the bourgeois state and is self-limited to bourgeois property forms. It is a policy of disaster for the proletariat.

Lenin's What is to be Done? showed how tailing after the spontaneous struggles of the working class rather than channeling those struggles into a revolutionary direction leads to the doorstep of the bourgeoisie. The "stages theory" in its most generalized form meant simply adapting to backwardness and therefore to bourgeois ideology and control. It meant in practice applying Bernstein's infamous formula, "the movement is everything, the final aim is nothing."

The distinction between Stalin and Mao on "two stages" in the advanced countries is worthy of note. The CCL, like Stalin before it, advocated a "single stage" revolutionary strategy for the advanced countries. But that formulation became for the CCL the

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rationalization for sectarianism like that which allowed the German CP under Stalin to be isolated and destroyed in the face of a fascist upsurge. Mao, in contrast, while silent on the U.S., advocated a multi-class "Peoples Democratic Dictatorship" for imperialist Japan.

Trapped in an alteration between two defective theories--the Stalinism of the "third period" and the Stalinism of the "popular front"--the CCL swung over to advocating a "united" front against fascism, which to them meant uniting with the "democratic" imperialists as the lesser evil. This "united" front is supposed to become a government coalition and then a launching pad for a socialist revolution. It was this policy which led to the catastrophe in Spain and the capitulation of the French and Italian CPs following World War II. In the U.S. at the present time it meant a policy of support for the Panthers' "united" front against fascism which wound its way to the liberal bourgeoisie through an alliance with the CPUSA. History, as Marx once remarked, often repeats itself--the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.

The CWC did not rule out the possibility that the "democratic" imperialists might once again come to power following a fascist takeover, but held instead that revolutionaries must neither aid such a government in its ascent to power nor give it any support once in power. The CWC concluded it would stand in revolutionary opposition as did Lenin (and Trotsky) to the Kerensky government which issued out of the February overturn of the Tsar.

Stalin made a profound departure from Leninism on questions of over-all revolutionary strategy in the second Chinese Revolution. Stalin resuscitated not the "old Bolshevik revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry," as Progressive Labor claims, but the Menshevik formula of unity with the bourgeoisie. This policy led directly to the bloodbath of 1925-27. Mao, rather than coming to terms with Stalin's disastrous policy, discarded the theory of urban proletarian insurrection and turned to the peasantry. He accepted the bloc of four classes and the "two stage" theory seeking only to give it a new footing. Bill Grey's article in Spartacist #15-16 ("Chinese Menshevism," April-May 1970) develops our analysis in greater detail.

The RU, in contrast to the CCL, lapsed into a fairly open variant of the "two stages" theory while retaining an anti-fascist clause. It is here that "Third Worldism" becomes evident. The RU subordinates the contradiction between the workers and capitalists in the U.S. to the so-called "principal contradiction" between imperialism and the national liberation movement. In this way, the RU could claim "internationalism" and maintain that its politics did not stop at the national boundaries. Instead of recognizing the vile nature of the colonial bourgeoisie and that workers revolution in a given country is the best (although not the only) form of international aid, the RU defined its main task as helping the "countryside surround the cities"--a metaphorical allusion to the liberated colonial countries surrounding the advanced countries, the Lin Piao worldwide "two stage" scenario whose U.S. corollary was the RU's "anti-imperialist stage."

At the time of the split from the RU, the CWC founders believed that the "anti-imperialist stage" in the U.S. crippled the domestic revolutionary struggle and represented a mechanical application of Mao's theory for a colony to an advanced country. They therefore considered the RU to be a right centrist departure from Maoism. But its intensive study of Maoist theory and history demonstrated to the CWC that one can only be simultaneously a subjective proletarian revolutionary and a Maoist by ignoring history and dividing up the world into disconnected parts. The RU genuinely represents consistent mainstream Maoism; its domestic strategy flows logically out of the Chinese world strategy, a strategy which cripples the proletariat of the advanced countries.

For lack of an alternative, the CWC tended at that time to uphold a kind of "maximum" program which meant propaganda for socialism and political exposure of day-to-day events. They also adhered to the Red Guard notion, popular in the early days of the Cultural Revolution, that "destroying is building." (It is worthy to note in passing that the slogan "It is right to rebel" has since been changed in the Chinese press to "It is right to rebel against reactionaries"!) As can be easily imagined, such a disposition as "destroying is building" is hardly conducive to a well-run faction fight. This only succeeded in enraging Avakian all the more, which is the equivalent of fanning a forest fire with an old newspaper.

Pursuing the Lion into his Lair

The unassailable fortress of the "two stage" theory is Mao's New Democracy. If it could be shown, however, that the "two stage" theory did not apply even to the most backward of countries--countries bound hand and foot to foreign imperialism without even so much as a democratic land reform--then the theory would fall of its own weight for the rest of the world. It would prove that Mao's strategy also betrayed the colonial proletariat, and Maoists would find themselves like Alice, after the Queen's rantings, with nothing but a pack of cards.

It was for this reason that the struggle within the CWC broke out, not in connection with programmatic work or practical activities, but over the re-examination of New Democracy. It is also for this reason that the dizzying spin of Progressive Labor culminating in Road to Revolution III began with its critique of the Indonesian slaughter in 1965. The unwillingness of three CWC comrades (see page 22) to confront the question led to a conditioned reflex of turning to blind practice.

Once it had consolidated around a critique of New Democracy, the CWC lost only one additional comrade, who had the unique distinction of holding simultaneously the theory of Permanent Revolution and the theory of "Socialism in One Country." Since these theories are polar opposites, it was not surprising that following his expulsion from the CWC he was soon expelled from the October League (a Los Angeles Maoist group headed by Mike Klonsky)--for "Trotskyism"!

Gangsterism

The criticisms of the RU provoked a deep-seated Stalinist reaction: the RU branded its critics "objective agents" of the bourgeoisie; then, imperceptibly, they became just "agents"; then, picking up steam, "subjective agents"; finally the RU painted the whole thing outright as the conscious work of police spies! The RU's three-year history is replete with gangster attacks against other tendencies. RUsers have physically attacked or threatened PL, the SWP, the Spartacist League, the IS, RU's own members, and undoubtedly other groups and individuals which distance makes impossible to observe. The recent split into a reformist wing (RU) and an adventurist wing (Venceremos) had the dubious distinction of tailing the Panther split in advance!

These gangsterist practices have been superficially identified as New Left "kick assism," vulgarly adapting to workers' backwardness, narrow turf questions, or just plain "macho" posturing. The deeper roots of these tendencies must be sought in the long-term, chronic, conflict of the RU's Stalinist world-view with the fundamental interests of the working-class movement. In the last analysis, it is a statement of ideological bankruptcy and compulsive self-insulation. In the same way, Stalin's physical liquidation of the overwhelming majority of Bolshevik leading cadre was rooted in his counter-revolutionary world-view which was profoundly at variance with the workers' interests--and not because Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rykov, etc., etc., were agents of the Mikado, Great Britain and Hitler.

Two Obstacles

As the CWC progressed and developed, the charge "Trotskyite" began to be heard with greater frequency. The CWC comrades' first inclination was to attribute such charges to namecalling. Later, when it became evident that many CWC positions did at least parallel those of Trotsky, the question of Trotskyism had to be faced, on a psychological as well as a political level. It may be hard for those not personally experienced in the Stalinist tradition to grasp that in the Stalinist movement, to find oneself a Trotskyist can be traumatic. Having accepted the mentality that to become a Trotskyist is to separate oneself forever from the "healthy" working-class struggle, the CWC comrades had to conquer this obstacle to scientific objectivity before they could face the growing realization that their "Trotskyite" positions were indeed Trotskyist, were indeed essential parts of a unitary world-view which was truly communist, i.e. Trotskyist.

The second danger the CWC faced was a "facile shift from Stalinist to Trotskyist forms of thought," as some Japanese comrades put it. In other words, if the CWC did not thoroughly come to terms with its past, the comrades stood in danger of becoming merely Maoists in Trotskyist clothing. What was needed as part of the continuing process of study and self-examination was to come to grips with the Fourth International and the present state of the movement. The "Theses on Pabloism, Inverted Pabloism and the Fourth International" represents a concentrated summary of this investigation. These "Theses" are part of a much longer document submitted

to the September 1971 Spartacist League plenum as part of the documentary basis for the fusion, which will be published shortly.

The litmus test of the depth of the transformation came, surprisingly enough, in negotiations and relations with the Workers League. Stalinism no more carries a union bug than classical revisionism did before it. The Workers League was the first self-proclaimed anti-revisionist Trotskyist organization with which the CWC came in contact; this brief encounter with the WL is embodied and summarized in the documents which, we believe, speak for themselves.

Fusion

The evolution and qualitative transformation of the Communist Working Collective, culminating in the deeply principled fusion between the CWC and the Spartacist League, represents a striking confirmation of the SL tactic of Leninist regroupment. More than that, it is part of the continuing transformation of the SL into the nucleus of the vanguard party, with the program and embryonic forces necessary to carry its propaganda and agitation into every sector of the exploited masses and seek to weld their struggles together into a unified working-class struggle against capitalism. The construction of a vanguard party depends greatly on its publications. Not in the vulgar sense--for anyone can put out a garbage rag--but in the sense that Lenin described in polemicizing for Iskra. A party is built, other considerations aside for the moment, through a central organ, which, acting as a kind of scaffolding, provides a structure around which ideas are disseminated, agitation is carried out and cadre are trained and brought into a coherent, tight, systematic network of agents. This network acquires all the skills necessary to mobilize the class and "assume the reins of government" when the time comes. The launching of Workers Vanguard as the regular and frequent main organ of the SL is a vital part of this perspective.

26 October 1971

FROM MAOISM TO TROTSKYISM

—Reprinted from WORKERS VANGUARD, No. 1, October 1971

The theoretical development of the Communist Working Collective (CWC) grew out of the experience of two comrades in the Maoist Bay Area Revolutionary Union. Their criticisms of the RU became the main ideas around which the CWC was founded and represented the beginning of our differentiation from mainstream Maoism. Our criticisms of the RU centered around the "Strategical United Front Against Imperialism," which called for unity with sections of the bourgeoisie, saw the proletarian party arising out of this united front, and subordinated communist work to uncritical support of various petty-bourgeois struggles, especially national struggles.

In reaction to the tailism of the RU and the RYM(SDS), the two comrades supported and drew close to the California Communist League. The CCL (now the CL), which originated in the Communist Party and the Provisional Organizing Committee, is a small sectarian Stalinist group who see themselves as a pre-party formation, publish a newspaper, and require a working-class job for all members. We were soon repelled by the conscious anti-intellectualism and workerism which veiled a crude economism and was then passed off as theory. We saw that theory must take precedence over practice in the period of pre-party formations. The main void in the American movement was the absence of a revolutionary program, and dogmatic adaptations of various formulations of Stalin's Third International would not fill it. We became convinced that this program could not be developed within the bureaucratic confines of the CCL. We were critical of the deification of Stalin and could not accept the analysis that the restoration of capitalism in the USSR began with the last heartbeat of J. V. Stalin. We believed that Stalin had made a number of important errors, such as the mass purges of the 1930's. But we thought that Mao Tse-Tung, through the "Cultural Revolution," had rectified these errors with the discovery that classes and class struggle continue during socialism. We counterposed Mao to Stalin and came into direct conflict with the CCL who equated any criticism of Stalin as an attack on the dictatorship of the proletariat ("d of p").

A similar struggle was also developing in the CCL's youth group, the Young Communist League. After breaking with the CCL both groups fused to form the CWC.

Analysis

The CWC began by analyzing the programs of the Bolsheviks, the CPUSA, Weatherman, RYM II,

and the Progressive Labor Party. Our basic criteria were the primacy of the class struggle, propagating socialism in practice, recognizing the need for a Leninist vanguard party, and publishing a theoretical communist newspaper capable of serving as a collective organizer. Within these programmatic principles, we made numerous criticisms, but could not advance toward a program.

Applying Mao Tse-Tung Thought to the U.S. was complicated by its inherent ambiguities. Groups as divergent as Weatherman and PL could claim that they were the expression of Maoism in America. Two platitudinous statements on the black struggle are the sum total of Mao's guidance to the U.S. movement. The clearest Chinese statement was a public letter to the CPUSA in response to their support of the Soviet Union against the Chinese. The CPC called upon the U.S. communists to "carry on and enrich the revolutionary tradition of William Z. Foster... form the broadest united front against imperialism... carry through to final victory the great cause of the people of all countries for world peace, national liberation, democracy, and socialism." This was precisely the RU's strategical united front. We rationalized that this was not the current Chinese position, that it was written in 1963 when the CPC was controlled by Liu. In short, we tried to paint the RU as right deviationists from Mao's Thought.

Our position on the Chinese international strategy was filled with contradictions. We accepted the two-stage revolution theory in the colonial countries but disagreed with the same two-stage theory when applied to world revolution. We were dubious of Lin Piao's strategy of triumphant colonial revolutions surrounding the imperialist countries, "the countryside surrounding the cities." This strategy, based on united front (really popular front) national liberation struggles, relegated the proletariat to a supporting role. A correct strategy, we thought, should be the reverse: only a working class revolution in the imperialist countries could completely overthrow international capital. In Long Live Peoples War, Lin Piao's only reference to the proletariat of the West was: "Since WWII, the proletarian revolutionary movement has for various reasons been temporarily held back in the North American and West European capitalist countries."

We were disturbed by the lack of analysis by Lin Piao of the history of the western proletariat but we were ignorant of the theoretical and historical experience of the working class since the

Russian revolution except through Stalin's falsified histories. Not understanding the actual basis of Maoism we tried to separate Mao from the strategic united front against imperialism, from Stalinism, and from the defeats of the Third International. In short, we tried to separate Maoism from Mao; as a result, after four months we were no closer to a program than when we formed.

Permanent Revolution

The turning point of the CWC was a debate over the nature of the Chinese state in 1949. Most of the group concluded that "New Democracy" was a fundamental revision of Marx and Lenin on the class nature of the state. Our view, though incomplete, logically would lead straight to Trotsky's Permanent Revolution. After this discussion and a split over whether critical analysis of Mao should continue, we were able to begin our task of independently re-establishing the theoretical and historical continuity of the communist movement.

How could a joint dictatorship ("New Democracy") exist? Marx and Lenin defined the state as special bodies of armed men enforcing the rule of a single class upon the rest of society. In the modern world, either the proletariat or the bourgeoisie controlled the state apparatus. There could be no third state, no "New Democracy." Mao called for a coalition government of the proletariat, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie, "national bourgeoisie," and even, for a time, the so-called comprador bourgeoisie (with Chiang, thus making a bloc of five classes!)—leaving the question of who controls the state apparatus unresolved. For the first time we understood the reason for Mao's uncritical support of the Indonesian CP immediately prior to its physical elimination, and the lack of any subsequent self-criticism by the CPC or Mao.

In the course of this investigation we learned that current Chinese editions of Mao's writings differed radically from the originals. This policy of outright falsification alone destroyed Maoism's scientific pretensions.

The debate over New Democracy was actually no debate at all. The two comrades supporting New Democracy said simply: "Your analysis is Trotskyist" and "unless it is in Mao, it is not true." (In which edition? one might ask!) Mao taught that intellectuals should go to the masses and learn from them, so when Mao was criticized, our dogmatists who had been pushing for programmatic investigation and study of dialectical materialism, flip-flopped and demanded that we propagate Maoism to factory workers as our primary arena and at every step present our theoretical achievements to them for final judgement. The overwhelming majority of the CWC determined to proceed with our analysis. Three comrades, clutching Red Books to their breasts, fled

from our threatening ideas. They eventually buried themselves in a small dogmatic sectlet, parroting invincible Maothought.

The CWC then divided into subcommittees to accomplish two basic tasks: to write a draft program and to examine anew the history of the Communist International. The latter committee immediately launched into a thorough reading of Trotsky who had played a prominent role in the CI's early history. It was here that we first realized that Trotsky's analysis paralleled our own. But it was Trotsky! Suddenly we felt the full weight of the emotional spectre of the splitter/wrecker agent Trotsky looming before us. On the most significant question of the Chinese revolution we were "Trotskyites"!

It became immediately necessary to reorganize the work, abandon the committee system and bring the entire collective into this basic study. Fortunately, the other comrades who had put together a threadbare draft program recognized that fundamentals take precedence even over program. We began the Stalin-Trotsky study with some of us already embryonic Trotskyists.

What is the relationship between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism? This question, important above all to nations which have not achieved their bourgeois revolutions, was resolved by study of the experience of the Russian Revolution.

The Menshevik view tied the proletariat to the leadership of the liberal bourgeoisie which the victory of the bourgeois revolution would put in power. The proletariat under the more favorable conditions of the bourgeois republic could then begin its struggle for power. Permanent Revolution advocated by Trotsky maintained that, "the complete victory of the democratic revolution in Russia is conceivable only in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, leaning on the peasantry." Upon seizing power the dictatorship of the proletariat would immediately be faced with both democratic and socialist tasks. The peasantry was not an independent force but must either follow the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. The seizure of power by the Russian proletariat would spark revolution in the West, protecting Russia from bourgeois restoration and providing immense resources for backward Russia's socialist development.

History proved Trotsky's position correct and Lenin adopted this strategy in April, 1917 (April Theses). This strategy remains the only correct strategy for revolution in the colonies.

After the Russian Revolution Stalin and later Mao revived the Menshevik two-stage revolution which subordinated the proletariat to the liberal or national bourgeoisie. Because of ties to imperialism and landholding, the national bourgeoisie cannot carry out the bourgeois revolution. The two-stage strategy means subordination of

the workers and peasants to imperialism and the landowners, leading the workers into the inevitable reaction and slaughter. Just as Stalin's support of the Kuomintang led to the Shanghai massacre and destruction of the Chinese Revolution in 1927 so Mao's New Democracy led the Indonesian party to massacre in 1965. Such are the fruits of New Democracy.

The actual history of the Chinese revolution repudiates New Democracy. The Chinese Communist Party seized state power in 1949 and established a deformed workers' state characterized by nationalized property and a bureaucracy ruling over the working class. All the talk of "The Dictatorship of Four (or five) Classes" aside, the CPC (including the Red Army) and nobody else controlled the state. Its reformism led it to talk of sharing the power, something it could not actually do in China without being overthrown by a bourgeois counter-revolution. Those who took the CPC's words literally—like the PKI of Indonesia—were crushed.

Only a victory of the working class and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat can break imperialism, carry through the agrarian revolution and enable the working class to rule in their own right.

What is Socialism?

An essential task of ours was a re-establishment of the basic axioms of Marxism-Leninism. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin all believed that communism would replace capitalism only after a transitional period during which the proletariat enforces its dictatorship over all the other classes.

Socialism according to Marx and Lenin means the lower phase of communism. It is a society characterized by common property ownership, very high productivity of labor, the absence of class-based social antagonisms, the replacement of the standing army by a universal people's militia, material incentives limited to equal pay for equal work, full emancipation of women, disappearance of the age-old distinction between town and country, etc. In short, it is only the beginning, but definitely the beginning, of man's ascent from the "kingdom of necessity into the kingdom of freedom."

It was obvious that the socialism which Marx and Lenin envisioned would be a world society, necessarily embracing the industrialized countries of Europe, the United States and Japan.

Now we understood why Stalin was forced to deny one year after the great purges that there was any longer any class struggle in the Soviet Union. To proclaim socialism in the Soviet Union he had to deny the glaring non-socialist features of the Soviet Union. The Chinese "discovery" that classes still exist under socialism is equivalent to discovering that their socialism is not social-

ism.

Any analysis of the Third International must come to grips with the Stalin-Trotsky debate on socialism in a single country. All would-be revolutionaries are forced, willy-nilly, to a position on this single vital question. Thorough study of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky revealed the true nature of the debate.

International Revolution or National Reformism

The theory of socialism in a single country requires a denial of the fundamental characteristics of modern capitalist economy and cuts the heart out of Marxism. In The German Ideology and elsewhere Marx states very clearly that one of capitalism's greatest achievements is the creation of a proletariat who is a world historical, universal man based on the international division of labor and the supra-national character of modern productive forces. The motive force of history is the ever developing productive forces. For a new historical society to evolve this new society must unfetter the world productive forces. Denying this is tantamount to denying Marxism—precisely what Stalinism-Maoism does.

Because of uneven development the proletariat in the colonial countries may be first able to seize power. Their seizure of power does not abolish their dependence on the international division of labor. As the former colony develops it becomes more dependent on the world economy. Lenin spoke of "a test which is being prepared by the Russian and international market, to which we are subordinate, with which we are bound up, from which we cannot break away." The only hope for the dictatorship of the proletariat in the backward country is clearly set forth by Lenin on the 5th anniversary of Soviet rule. "Even before the revolution and likewise after it, our thought was: immediately, or at any rate very quickly, a revolution will begin in the other countries, in the capitalistically more developed countries... or in the contrary case we will have to perish... The dates have shifted, the pattern of events has formed itself in many respects unexpectedly, but the fundamental orientation remains unchanged."

Once we grasped the essence of socialism in one country, i. e., national reformism, all the other pieces of the puzzle of the temporary postponement of revolution in the advanced countries fell into place.

To mask socialism in a single country in Leninist phrases Stalin had to turn Lenin inside out. All the subsequent lies and falsifications of history were designed to reconcile the revolutionary internationalism of Marx and Lenin with the counter-revolutionary national reformism of Stalin and Mao. Here is the thread which runs through the popular front, social fascism, support

of the liberal bourgeoisie against the proletariat, peaceful co-existence, and the absence of a communist international.

National reformism represents the world outlook not of the proletariat but of the bureaucracy on the backs of the proletariat. The principal historical cause for the degeneration of the Soviet regime was Russian backwardness and universal want confronted with hostile capitalist encirclement, setting the basis for fulfillment of Marx's predictions that so long as want was merely made general, "all the old crap" would rise up again, i. e., the development of a privileged bureaucracy. International revolution, which unfetters the world productive forces, is contrary to the interests of the bureaucracy for it would eliminate the basis on which it rests. The position of the Stalinist bureaucracies is analogous to the labor bureaucracy under capitalism. Although their social base is the proletariat they occupy privileged positions, maintained by collaboration with the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

According to Stalin only intervention by the capitalist countries can prevent the building of socialism in a single country. He advanced the tactic of the "neutralizing of the world bourgeoisie" by the world proletariat to ensure the building of socialism unopposed. The world would attain socialism through the Directorate of State Planning for the USSR, through peaceful economic competition. The world proletarian movement is turned into border guards for "socialist countries." The Communist International first degenerates into a pressure group on the world bourgeoisie and then is dissolved to give concrete assurances to the bourgeoisie that the bureaucracy has no plans for their overthrow.

The fundamental identity between Maoism and Stalinism was the reason why the Chinese would neither summarize the Third International or call for a new International. The anti-imperialist united front—a bloc between the Chinese bureaucracy and sections of the world bourgeoisie is a concrete betrayal of the workers and peasants. The Chinese bureaucracy hopes to transform its alliance with tinpot national bourgeoisies of colonial countries into a grand alliance with the imperialist bourgeoisie, e. g., from Sihanouk to Nixon. Membership in Peking's anti-imperialist front consists of everybody from the Pakistani military regime of Yahya Khan to imperialist Japan. Mao calls for a "patriotic united front of all strata of the Japanese people" within one of the most developed imperialist nations in the world. Why? Because the victory of the working class in Japan, the industrial powerhouse of Asia, would immediately precipitate the political overthrow of the Chinese bureaucracy by the Chinese working class. Here stands Mao, stripped of his red veil, fighting for the interests of the bureauc-

racy.

Avakian on the Run

In a real sense our collective struggle had been one of defeating the revisionism in the communist movement exemplified by the RU. For a full year we had probed Maoism for something to refute the RU united front strategy. Nothing was forthcoming. Only by basing ourselves on Lenin and Trotsky did we finally come up with a concise, revolutionary refutation of the RU's class collaboration policy of the popular front and understanding of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies. In July we had a chance to intervene in a panel debate on Chinese foreign policy between Maoists Bob Avakian (RU) and Frank Pestana and former SWPer Milt Zaslow (Liberation Union), and a lecture on the RU united front strategy by Avakian.

The night of the panel on China's foreign policy fell ironically on the day after Nixon announced his visit to China, putting the defenders of Mao in an extremely shamefaced position. Far more important, though, was that the lines were drawn this time not between the "left" and right Maoists as so often in Los Angeles, but between Stalinism and Trotskyism. Between our leaflet, Zaslow's devastating critique, and comments from the floor, the debate was a complete and unconditional rout of Stalinism and Maoism. Barely a Stalinist dared to speak from the floor as time and again Avakian and Pestana completely contradicted themselves in their attempts to defend the indefensible Chinese betrayals. In such a position, Maoist debate was replaced with the Stalinist stand-by: slandering the personal integrity of Trotsky. In all, they got creamed.

To top it off Avakian personally attacked a CWC member (a former RUer) for "corrupting the youth" and threatened him with violence if he appeared the following night. The CWCer, replying with the slogan "Long Live Socrates!" proceeded to form a defense front and returned the next night in force.

The collective proprietors of the hall in collaboration with Avakian avoided another "terrible" night by limiting questions to 30 seconds and prohibiting discussion and debate.

The year's effort had transformed an insignificant internal struggle within Stalinism into a component part of the historic and worldwide battle of Marxism-Leninism against its detractors, thereby helping to prepare the way for the socialist revolution.

By the time of the RU confrontation we had concluded the greater portion of our examination of Trotskyist groupings. We had long been critical of the SWP's rampant revisionism even when we were still Maoists. In fact, one of the main obstacles to taking Trotskyism seriously was the politics of the SWP. We noted their similarities

to the CPUSA, sharpened up our historical understanding of the particular twists their opportunism took (Pabloism, Cuba, etc.) and then turned to those groups which appeared to be applying Trotsky's ideas in a serious manner.

We spent considerable time examining the "Russian Question," that is, the class nature of the Soviet State. In the course of this inquiry we studied both wings of the International Socialists (state capitalist and bureaucratic collectivist) and found both wanting. We concluded that Trotsky's analysis of the deformed workers state as an obstacle on the road to socialism, as the first phase of the restoration of capitalism but not itself that restoration, remains the most sensible ordering of the facts. We should note in passing that while we did not consider the IS practice in party building to be Leninist, we found the individual members and the local Los Angeles leadership to have a democratic and scientific spirit in our all-too-few discussions with them.

Wohlforth Exposed

Our investigation of organizations considering themselves Trotskyist led us to study the politics of the Workers League and the Spartacist League. Our contact with the Workers League soon revealed to us the spurious character of that organization and its dependence upon the blind loyalty of its membership to it and its international bloc in place of Trotskyist politics. In a letter of April 27 Tim Wohlforth declared that the Spartacist League "is completely hostile to the Fourth International and bears no relationship whatever with Trotskyism" and that "you cannot have joint discussions or joint actions with us while at the same time maintaining relations of any sort with Spartacist." We replied on May 18 that we could reach such a conclusion only "on the basis of our

own independent investigation." We noted that "Spartacist has shown a healthy attitude toward encouraging and aiding our investigation (which is more than we can say about your approach)" and reaffirmed our intention to continue our investigation of the SL and WL "in spite of any roadblock you may throw up in our way."

If Wohlforth had had his way, we would not only have proclaimed the WL to be the Leninist vanguard before we had even studied the question, but further we would have been prevented from our attempts to influence the Maoists in the direction of Trotskyism. Referring to recent Chinese atrocities in Ceylon and Pakistan, Wohlforth declared, "In any event we will not have joint actions with Maoists." We replied that he obviously assumed that Maoist groupings were finished formations, and ignored the tremendous flux such organizations were undergoing in the wake of the intensifying crisis of world imperialism and the ever clearer capitulations of Chinese Stalinism to imperialism. Such sectarianism, we wrote, could permanently bar these comrades from the road to Trotskyism. We characterized Wohlforth's position as leading to "either a sectarian liquidation of the united front reminiscent of Third Period Stalinism or to a series of opportunist zig-zags—now condemning joint action, now pragmatically entering into it."

The arrogance, sectarianism, misrepresentation and political tomfoolery exemplified by the WL in our contact with them only underscored the decisive character of our break with Stalinism. In this sense the WL hastened our decision to fuse with the organization which, through open and comradely discussions sustained over a period of months, we found ourselves in political solidarity. Our fusion with the Spartacist League took place at the Labor Day Plenum in New York.

November 7, 1967

Comrades,

Today is the 50th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. It is a day of celebration. The red October days, the Bolsheviki, and the historic achievements of the Soviet people will stand forever as a beacon to the peoples of the world in their struggle to free themselves from exploitation and oppression. The theories and leadership supplied by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin has provided and will continue to provide the working class and its allies with an inexhaustible source of knowledge and inspiration.

Yet these great accomplishments are being sullied and used to serve imperialism by the Soviet revisionist clique at this very moment. The present leaders of the Soviet Party and State have set themselves against communism, against revolution, and against the Soviet people. Disguising themselves as "creative Marxists," they are in fact restoring capitalism at a frantic pace.

The Soviet revisionists have overthrown the dictatorship of the proletariat and replaced it with the "state of the whole people," a ludicrous invention which in practice means the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. They have liquidated the Marxist-Leninist vanguard party and transformed it into the "party of the entire people." Their crimes against the people are so gross and immense as to dwarf even the arch-treachery of the revisionists of the Second International.

In brazen disregard for the revolutionary aspirations of the people of the whole world, they have substituted "great power" chauvinism for proletarian internationalism and have split the world communist movement by their collaboration with imperialism and particularly with U.S. imperialism. They have sought to drive all revolutionaries into a cul de sac with their "theories" of revisionist "peaceful coexistence," "peaceful competition," and "peaceful transition." In this they cannot succeed.

The social root of their class collaborationist "theories" consists in the rise of a privileged bourgeois stratum within Soviet society. Proceeding from their subjective wishes they have capitulated to nuclear blackmail in order to reconcile the irreconcilable the imperialist bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the proletariat and oppressed nations on the other.

Making full use of the great name of Lenin and the prestige of the world's first socialist state, the revisionists have caused untold harm to communist parties of a number of countries. It was the 20th Congress and the emergence of the revisionist dictatorship which assured the complete victory of revisionism in the Communist Party U.S.A. However, it is important to note that opportunism and revisionism have deep historic roots in the C.P.U.S.A. which can be traced to the class collaborationist line associated with Earl Browder. Today the essential principles of Marxism-Leninism have been abandoned and the party has degenerated into a variant of a

bourgeois party. The leaders of the C.P.U.S.A. have revised the scientific analyses of the state and role and character of the vanguard party. They have abandoned dialectics and substituted extreme subjectivism and pragmatism.

No longer regarding the state as the instrument of one class for the suppression of another class, they have widely peddled the notion that the people can use the state for their own purposes through "mass interventions in the state." They have failed to understand that ideological and ultimately material preparation for the counter-revolutionary violence of the bourgeoisie is the sine qua non of revolutionary work among the masses. Instead they have placed exclusive reliance in practice on "peaceful transition" while reducing "violent revolution" in theory to mere possibility. Seeking an out for imperialism, they have elevated parliamentary struggle to the main form of struggle, subordinating all other forms to it. They have elevated tactical differences within the imperialist bourgeoisie into a whole new "theory" building the illusion that there is an "intransigent ultra-right" section and a "reasonable, moderate" section who are subject to pressure from the people on fundamental questions. (It is interesting to note, much to the embarrassment of the revisionists, that it is the "reasonable, moderate" imperialists who are now in power and administering the fascist aggression in Vietnam.) It is through these deceptive devices that the leaders of the C.P.U.S.A. are turning over the peoples' movement to imperialism and its agents, and are paving the way for fascism.

The Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, while remaining in name, has been all but liquidated in substance. The party's theoretical magazine, Political Affairs, has been turned into an organ for the spreading of reformist views under the old and familiar guise of "tactics as a process," and avoids full explanations of reality as though such explanations would be adventurous. Likewise the party newspapers, already severely isolated from the working class and its allies, persists in giving full prominence to electoral politics and have eliminated all ideological struggle from their pages. Thus, instead of a collective organizer and agitator we have a progressive bourgeois press which simply reflects the current and local trends in various movements.

Organizationally, the dialectical unity between freedom and discipline, between democracy and centralism, has been destroyed; the party manifests an entrenched bureaucratic inertia and rampant bourgeois liberalism at all levels. The professional revolutionary cadre which Lenin urged as an essential ingredient of the proletarian party has long since disappeared, and there has been complete reliance on legal methods of struggle combined with accommodation to the difficulties imposed by McCarthyism. The treatment of theory by the leadership is subjective and sectarian, leading to a marked separation of theory and practice; many hard working and honest comrades have been led to the erroneous conclusions that a revolutionary theory is no longer needed for a revolutionary movement or that the narrowest forms of practical activity give rise to scientific theory.

The leadership consistently tails the liberal bourgeoisie in basic questions of policy and has proved to be completely opportunist

in practice, adapting itself to the local and current petit-bourgeois trends and pressures from the bourgeoisie. These errors are telescoped in the struggle of the Negro people. The party leadership has vacillated between liberal integrationist and pacifist trends, and reactionary nationalism. It has substituted Negro-White unity divorced from principle for working class unity based on Marxism-Leninism and for the concept that national struggle is, in the final analysis, a class struggle.

In coalitions where the party has influence it avoids struggle, treats opportunists and outright counter-revolutionary elements as allies and has even entered into alliances with Trotskyites. The class composition of the party reveals the social root of its thoroughly revisionist ideology; it is composed primarily of members of the labor aristocracy, petit-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie, and objectively serves their class interests.

The revisionists cry for unity but their unity is with the bourgeoisie, with imperialism. We also believe that unity is necessary but this unity must be against imperialism--first and foremost against U.S. imperialism--and be based on revolutionary principles. We believe a revolutionary party of the proletariat must rest firmly on the science of Marxism-Leninism, represented in our era by the thought of Mao Tse-Tung; it must recognize that modern revisionism is the main social prop of imperialism and struggle to defeat this traitorous trend, especially in our own country: it must support the heroic fight of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialism principally by defending the four points of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the five points of the National Liberation Front in the south. Finally, we believe all revolutionaries should salute and support the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution now in progress in the Peoples Republic of China.

We have concluded that it is impossible for one to be organizationally affiliated with revisionism, serving it objectively, and at the same time be a consistent Marxist-Leninist. We therefore urge all genuine communists to sever their ties with the revisionist party and to unite with the revolutionary peoples of the world against imperialism and its number one ally, modern revisionism. We welcome correspondence with all interested and sympathetic comrades and friends, and will be happy to discuss further our immediate plans and views of other existing parties.

Michael Miller
Marvin Treiger

Los Angeles

[Extracts from Critique of the RU]

THE "TWO STAGES" THESIS IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The core idea at the heart of the RED PAPERS is the separation of imperialism from capitalism. Lenin stated in very clear terms that: "imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism." The contrary idea, which begins with the separation of imperialism and monopoly capitalism, tends to identify imperialism with events that take place outside of the borders of the country, with a policy "preferred" by the capitalists and ultimately as a stage of capitalism that can be ended prior to the overthrow of capitalism. What does the RED PAPERS say on this important conception:

"The U.S. ruling class not only exploits our own working people; it extends its exploitation throughout the world by a system of imperialism."

The statement goes on to state:

"The present period is characterized by the increasing struggles of the peoples of the world against U.S. imperialism. This weakens the domestic position of monopoly capitalism enabling our struggles to advance."

Whenever the Statement discusses the world's peoples it focuses on imperialism, but whenever it discusses the U.S., it focuses on monopoly capitalism. This view is so ingrained that when the struggle of oppressed peoples within the U.S. borders is alluded to a careful distinction is still made:

"These peoples, having developed historically as 'internal colonies' of the United States, embody elements of both the external and internal struggles against the U.S. ruling class... on the one hand the struggle of the colonized people of the world against American imperialism; on the other hand, the struggle of the U.S. working class against monopoly capitalism."

The only time in the Statement where any definition of imperialism can be found is when the title of Lenin's classic work is cited. But in the very same sentence, no doubt to counter-balance dogma, the error is reinforced:

"Lenin, in Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, defined monopoly capitalism and imperialism precisely by the dominance of finance capital. (emphasis added)

Again, it states:

"As the peoples of the world increasingly seize the initiative in their global confrontation with U.S. imperialism, the ability of monopoly capitalism to resolve its contradictions with the U.S. working class becomes progressively limited, setting the stage for the seizure of state power by the working class."

If this represents a "primitive understanding" which the RED PAPERS purports to be then there should be no problem in changing it, admitting error, and making crystal clear the distinction between a revolutionary line on imperialism and a rehash of Kautsky's revisionism. Instead of forthright self-criticism, Avakian makes no mention of this criticism in his article The United Front Against Imperialism which is supposedly a response to reactions to RED PAPERS I. It is true that in that article Avakian defines imperialism correctly but as we will show he in no way abandons the essence of that separation. In fact we point out the error in the RED PAPERS, not because we think that a definition settles all questions, or because we do not believe that definitions can be corrected (after all the CPUSA (R) still clings to some of Lenin's words). We would not even oppose the use on occasion, for agitational purposes, of a formulation that referred to "monopoly capitalism and imperialist policies," but because this error stands something like the tip of an iceberg stands above the surface while 9/10ths of the iceberg is nicely concealed below the surface.

In our view the separation of imperialism and monopoly capitalism in the Statement is an index of a deeply held view that the American revolution will take place in two stages; first an anti-imperialist stage and second an anti-capitalist stage. TARNO has so much as admitted this in private conversation and it would be better if placed squarely on the table. In other words, the RED PAPERS does not represent a "primitive understanding" at all but is in fact a fairly sophisticated thesis on the nature of the American revolution. Mao says that to know a thing you must change it. If you have any doubts that this is true, try and change the basic formulations.

Let us return to the "Statement" and try to surface some of this iceberg. On the question of real friends and real enemies, the Statement says the following:

"The monopoly capitalists are the ruling class of the United States. But various small and middle-sized capitalists have interests that conflict with those of monopoly. A number of other class segments in the United States--for example small farmers, "independent" professionals, small storekeepers--also have basic interests in opposition to those of the monopoly capitalists."

To argue that middle-sized capitalists in the richest most ferocious imperialist country in the world "also have basic interests" in opposition to those of the monopoly capitalists is completely off the beam, unless of course there is some anti-imperialist stage between us and socialism where these "basic interests" can be met. Even if a certain number of these middle-sized capitalists were to side with the proletariat on one question or another, what is the actual likelihood of their role? We can better understand this if we examine the historic role, not so much of medium-sized capital, but of a strata considerably below it, that of the labor aristocracy. Remember we are considering friends and enemies not in the abstract but in the likely course for the development of the civil war. Also remember that Lenin is speaking here of a section of the working

class itself:

"In the civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie they invariably, and in no small numbers take the side of the bourgeoisie, the "Versaillaise" against the "Communards."

Unless the economic roots of this phenomena are understood and its political and social significance is appreciated, not a step can be taken toward the solution of the practical problems of the communist movement and of the impending revolution."

Now, within the United States, given the relative strength of the labor aristocracy, its international connections, its merger with the upper stratum of white supremacists and given in opposition to that the central role of the struggle of the national minorities in the struggle of the proletariat and the necessity to resolve the principle contradiction within the U.S. in favor of freedom for the oppressed nations within our borders, given all of this, is it not ludicrous to see these strata as anything but tied to the bourgeoisie by a thousand threads. The working class of the United States is huge. The strata counted as allies with "basic interests" in the RED PAPERS and as vacillators in Avakian's paper are a tiny minority, one that will certainly overwhelmingly oppose the social revolution.

There is in the "Statement" one passage which at first glance seems to uphold a single stage theory of revolution. Yet while upholding the dictatorship of the proletariat in one breath, it defines it in a way that throws ambiguity into the question at best and which at worst is one more example of the stages theory in action:

"It is our conviction that the U.S. working class, black and white with its allies from other classes, together constituting a vast majority of the people and led by a Marxist Leninist revolutionary party, will smash the existing state apparatus (in fact a dictatorship of the monopoly capitalist class) and set up its own form of state: the dictatorship of the proletariat. The power of wealth will thus be overthrown and replaced by the power of the people, led by the working class."

Similar to this is a formulation that appears a little further on:

"The people need a party and the party needs the people; neither can succeed without the other."

The second formulation is all wrong and sounds much more like Khrushchev than like Lenin. It is probably an easy mistake to fall into when one has "evolved" from the student movement where a few workers are to be found, or if one is tailing after the Panthers for whom the slogan "power to the people" retains a certain validity based on the struggle for national liberation. But the formulation "power to the people, led by the working class" is more akin to Mao's theory of new democracy and the new democratic state than to socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In contrast the dictatorship of the proletariat represents the power of the working class, unqualified and complete, even tho its policies may represent certain tactical compromises with other classes and strata as the price of retaining power. In fact many of the measures insti-

tuted by the working class will bring greater benefits to strata other than the workers themselves, such as strata immediately below the proletariat, the many victims of imperialist rule, etc.

No state can ever be a "peoples state." Engels made this clear when he admitted the correctness of the anarchist criticism of the formulation "peoples state." Engels' letter of self-criticism was suppressed for 36 years by the revisionist Kautsky. Nor can there be a "party of the people" even given the colloquial use of people to mean the classes in modern society opposed to imperialism: Lenin blasted the Mensheviks for upholding such a party. He pointed out that an eclectic, hodgepodge would result incapable of leading anyone except the petit bourgeois democrats. There are occasions, once again, where the slogan "power to the people" can be used for certain agitational purposes, but never can such misleading formulations be permitted to find their way into a "Statement of Principles." There must be no confusion that we are in any way opposing tactical united fronts or a program embracing democratic demands, but we can never do so at the expense of the independent and leading role, politically and organizationally, of the proletariat.

We should not underestimate the degree to which the ideas expressed in the RED PAPERS represent not so much a "primitive understanding" as a tailing after developments in the "new left." This is the source of much of the original popularity of the RED PAPERS, it is one of the reasons it "caught on" so quickly and is now subject to so much criticism. A study of the "new working class" theories in vogue two years ago will show a separation between imperialism and "neocapitalism." The spontaneous development of the student movement produced an "anti-imperialist" consciousness, not anti-imperialist as a system but rather anti-imperialist as a policy. The lack of connection between the Vietnam war and imperialism as a system was reflected in radical students' minds in the form of a separation between imperialism and capitalism theoretically. It is only now that a section of the student movement, RYM II SDS, has finally adopted the Leninist line on the question only to find that in so doing they were forced to throw out all their old premises. The RED PAPERS in this respect is no more than a half-way house and we know from experience that a half-way house usually leads back to the prison rather than forward to freedom.

The "new left" produced a crop of economists who were neither "new" nor particularly "left," but who attained a certain prominence thru their revisions of Marx' theory of surplus value and his theory of crisis. The RED PAPERS completely omits any statement regarding the Marxist theory of crisis in its section of political economy and makes a mockery of the theory of surplus value:

"The worker creates a product of value, part of which is returned to him as wage, and the rest of which is taken from him by the capitalist as profit."

This is diametrically opposed to Marx' formulation:

"Wages are, therefore, not the workers share in the commodity produced by him. Wages are the part of already existing

commodities with which the capitalist buys for himself a definite amount of productive labor power."

If an employer fails to sell the goods produced, he still must pay the worker for the use of his laboring power, that is, his ability to work. To suggest that a part of the product is returned to him as wage is to liquidate Marx' main discovery in the field of political economy, the discovery of the secret of surplus value. It is impossible to grasp without a correct understanding of this basic Marxist concept why the problem for the worker is not simply one of an inequitable share but a problem of exchange itself. It appears in the RED PAPERS formulation as if the worker has been cheated. Nothing of the kind. In fact the exchange between the worker and the capitalist is based on the real exchange value of laboring power. The capitalist is able to exploit the worker because the use value of laboring power, which the capitalist has at his disposal is capable of producing more value than is necessary to replace it. The differential between the consumed use value and the exchange value of laboring power is surplus value. Laboring power is the only commodity, hence its uniqueness, which is value-producing.

The implication of this formulation for struggle would tend to lead us to the slogan "A Fair Day's Pay for a Fair Day's Work" rather than the revolutionary slogan "Abolition of the Wages System." Further, it is impossible to construct a Marxist theory of crisis, to explain "overproduction" or any of the attendant features of crisis on the model offered. This section represents a "primitive understanding" all right--taking us back before Marx to Smith and Ricardo. If it is true that this section was drafted by the counterrevolutionary Fitch, when the RU was young and carefree, why the reluctance to change it? Why not recognize that all of these criticisms form a consistent pattern, a pattern of right opportunism indicating allegiance to a two-stage theory of the revolution?

The first RED PAPERS states:

"It is therefore the primary revolutionary duty of the people of the U.S. to build a militant united front against U.S. imperialism."

It was in this formulation that the problem of the relationship between support for the national liberation movement and the question of stages in the U.S. first arose. While it is impossible at this time for us to fully examine Avakian's thesis in the United Front article, we can make these preliminary observations. On the one hand Avakian disagrees with RYM II's formulation that the united front against imperialism can only be a tactical orientation based on the definition supplied by Stalin in Foundations of Leninism (see pages 88 to 103) and upholds it as a strategic united front. On the other hand he disclaims himself from any notion of a "two stage theory" of revolution. He quotes RYM II which says "strategy means a plan for the basic realignment of class forces" i.e. a change in power relations, a new form of state, and then baldly argues that the united front against imperialism is a strategy, even going so far as to say there is: "the immediate stage of anti-imperialist

struggle and the long range fight for socialism." Now Avakian is clearly trying to have it both ways. The RU is tipping its hat to a single stage theory and tipping its hat to a criticism of Weatherman's line, but is in fact opposing the theory of a single stage and making no serious criticism of the real results of Weatherman's complete opposition to any tactical united fronts. One timely example will perhaps make the point stronger than a thousand words. The shorter United Front paper states revolutionaries can either:

"1. denounce the demonstration for what it is and try to make it as unsuccessful as possible, or 2. They can join the demonstration, bring forward demands and change it into a real anti-war movement, call together other militant organizations to plan how this can be done, by raising the slogan "Bring the Boys Home Now!" and exposing Nixon's phony withdrawals; extensively leaflet around these questions,...By these means we can build a united front at this demonstration and turn it into a real anti-war victory for the left."

I don't know who the chauvinist, jingoist pseudo Marxist is who wrote these lines but he or she ought to go join the revisionist party, or better yet the Trotskyists, because this is exactly their line in the anti-war movement. It is the line of reading the rolls of the U.S. war dead, it is a line of tears for "our poor boys" while our Vietnamese brothers bleed and die ten for one. It is the line of the Senators and Congressmen, it is strictly a line of self interest based on the notion of America first. It is a shameful line for a communist. It does not even identify the enemy as part of its blatant chauvinism. What is our attitude toward the war? First we must say "U.S. Get Out of Vietnam" which can unite a broad section of the people against the U.S. ruling class. Second, we must use the occasion of united front actions of this type to propagandize the justness of the Vietnamese cause and why we should act in solidarity with them. We must seek to create a united front where these politics become increasingly dominant and third, we must educate the workers why the greatest possible defeat of their "own," of our "own" ruling class is in their best interest. In other words, there must be struggle as well as unity in these tactical united fronts and their main purpose must be the accumulation of strength of the revolutionary forces for a decisive assault on state power. Only if we consciously in our propaganda oppose each and every manifestation of national chauvinism, of jingoism, will we succeed. Now, does that mean we will unite with those who say "Bring the Boys Home Now!" Damn right it does. We are not moralists and we'll unite with the devil if it means alleviating the oppression of the masses one iota. But it is one thing to unite with those who for their own reasons oppose this war and quite another thing for us to spout such a backward line. RU members should examine this concrete example and see if it conforms to their practice. Did anyone put forward an internationalist line on the moratorium? Was patient education done among workers so that they would hope "their" government's defeat? Was there a criticism of the revisionist-Trotskyite slogan of "Bring the Boys Home Now!" and the jingoism it engendered? Or did it seem like the revisionists were really on the right track after all except maybe a little weak at letting things slip out of their hands into the hands of Kennedy and Co.?

...

"MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY!"

It will be impossible to grasp the problem of changing the "Statement of Principles" if we do not investigate the problem of the relation of theory to practice. the RED PAPERS states:

"We know that the program of a revolutionary organization at any time is less important than conscientious application to serving the people."

We would associate ourselves with the statement of the Chinese which is directly the opposite of the above:

"It is only when the Party has a revolutionary political program that it can hold its line thru each and every turn of events, consolidate the links between the revolutionaries and attract the masses to the revolution." (emphasis added)

The line of the RED PAPERS to belittle theory and to set mass work against theory as opposites is very dangerous particularly during a period of history such as this. We must apologize for the following overlong quote from Lenin--but it contains so much that is rich and relevant today that we have decided to incorporate it whole:

"Those who have the slightest acquaintance with the actual state of our movement cannot but see that the wide spread of Marxism was accompanied by a certain lowering of the theoretical level. . . Quite a number of people with very little, and even a total lack of theoretical training joined the movement because of its practical significance and its practical successes. We can judge from that how tactless RABOCHEYE DYELO is when, with an air of triumph, it quotes Marx's statement: "Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes." To repeat these words in a period of theoretical disorder is like wishing mourners at a funeral many happy returns of the day. Moreover these words of Marx are taken from his letter on the Gotha Programme, in which he sharply condemns eclecticism in the formulation of principles. If you must unite, Marx wrote to the party leaders, then enter into agreements to satisfy the practical aims of the movement, but do not allow any bargaining over principles, do not make theoretical "concessions." This was Marx's idea, and yet there are people among us who seek--in his name to belittle the significance of theory!

"Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This idea cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity. Yet, for Russian Social-Democrats the importance of theory is enhanced by three other circumstances, which are often forgotten: first, by the fact that our Party is only in process of formation, its features are only just becoming defined, and it has as yet far from settled accounts with the other trends of revolutionary thought that threaten to

divert the movement from the correct path. On the contrary, precisely the very recent past was marked by a revival of non-Social-Democratic revolutionary trends (an eventuation regarding which Axelrod long ago warned the Economists). Under these circumstances, what at first sight appears to be an 'unimportant' error may lead to most deplorable consequences, and only short-sighted people can consider factional disputes and a strict differentiation between shades of opinion inopportune or superfluous. The fate of Russian Social-Democracy for very many years to come may depend on the strengthening of one or the other 'shade.'

"Secondly, the Social-Democratic movement is in its very essence an international movement. This means, not only that we must combat national chauvinism, but that an incipient movement in a young country can be successful only if it makes use of the experiences of other countries. In order to make use of these experiences it is not enough merely to be acquainted with them, or simply to copy out the latest resolutions. What is required is the ability to treat these experiences critically and to test them independently. He who realizes how enormously the modern working-class movement has grown and branched out will understand what a reserve of theoretical forces and political (as well as revolutionary) experience is required to carry out this task.

"Thirdly, the national tasks of Russian Social-Democracy are such as have never confronted any other socialist party in the world. We shall have occasion further on to deal with the political and organizational duties which the task of emancipating the whole people from the yoke of autocracy imposes upon us. At this point, we wish to state only that the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory."

It is as if these words were written today! Are not Americans die-hard empiricists? Are we not without a party? Have we settled accounts with this or that "shade"? Are we not mesmerized by the victories of the international movement? And finally, are not our national tasks in this "melting pot" such as have never confronted the socialist movement?

The danger in the line of belittling theory is that it provides a hiding place for erroneous views under the guise of a "primitive understanding" or under the even more subtle banner of "agnosticism." The CP youth are still making an investigation into the cultural revolution. They naturally never do make a real investigation, but they raise their "ignorance" to the level of theory and justify a revisionist line. We are not interested in agnosticism that leads to revisionism, or that covers opportunism. It is no crime to not know something or even to be wrong about it. What is a crime is to hide in dark corners, to try and nestle alongside of revolutionaries, to set up a bourgeois headquarters in order to suppress contrary views, carry out a campaign of lies and slander, poisoning the atmosphere, to enforce reactionary discipline and to hang on, desperately, to an erroneous political line.

CONCLUSION

The class roots of the "Statement of Principles" ultimately stem from the labor aristocracy. The attempt to reconcile the tiny privileged upper stratum of workers with the great mass of workers is centrism. It is bound to result in the victory of the labor aristocracy. It is no accident that the "Statement of Principles" does not speak of the labor aristocracy. It does not bring to the forefront the struggle between two lines within the working class and it does not underscore its tremendous significance. No wonder theory is belittled. The link between an opportunist "two stages" line and a chauvinist "dual nature" line consists in the outlook of the labor aristocrats. Lenin states:

"The economic basis of opportunism and social chauvinism is the same: the interests of an insignificant layer of privileged workers and petit bourgeoisie who are defending their privileged positions, their "right" to the crumbs of profits which "their" national bourgeoisie receives from robbing other nations, from the advantages of its position as a great nation."

The contradiction between ignorance and knowledge should be resolved thru learning. The contradiction between one class line and another must be resolved by class struggle.

We are confident that eventually the "Statement of Principles" will be repudiated and that the RU will fulfill the promise of its beginnings. We disagree with the line of the Political Committee that "the 'Statement' is fundamentally sound; that the leadership is fundamentally sound and that the organization is fundamentally sound." We consider the "Statement" to be fundamentally unsound and demand that it be repudiated; we believe that some of the leadership is fundamentally unsound and must make a thorough-going transformation and we believe that the fate of the organization is in the balance. We believe that the test of the organization will be its ability to carry out the struggle.

All the truths of Marxism can be summed up in a single phrase:

"IT IS RIGHT TO REBEL!"

[_September 1969_]

/September 1969/

Dear Comrades,

Our Los Angeles Collective has voted unanimously to found our collective and all future collectives that we build on a set of principles that stand at complete variance with the "Statement of Principles" in RED PAPERS I.

The "Statement of Principles" separates imperialism from monopoly capitalism instead of recognizing imperialism as the monopoly stage of capitalism, as the highest stage of capitalism, with no intermediate rungs between imperialism and socialism. The position, therefore, is simply a carefully veiled resuscitation of the CPUSA(R) anti-monopoly coalition, the "two stage" theory of the American revolution. The document chauvinistically upholds the privileges of the oppressor American nation by denying the right of political secession to the Black nation thru its thesis that the "Black nation is everywhere" and that Black proletarians in the Black Belt are really members of the American proletariat. The "Statement of Principles" upholds the rotten system of male dominance by denying the hatred of women for male supremacy, by denying men's oppression of women, by denying the existence of masculine privilege within the working class and by throwing up its hands on the question of male supremacy within revolutionary organizations.

The leadership has accused everyone else of sectarianism, of "book worship," of making too much of theory, of hairsplitting... while they have refused to budge an inch on any of the fundamental questions that have been criticized. It is not that they belittle theory, but rather that they belittle only the theory of others thinking that they have laid the foundations for the Marxist Leninist line in America. They pretend to accept all criticisms but do not in fact accept any of the criticism. Instead they wage an unprincipled campaign of slander and innuendo, suppression of contrary ideas, effectively cutting off the membership from developments throughout the country.

The atmosphere of liberalism toward error, the absence of the most elementary democratic centralist forms such as a responsible chairman of the organization and an identifiable leadership, the Liu Shao Chi preoccupation with busy work not based upon a plan has isolated some of the best comrades from the ideological struggle and developed in them a contempt for the struggle to sharpen our scientific weapons--all these contribute to the inability of the RU to deal effectively with its shortcomings.

We believe that it is essential to separate ourselves from the splitting activities that have been carried out nationally against RYM II and in the Bay Area SDS by RU comrades. The attempt to prevent an alliance in the Fall Action between RYM II, the Black Panthers and the Young Lords, by insisting that the Weatherman narodniks be united with at the very moment they were attacking the people; by accusing RYM II, the Black Panthers and the Young Lords of "scabbing" on the Fall Action by not uniting with the Weatherbureau, by suppressing any report in The Movement newspaper of the Detroit RYM conference, and doing all this in the name of unity,

pretending to oppose Weatherman and standing smack dab in the center which means on the right.

It is our view that there is a unity of theory and practice within the RU. Just as the practical actions of the RU in the recent period have attempted to unite Marxist Leninists with opportunists, so too, the theoretical line of the "Statement of Principles" embodies a similar "centrist" line. It is our view that "centrism" invariably sides with opportunism and is at its root opportunist. Centrism is designed to save opportunism, to keep the backward backward and to hold back the advanced.

The line of struggle open to Marxist Leninists within the RU must be to call for public repudiation of the "Statement of Principles" and for substitution of a Marxist Leninist set of principles in its place. To build, on the basis of those principles, a base in the proletariat, real alliances with Black and Brown revolutionary organizations, a strong working class women's movement and a powerful RYM II region in the Bay Area. These are the preliminary steps which in this period will help us move toward the creation of a new Marxist Leninist Party in the U.S.

Marv Treiger
on behalf of the L.A. collective

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

The L.A. Young Communist League sees the fundamental question of all revolutions being the question of state power. The dictatorship of the proletariat is our strategic goal and is the main instrument of the proletarian revolution. Only under the dictatorship of the proletariat will the working class be able to maintain state power after overthrowing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and crush the bourgeoisie as the new rulers push toward the victory of socialism.

Lenin:

"The transition from capitalism to communism represents an entire historical epoch. Until this epoch has terminated, the exploiters will inevitably cherish the hope of restoration and this hope will be converted into attempts at restoration."

(Selected Works, Vol. VIII)

The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary because the strength of the overthrown bourgeoisie is still greater than that of the working class.

Lenin:

"...they still have money...some movable property--often fairly considerable, they still have various connections, habits of organization and management, superior education, close connections with the higher technical personnel (who live and think like the bourgeoisie), incomparably better experience in the art of war (this is very important) and so on and so forth."

(Selected Works, Vol. VII)

Joseph Stalin was the first proletarian leader to build socialism under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The policies that he initiated were real life practice of the dictatorship of proletarians. The L.A. Young Communist League sees the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the question of Stalin as one and that historically, attacks on Stalin have actually been attacks on the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Young people in particular should have no objection to a system where the vast majority of people are on top and wage a fight to stay there; we know the brutal truth of imperialist dictatorship in this country.

The strategic aim of the L.A.Y.C.L. is the complete overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the institution of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In order to direct the struggle for this aim a true worker's party must be formed. In training ourselves and others to be communists we are creating the young builders of the party.

LONG LIVE THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT! !

[6/27/70_7

STALIN

Joseph Stalin was a great Marxist-Leninist. He inherited Marxism-Leninism, and defended it against many enemies. He led the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R. He led the Soviet people in the struggle against the Nazis. All this the world proletariat will never forget.

But comrade Stalin also made many mistakes.

After the kulaks were eliminated, he repeatedly declared: "The exploitation of man by man has now been abolished....All the exploiting classes have now been eliminated."¹ And again: "The feature that distinguishes Soviet society today from any capitalist society is that it no longer contains antagonistic, hostile classes; that the exploiting classes have been eliminated."²

This was simply not true. Many groups of people received far over the average income. Is this not exploitation? Indeed, bourgeois elements crop up throughout the stage of socialism.

Stalin failed to realize that class struggle still existed after the kulaks were eliminated. He said: "Soviet society, liberated from the yoke of exploitation, knows no such antagonisms, is free of class conflicts, and presents a picture of friendly collaboration...."³

All this but a few short years after they had expelled some 270,000 party members!

Stalin failed to recognize that the question of which would win out, the socialist road or the capitalist road, was yet to be decided, and thought that capitalist restoration could come only from invasion. He said: "The socialist ownership of the means of production has been established as the unshakable foundation of our Soviet society."⁴ He also said: "The final victory of socialism is the full guarantee against attempts at intervention, and hence against restoration, for any serious attempt at restoration can be made only with serious support from outside, only with the support of international capital."⁵

The revisionist take-over completely disproves both of these.

These errors came from two places. On the one hand, the Soviet Union was the first, and at the time, the only country to build socialism, so there was no historical experience to sum up. On the other hand, Stalin did not apply dialectics to socialist society, that is, he one-sidedly stressed the positive aspects, while completely ignoring the negative aspects, such as the bourgeois elements, the possibility of internal restoration of capitalism, etc. In so doing, he obscured the contradictions of socialist society, and denied the struggle of opposites.

Chairman Mao has repeatedly pointed out:

"In the historical period of socialism, there are still

classes, class contradictions and class struggle, there is the struggle between the socialist road and capitalist road, and there is the danger of capitalist restoration. We must recognize the protracted and complex nature of this struggle. We must heighten our vigilance. We must conduct socialist education. We must correctly understand and handle class contradictions and class struggle, distinguish the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy from those among the people and handle them correctly. Otherwise a socialist country like ours will turn into its opposite and degenerate, and a capitalist restoration will take place!"⁶

The question of Stalin is inseparable from the restoration of capitalism in the U.S.S.R.

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1. J.V. Stalin, On the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R., Problems of Leninism, FLPH Moscow, 1953, p.683.
 2. J.V. Stalin, Report to the 18th Congress of the CPSU, Problems of Leninism, FLPH Moscow, 1953, p. 777.
 3. loc. cit.
 4. Stalin, Draft Constitution, op. cit., p. 683
 5. Stalin, On the Problems of Leninism, Problems of Leninism, op.cit. p. 191.
 6. Mao, quoted in Lin Piao, Report to the 9th National Congress CPC, pp. 20-21.

[6/27/70]

STATEMENT OF WORKING UNITY
COMMUNIST WORKING COLLECTIVE
September 9, 1970

I. Political

- 1) "If there is to be a revolution, there must be a revolutionary party. Without a revolutionary party, without a party built on the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and in the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary style, it is impossible to lead the working class and the broad masses of the people in defeating imperialism and its running dogs." (Mao Tsetung)
We hold that no such party exists in the United States, although many groups and people are trying to build one. Therefore, we hold that the primary immediate task of communists in the U.S. is the early founding of a Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist-Mao Tsetung Thought).

- 2) "Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement." (Lenin) We hold that the main lack in the communist movement at the present time lies precisely in understanding Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and applying it to the U.S.
Therefore, we hold that, in this period, theory is primary and practice is secondary, and that we must work accordingly.

II. Theoretical

- 1) We hold that it is necessary to elaborate in positive fashion our General Programmatic Ends.

- 2) We hold that it is essential to "shoot the arrow at the target." The American revolution is the target and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is the arrow. We therefore hold that a series of short essays on various problems of the American revolution will greatly aid our work.

- 3) We hold that we must criticize and struggle against revisionism and all right and "left" opportunist trends, wherever they appear. We do this with the twin aims of achieving higher unity among Marxists, and defeating the enemies of the working class pretending to be Marxists.

III. Practical

- 1) We hold that it is necessary to engage in limited practical work from the outset of the group in order to test theory, gain experience and attract a limited number of revolutionary-minded people.

- 2) We hold that practical tasks should mainly take the form of propaganda work of the following types:
 - a) formation and conducting of study groups;
 - b) dissemination of Mao Tsetung Thought;

- c) independent leaflets written by ourselves
- d) exchange and discussion with other revolutionaries and groups.

IV. Organizational

- 1) We hold that political work must take precedence over and guide organizational work. Further we believe that organization must flow from unity based on fundamental principles.
- 2) We therefore hold that a proper measure of democracy is essential for carrying out our tasks and that centralism, confined to agreed upon decisions, is both desirable and necessary to ensure democracy.
- 3) We consider this organizational form transitional and minimal until such time as we have achieved sufficient unity to found a Local Communist Organization.

THE PEOPLE WILL WIN!

Today thousands of Chicanos and Latinos have gathered to protest the Indochina War and forward their struggle for national equality. As communists, we wholeheartedly support the liberation struggles of the Indochinese and the Chicano and Latin people's struggle for emancipation. The Indochinese people's struggle has shaken the U.S. aggressors to their foundation. U.S. imperialism requires political-military control to continue reaping its worldwide profits. Thus, it fears the risings of the Indochinese and peoples throughout the world.

'National Struggle Is A Matter Of Class Struggle'

The struggle of Chicano and Latino peoples dates back over 125 years of U.S. colonialism and imperialism. When 1/3 of Mexican land was "granted" to the U.S. in the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, Mexican-Americans were made to labor in mines, fields, and desert. While the capitalists profited, it was mainly the Mexican-Americans who built the Southwest. Today Chicanos and Latinos are still oppressed as a group and most work on farms and factories of the imperialists, supplying a major source of low-paid labor and higher profits.

To maintain their position, the capitalist class strives to keep the people divided and fighting each other along national lines. Their main tactic is to subjugate a people economically, destroy them culturally, restrict them intellectually, harass them politically, and then turn around and point to their lower status and attribute it to their "inherent inferiority." This chauvinist ideology has its roots in the capitalist political-economic system and is instigated and controlled by the monopoly capitalist class. Although these ideas are wide-spread among the masses of the U.S., more and more working people of all nationalities are recognizing them as lies and uniting against their common enemy. National equality in the U.S. can be achieved only with the overthrow of U.S. imperialism and the elimination of class society. That is the truth of the statement by Mao Tsetung, Chairman of the Communist Party of China: "In the final analysis, national struggle is a matter of class struggle."

Chicanos are drafted and die in Viet Nam in higher percentage than do blacks and whites. But working people of all nationalities die in the U.S. aggressor's war. The Chicanos, Afro-Americans, European-Americans, Indians, Asians and all other American national groups have the same basic interests and objectives as the peoples of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Their enemy is our enemy...U.S. imperialism.

The Seizure Of Power

"The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war is the central task and the highest form of revolution." (Mao) This week the farm workers of Salinas Valley have risen in an unprecedented struggle against the growers and certain teamsters who have joined hands with the enemy. Despite calls for

total non-violence, the imperialists have shown no tolerance and many beatings and arrests have occurred. We think the lesson is clear. The imperialist rule stands mainly on the power of its armed forces...army, national guard, and police. Total non-violence will not break this rule. Ultimately, it is only the organized revolutionary armed force of the workers of all nationalities led by their communist party that can crush the counter-revolutionary force of the imperialists.

Put Politics In Command

We believe that politics must command the gun. We stand for the bearing of arms, but we feel that calls for "armed struggle today" or the carrying out of such actions at this time, serve to divert us from our main tasks and cost us valuable fighters. The central tasks for revolutionaries today are to arouse the masses by spreading revolutionary ideas--Mao Tsetung Thought--and the building of a multi-national communist party. Today we must prepare for revolution.

"The complete emancipation of all oppressed peoples and nations is not far off." With these words, Chairman Mao sums up the present epoch of imperialism's destruction. The rising tide of the Chicano struggle is certainly another indication that U.S. imperialism is nearing its last days. Just as the Indochinese peoples have joined to deal the aggressors crushing blows, the American people of all nationalities will soon unite and defeat the imperialist rule in the U.S.

VICTORY TO THE VIETNAMESE, LAOTIANS AND CAMBODIANS!

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF ALL NATIONALITIES
UNITE TO DEFEAT U.S. IMPERIALISM!

DARE TO STRUGGLE, DARE TO WIN!

Issued by: COMMUNIST WORKING COLLECTIVE, P.O. Box 72325, Watts
Station, L.A. 90002

[29 August, 1970]

WE MUST GO TO THE MASSES --E.L.

1. Where does correct theory come from?

This is the question that must be answered if we are to write any kind of correct program. Writing a program is the same as trying to develop correct theory.

"There is only one kind of true theory in this world, theory that is drawn from objective reality and then verified by objective reality; nothing else is worthy of the name of theory in our sense." (Rectify the Party's Style of Work, Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works, Vol. 3, pg. 40)

"Marx undertook detailed investigations and studies in the course of practical struggles, formed generalizations and then verified his conclusions by testing them in practical struggles--this is what we call theoretical work." (Ibid.)

Only by testing our knowledge in practical struggles can our theories be determined correct or incorrect. Only in the process of struggling in the real world can our theory advance from one level to the next.

Mao speaks of two different kinds of knowledge: book learning or indirect knowledge and practical or direct knowledge. Correct theory must come about by the integration of the two. Our group has predominantly book learning knowledge. This book learning knowledge is very important and we must do more of it but if it is not constantly integrated with practical knowledge from the very beginning then it is worthless.

"A person goes from a primary school of this kind all the way to a university of the same kind, graduates and is reckoned to have a stock of learning. But all he has is book learning; he has not yet taken part in any practical activities or applied what he has learned to any field of life. Can such a person be regarded as a completely developed intellectual? Hardly so in my opinion because his knowledge is still incomplete." (Ibid. pg. 39)

If we want to develop a program that has any complete ideas in it then we must understand that all knowledge from books, all indirect knowledge, is incomplete. We cannot write a program in isolation. A correct program will not come out of the library.

2. Who then should we not isolate ourselves from?

Again we come back to the two different kinds of knowledge. If our group has predominantly book learning knowledge then where shall we seek the other kind of knowledge we so desperately need? The masses or other Left groups? A little experience will tell a person that it is the masses of working people who have a far greater store of direct practical knowledge than anyone else. By going primarily to other left groups we confine ourselves to the sphere of book learning knowledge and will not end up anywhere but in a rut.

If we plan on providing any kind of leadership for the masses then we must base ourselves on them from the very beginning.

"Take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast and translate these ideas into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on over and over again in an endless spiral, with ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge." (Concerning Methods of Leadership, Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works, Vol.3, pg. 119)

Without basing ourselves on the masses we have no basis for uniting with other groups. Our "theories" will have no more validity than theirs if we have not developed them through interaction with the masses. We will be ivory tower polemicists. Only by adhering to this idea of going to the masses can we put an end to the sectarianism that exists among Left groups today. Only by observing a person's or a group's relations with the masses can we judge whether they are truly revolutionary.

"...but sectarianism can only be eradicated by putting forward and faithfully applying the slogans, 'For the workers and peasants' and 'Go to the masses!'. Otherwise the problem of sectarianism can never be solved." (Yenan Forum on Art and Literature, Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works, Vol.3, pg. 79)

If we do not go to the masses with our ideas and collect their ideas at the same time and if we do not do this first and foremost then we cannot possibly succeed in writing a program.

3. Do we have the forces to go to the masses?

Here we must ask the question: is going to the masses simply a matter of numbers? No it isn't. When we go to the masses we are going in order to find out what a certain type of person, the worker and primarily the advanced worker, thinks about the world. If we want to understand a sparrow it is not necessary to massacre the entire species. It is only necessary to dissect a few and soon a definite pattern will develop from which one can project what other sparrows will be like. This is also true of the masses. We need only go to a few people in various factories, schools, etc. and we will begin to get an understanding of what the masses are like and how they and we can best push the revolutionary movement forward. This task could conceivably be accomplished by one person let alone the several people we have now.

The argument that we don't have enough people to go to the masses in force so we shouldn't go at all is a bit like the poor fellow who, after losing his keys in one spot, goes off to look for them in another spot because the light is better there.

4. Doesn't this mean that theory is not primary? Isn't this catering to the spontaneity of the masses? Isn't this Economism?

First, we hold that theory and practice are a unity. One cannot exist without the other. This is why we can say that while theory is still primary there is no theory unless we integrate ourselves with the masses.

We do not believe that correct theory will come spontaneously out of the masses. We say that we must bring to the masses the Marxist science that we have (dialectics) and constantly use this science to sum up and concentrate the ideas of the masses.

Neither do we believe that the spontaneous movements of the masses are in themselves revolutionary. Only by integrating the science that we have with the struggles of the masses can we develop a correct revolutionary theory.

6. We must study the language of the masses.

A. We must never assume that people understand what we are saying: We tend to use time honored (hack party) phrases which people do not understand.

B. We must fight the elitist approach which says that "I know everything, I am the vanguard, I am the embodiment of the relatively advanced and all you relatively backward people better listen closely because I am only going to repeat this once." We must become conscious of our own backwardness even in comparison to the masses and adopt a modest attitude in our work.

7. Concrete Proposals

- 1) Go to the masses--a job, junior college, etc.
- 2) Start study groups of advanced workers and some students.
- 3) Write leaflets--find out pressing questions of the masses.
- 4) Do research--
 - A. into Marxism-Leninism Mao Tse-tung thought--
 - the science
 - B. into U.S. history
 1. political
 2. economic
- 5) Everything must be brought to the masses for scrutiny.
 - A. For theoretical criticism--often times the masses are more advanced than the intellectuals or the party.
 - B. For general reaction
 - C. For understandability
 - D. For value to the U.S. revolution
- 6) Engage in practical struggles of the masses--trade union, school, etc.

[12/12/70]

FIVE POINT PLAN

Proposal for a Plan based upon the Statement of Working Unity

- I. "Focus our theoretical work to create an ideological center." Prepare and publish a Journal.
- II. Study Classes
 - a) "Overcome the group's theoretical weaknesses." We should carry out a common study of political economy as our main weakness at this time.
 - b) "Those who have learned must begin to teach." Set up an introductory class in Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought for contacts led by 1-3 comrades.
- III. "Revive our participation in the practical struggle." Specifically prepare for the impending escalation of the war in Indochina. (Perhaps a demonstration, perhaps factory leafletting, etc.)
- IV. "Defeat small group mentality in practice." Approach other Maoist groups with contingency plan with regard to Indochina. Assign two comrades.
- V. "Free the maximum number of comrades for theoretical work."

Explanation of the Plan

I. We have carried out a great deal of study and it is time we applied what we know to advanced problems in the form of articles. The absence of a clear plan for future work plus the recent "factional struggle" have led to a certain drift within the group. A major manifestation of this has been the tendency to devote excessive time to strictly personal matters. Although the personal and social side are important and we have all benefited from these exchanges, it is beginning to turn into its opposite, to the point where only a political advance can bring our whole work forward.

A Journal would give us a better focus than a newspaper. We are not yet at a point where we could put out a newspaper and apply in a systematic way our principles for the obvious reason we are not clear what they are. A Journal would enable us to clarify our ideas; it would provide us with a goal and a direction; it would provide an ideological center for our work.

The Journal would perhaps be quarterly, with signed articles and with freedom of expression based on certain generally agreed upon principles and a standard of excellence. Peoples and persons outside the group would be welcome to participate and debate would be encouraged.

The first issues of the Journal might include the following articles: (not in order of importance)

- 1) Statement of Working Unity plus an article on theoretical work (revised and explained)
- 2) article on the two stage theory of revolution perhaps modeled on Ligne Rouge article
- 3) article on woman question--perhaps review of new anthology
- 4) article on state of international communist movement (3rd International, etc.) and our theoretical tasks.

- 5) article on philosophy and Mao's Thought.
- 6) Our Program--Draft (perhaps with outline and explanation).
- 7) article on Stalin (roots on restoration).
- 8) article on social-imperialism (roots of restoration).
- 9) article on Stalin-Trotsky struggle.
- 10) article on fascism
- 11) articles on PLP and RU, etc. (Economism, "Left" Opportunism) (revised of course).
- 12) article on leading role of proletariat historically and in U.S.
- 13) article on history of dictatorship of the proletariat.
- 14) article on national question.
- 15) articles on U.S. history and class struggle.
- 16) reprints.
- 17) statistical data (map of Black Belt, etc.).

The above will perhaps give an idea of what I mean. On some of these topics we know nothing or little but on other questions we have many ideas and even already existing drafts of articles. Most of the comrades should be involved in this work. (The program should not be as long as we originally thought--not so long as the CPUSA, but more like the early Bolshevik or Chinese in length and should be written by not more than three comrades). Not everyone should write articles but everyone should participate in the discussion of them. (Some comrades will be teaching classes, making contacts, etc. or will not feel prepared to write and they should not be forced). If we do a decent job and reach out to other revolutionary intellectuals and advanced workers, even hopefully groups will want to contribute and/or merge.

We should set forth some general deadlines, say 4-5 months, to put out the first issue of the Journal. If we fail to do so, or to make substantial progress, we should take up the question of dissolving the group.

II. Study Classes. This point is self-explanatory.

III. Just as we swung too far into practice with the Moratorium, we have swung too far away from it since. Our experience in the Moratorium was invaluable. The best form of contact with the masses is during and in relation to class struggle not merely through study groups divorced from practice, though any contact is better than none. We must learn in order to lead and lead while we are learning. We must conscientiously apply the mass line.

IV. Our contact with other groups is bound to be limited prior to publication of the Journal or at least prior to more advanced drafts of articles. We can, however, now build trust and strengthen the possibilities for unity through common action.

V. Our Statement of Working Unity has not dealt with the problem of how we spend our time although we have had an informal approach that has been generally quite good. All of the comrades have sought, to one degree or another, to integrate with the masses in job, school, community, etc. This is a good thing.

Our approach still contains, however, vestiges of the PLP-CCL

approach which idealizes the workers and "contact" with the workers. During this period, or at least until two or so issues of the Journal come out, our main attempts should be to maximize free time for theoretical work. There should be exceptions to this however--for those who have had no contact or factory experience and who fail to use their free time in a disciplined and productive fashion; for those who simply fail to use their time well; for those who are already strategically placed in industry and for those whom economic necessity offers no alternative. But otherwise, whenever possible, we should strive to turn ourselves into professional revolutionists. As it is we are too busy with school and jobs to engage in the FULL TIME RESEARCH NECESSARY TO LAY THE FOUNDATIONS FOR A PARTY!

Comment in Conclusion

In order to accomplish any of the above, or an alternate plan, we must put an end to the "factional atmosphere" that certain comrades have created in their approach to our common problems. Instead of proceeding from the democratic method of resolving contradictions among the people and applying the formula "unity-criticism-unity," they have closed their minds and hearts, branded those with differences as "counterrevolutionaries" and treated the contradictions in the Collective as if they were contradictions between the people and the enemies of the people.

If they should decide to go off on their own, they will be making a big mistake but even then we will not be hostile to them but wish them success and try to learn from them in the future just as we have learned much from them in the past.

submitted 12/12/70

MT

The Theory of Stages
(suggested reading)--1

Main Works

Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution, V.I. Lenin
The Permanent Revolution: Results and Prospects, L. Trotsky
On New Democracy, Mao Tse-tung

Supplementary Readings

Conscientiously Study Chairman Mao's Theory of Continuing the Revolution Under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, by Chao Yang, Liberation, v.3 #5

(all the following from Lenin, Collected Works, volume as indicated)

VOLUME 8

- p. 17) The Autocracy and the Proletariat
- p. 72) Working-class and Bourgeois Democracy
- p. 83) From Narodism to Marxism (article one)
- p. 97) The Beginning of the Revolution in Russia
- p.158) A Militant Agreement for the Uprising
- p.167) Should We Organise the Revolution?
- p.184) General Plan of the Third Congress Decisions
- p.191) Draft Resolutions for the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.
- p.211) New Tasks and New Forces
- p.231) The Proletariat and the Peasantry
- p.257) A Revolution of the 1789 or the 1848 Type?
- p.275) Social-Democracy and the Provisional Revolutionary Government
- p.293) The Revolutionary-Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Peasantry
- p.368) section 3 of The Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.
- p.379) " 11
- p.382) " 13
- p.396) " 14
- p.461) On the Provisional Revolutionary Government
- p.511) Sketch of a Provisional Revolutionary Government
- p.537) The Struggle of the Proletariat and the Servility of the Bourgeoisie
- p.557) Three Constitutions or Three Systems of Government?
- p.560) The Revolutionary Army and the Revolutionary Government

VOLUME 9

- p.141) Concluding Paragraph to the Article "The Paris Commune and the Tasks of the Democratic Dictatorship
- p.307) Socialism and the Peasantry

VOLUME 10

- p. 40) The Proletariat and the Peasantry
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LETTER TO A MAOIST

April 6, 1971

Dear Mike,

Greetings on the 100th Anniversary of the Paris Commune!

We once took a period of time to investigate our continued participation in the revisionist CPUSA. On that occasion you took the initiative to contact me. It is only appropriate that I now return that expression of confidence and contact you...

You know of the Communist Working Collective's (CWC's) extended study into the "Trotsky-Stalin" debates. You know that what immediately prompted us into this inquiry was the unsummarized experience of the 3rd International and reservations I have had over the possibly superficial character of my "Two Public Lectures" on the nature of the Russian state (of 1936--the Stalin Constitution, and 1965--the Liberman reforms). The logic of the theoretical struggle, after repeated failures to develop a revolutionary theory, program and practice, dragged us fighting and screaming all the while toward those debates.

We have all floundered about for three years now seeking in Mao Tse Tung Thought a revolutionary alternative to the revisionists. In each instance the organizations we have encountered, worked with, or joined (with the exception of the "Old Collective" to which I will return) have all belittled the struggle for theory and disdained scientific inquiry. The party crisis manifested itself as a crisis of method. The methodological crisis, in turn, veiled political bankruptcy. These groups proved unable to supercede the "anti-monopoly coalition". The old soup was forever dished up with new spices. The fundamental theoretical bankruptcy of all the parties and groupings which consider themselves in the tradition of the 3rd International, that is, in the tradition of Stalin, has become increasingly apparent to us. The entire panoply of these groups adopted, in a most pragmatic way, one or another of the theses of the 6th and 7th Congresses of the C.I.

PLP AND RU

The theory of social fascism and the united front from below, adopted by the 6th World Congress, laid the basis for the defeat of the German proletariat in 1933. The German party approached a divided working class and widened the divisions enabling Hitler to come to power. Today PLP has picked up bits and pieces of this disastrous policy. PL's Trade Union program pitting the rank and file against the union leadership and now bypassing the unions altogether is a modern variant of the united front from below thesis. The extreme sectarianism of this line is only matched by the economism of the rank and file program which separates the minimum and maximum program of the party in the fashion of the 2nd International. PL, without a shred of strategic thought, totally avoids the struggle for the political independence of the class. Instead, it narrowly builds its own organization and eclectically tacks on the "dictatorship of the proletariat" to each leaflet and article. The theory of social fascism which places a revisionist trend within the working class on a par with fascism has crept into their program through the Chinese analy-

sis of the Soviet state (a topic for a subsequent letter). The practical consequences of this line are manifested quite clearly in the Angela Davis case and in their one-sided hostility to her defense (really a defense of the class). PL has recently taken to attacking Dimitrov (and rightly so) but sparing Stalin who stands behind Dimitrov and all the policies he articulated.

The RU, by way of contrast, covertly adopted the main theses of the 7th World Congress immediately following the Panthers' orgy of "united frontism". The RU's "strategic united front" is a thinly veiled rehash of the Dimitrov popular front, that is, it is based upon unity with a section of the bourgeoisie. The CPUSA adopts the popular front from above and attempts to bring the bourgeoisie directly into the leadership. The RU seeks to build a "united front" (popular front) from below through its "five spearheads". Each of these spearheads of struggle--minorities, anti-imperialism, anti-fascism, women and Trade Unionism--cuts across class lines and leads inexorably, from the opposite direction, to the door of the liberal bourgeoisie. PLP and the RU represent the past of Stalinism while the CP represents its future. PLP and the RU stand squarely in the Stalin tradition--with this exception--where Stalin put forward a more or less developed "theory", these groups are but pale reflections of the past. Stalin's failures have forced his contemporary followers to come down with an acute case of shamefacedness.

THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM

The epoch in which we live is the epoch of the contraction and decline of world imperialism. The conditions for revolution are ripe. They are, as Trotsky says, even somewhat rotten. The political and economic crisis of imperialism is being forced onto the backs of the workers. It is therefore possible, through struggle around a "transitional program" for the workers to learn from their own experience the need to take state power. The intervention of a conscious vanguard is the critical subjective condition without which the proper lessons will not be drawn.

Transitional demands are demands which by their very nature cannot be met by a bourgeois society in crisis. These "impossible demands" are only impossible within the framework of capitalism. The transitional program is not governed by the constraints of capitalism but constantly strives to pose the question of power through solutions for the real needs of the workers. The idea of transitional demands had its origins in Marx himself in his Address to the Communist League Central Committee of 1850. In this remarkable document, Marx lays out the basic approach to the democratic petit bourgeoisie, to elections, to embryonic dual power, to transitional demands and to permanent revolution. Marx points out that while the democratic petit bourgeoisie at most seeks the realization of some transitional demands, the proletariat pushes the revolution forward until state power is in the hands of the workers in all the dominant countries. This thesis of Marx, developed fully by Trotsky, must not be misconstrued as a mere phrase incidental to Marx' doctrine.

The transitional program resolves in theory the conflict between the minimum and maximum program controversy which erupted in the 2nd

International. Bernstein's slogan "the movement is everything, the final aim is nothing" expressed the opposite of permanent revolution. Bernstein's conception enabled him, and later Kautsky, to stop short at the minimum program, to elevate it, so to speak, to the beginning and end of Social-Democratic politics. Rosa Luxemburg, in eloquent and heroic rebellion against this revision of Marxism, upheld the maximum program as the program of the new party to be built in Germany. Luxemburg established what was essential--capitalism was in profound crisis and the old revisionist International had to be swept away. She did not, however, solve the problem theoretically of the relation of the period of the accumulation of proletarian forces with the period of civil war and revolution. It was left to Lenin and Trotsky to construct the new International.

The need for an investigation into the policies of the first four Congresses of the 3rd International is urgent! These Congresses were the Congresses of Lenin and Trotsky, the Congresses of the transitional program, of the proletarian united front, of political honesty and uncompromising ideological struggle, and of the supremacy of the world party above its national sections including the Russian section. Lenin's Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder and a host of speeches and articles by Trotsky lay the basis for the new International. Trotsky's writings especially develop the proletarian united front and form a summary of the main lessons of the early years of the Comintern. The ideas embodied in the Transitional Program find their historic continuation in the 1938 program of the 4th International. (We leave aside for the moment the question of revisionism in the 4th International and the proposals for defeating it.) In order to understand the strategic crisis that destroyed the 3rd International under Stalin's leadership we must turn our attention briefly to disputes that broke out within the Soviet Union, disputes which the Chinese are helping to obscure today.

SOCIALISM

Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin believed that communism would replace capitalism only after a transitional period during which the proletariat enforced its dictatorship. Socialism is the first phase of this communist society and will itself be replaced by communism proper, i.e., its higher phase. Socialism, according to the classics, is a classless society which can be identified by the following criteria: (1) Public property, that is, common property of the society as a whole, has replaced state property, collective property, group property, private property, etc.; (2) money has been abolished in the main and replaced with labor certificates and book-keeping is the main form of distribution and exchange; (3) equal products for equal work replaces material incentives which continue under the transitional regime; (4) "He who does not work neither shall he eat" will remain in force during socialism; (5) The state will become a "bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie". This semi-state will no longer be a dictatorship of the proletariat; (6) the armed force will consist of a militia which embraces the entire adult population. The full participation of women will constitute a modern day "index" of society's general emancipation, i.e., whether socialism has been achieved; (7) there will be no bureaucracy in the

sense that everyone will be a "bureaucrat" through rotation, and this process will begin, as does the forming of the militia, immediately following the revolution during the transitional period; (8) Socialism necessitates a higher productivity of labor than capitalism. It is only at a higher productivity than the most advanced capitalism that socialism justifies itself historically and is able to exist; (9) the distinction between town and country and with it between worker and peasant disappears under socialism following a protracted transition period; (10) The regime of socialism will be irreversible, that is, there will be no possibility of a restoration of capitalism; (11) Commodity production will in the main be eliminated which may be deduced from the above; (12) proletarian culture, which is still class culture in a society organized to abolish classes, will bear a transitional stamp, to be replaced by a higher socialist culture; (13) social antagonisms will remain, but there will be no class struggle because there will be no special groupings of the people to be suppressed. In short, it will be the beginning, only the beginning, but definitely the beginning, of the ascent of man from the "kingdom of necessity into the kingdom of freedom".

It does not take a genius to conclude that the society described above will undoubtedly be a world society or at least one that embraces the important imperialist countries of western Europe, the United States and Japan. Seen in this light, and this is the light of Marxism, we can understand why the Bolsheviks never even contemplated that a complete socialist society (Stalin's phrase) could be built in a single country, let alone in backward Russia. Stalin had to turn Lenin inside out in order to arrive at the conclusion that the theory of "socialism in one country" originated in Lenin. The theoretical basis of Stalinism, as an ideological system, begins in this marked departure from Lenin. The need to pose as unoriginal precluded an independent elaboration and proof of the theory of "socialism in one country" except as Talmud-like juggling of quotations. The consequent degeneration of theory (the crisis of method), backed up by the full force of the state and the GPU, forms the unchallengeable foundation of the "official" world communist movement. The history of the Bolsheviks' views on the subject of "socialism in one country" is brilliantly summarized by Trotsky in the 2nd Appendix to Volume III of his History of the Russian Revolution and warrants no further elaboration here.

The controversy over the "definition of socialism" never emerged as a major question among the Bolsheviks for the simple reason that there was universal agreement on the conception and because it had not become a practical question. It is only today, forty-five years later, when the classics of Marxism have been watered down, that it becomes necessary to deal once again with fundamentals. The Chinese, in order to uphold the theory of "socialism in one country" in a kind of backhanded way, have transformed socialism into a vulgar parody of what its founders intended it to be. We have collected the main body of references on the question in the works of Lenin, as well as references in Marx, Engels, Stalin and Mao. We are presently preparing a readable summary of those views in pamphlet form. I could, in the meantime, send you a xeroxed copy of our citations which amount to forty or so major references in Lenin alone.

We had to work against our prejudices when we began to examine Lenin's Collected Works. We, quite literally, had lost the ability to read what was on the printed page. State and Revolution may give the reader trained in the Stalinist school the impression that socialism coincides with the dictatorship of the proletariat and that socialism is the transition society to communism. It is possible to begin throwing off these "mind-forged manacles" by glancing at the subheadings in the critical fifth chapter. These headings reveal the difference between the transition from capitalism to communism, the first phase of communist society and the higher phase of communist society. We did not realize, tho it stared us in the face, that by communism Marx meant the entire mode of production of communism in his famous quote that the dictatorship of the proletariat is needed in the political transition period between capitalist society and communist society. At first, when we read further into Lenin, we imagined him to be hopelessly ambiguous and even a prime cause of the split between Trotsky and Stalin on the theoretical level. Nothing could be further from the truth. Lenin is completely consistent on the points of principle if only we learn to read. The two short articles, Politics and Economics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Greetings to the Hungarian Workers are perfectly clear and consistent and should be read in conjunction with this discussion.

A modern day mad hatter would undoubtedly be a bureaucrat in a deformed workers' state. The Chinese view that Mao has discovered that classes and class struggle exist under socialism and that the dictatorship of the proletariat exists under socialism is really an exceptionally crude revision of Lenin. Marx and Lenin knew perfectly well that a protracted transitional period where class struggle persisted and where the proletariat was in power would be needed in order to reach socialism. Stalin established socialism by decree when it was not yet a fact in order to substantiate in practice his absurd theories. The fact that classes and class struggle persisted in the USSR was merely proof that socialism had in fact not been established. There can be no question of new "discoveries" unless we have "discovered" that socialism has ceased to be socialism. If the Chinese wish to change these basic Marxian tenets then let them say so openly and make a case for the changes, but please, not these pathetic distortions.

We are exasperated with the feeble-minded folk who see the methodological dishonesty of the Chinese, who agree with Lenin's conception and then merrily continue to refer to China as socialist because "it is on the socialist road" or because "it has nationalized the means of production and introduced a planned economy" or because "its principal aspect is socialist" or because "it is building socialism", or finally, failing all else, they cry: "Well you are right, but the whole business is a matter of semantics anyway".

The stratification of industry and the beginnings of planned economy are really an index of proletarian power and not of socialism. These measures are indications of the determination to build socialism and its necessary prerequisites but not a sign that it has already been built. Lenin made it clear that if there were occasions when the Russia of the early twenties was referred to as

socialist it only reflected the "determination of Soviet power to achieve the transition to socialism, and not that the new economic system is recognized as a socialist order". In a similar vein, the idea of the "socialist road" indicates direction and not achievement. There is a sense in which we speak of the struggle between capitalism and socialism in the transition period--but this useful conception has been much abused. When we assert that the "socialist aspect is principal", what are we really saying? Are we saying that the productivity of labor is higher than under capitalism? Are we saying that equal products for equal work is the main form of distribution? Are we saying that public property (which emerges as the contradiction between state property and other forms of group property is superceded) prevails over "capitalist" property? Or are we saying in a new way that the proletariat is in power? The simplistic dualism capitalism/socialism obscures rather than illumines the complex transitional societies which history will (and has) produced. One of the consequences of the fact that the revolution began in backward countries is that socialism will be far more different from the existing transitional societies than any of these differs from present day capitalism. In fact, certain features of the advanced imperialisms suggest, but only suggest, the future socialist society more faithfully than do the backward countries where the workers are in power. We cannot liquidate the transitional society through bureaucratic decree. The idea that we are in the "early phase of socialism" effaces the distinction between two modes of production, and therefore the line between all class societies and classless society. No wonder each of the workers' states in the various camps tend to view their neighbor as capitalist since departures from a "socialism" which has not arrived are easy enough to notice. In the dualist tradition that which is anti-socialist must be positively capitalist.

Is this a wrangling over words? Lenin warned us to avoid scholastic disputes. The current "definition" of socialism obscures contemporary history from two directions--(1) it liquidates the transitional society throwing perspective off center and introducing endless confusion, and (2) it prevents us from grasping the social and material base for the possible degeneration of a workers' state. We lose the ability to distinguish a social from a political revolution and a parasite upon the backs of the workers from a new class society.

BUREAUCRATIC DEGENERATION

The theory of "socialism in one country" represents the world outlook, not of the proletariat, but of the bureaucracy on the backs of the proletariat. The prime historical cause for the degeneration of the Soviet regime was the severe isolation of the Russian proletariat and the backwardness of Russian society in confrontation with a hostile capitalist encirclement.

The low productivity of labor and the cultural poverty based upon it forced the regime to rely on the former Tsarist officialdom in the course of reconstructing a state apparatus. Lenin pointed out that only a handful of communists watched over a half million old officials and that while these communists thought they were directing the officials, these officials were in fact directing them.

The state, which was to begin withering away immediately following the revolution, has since swollen to massive proportions.

The world proletariat proved too weak to consummate revolution in Europe in the immediate aftermath of WW I which served to isolate the Russian worker from his main ally. The expected revolutions did not come and the weariness of the masses after years of civil war, revolution and famine began to generate forces of conservatism and reaction. These forces found expression in the person of Stalin and in the consoling doctrine that Russia (and later that only Russia) could build a complete, self-sufficient socialist society. Stalinism not only spread illusions and national reformism among the Russian masses, but exported idyllic pictures of conditions in the S.U. for world consumption. These pretty pictures were bound to sharply conflict with reality and produce a crisis. The Chinese have carried this phenomenon to new heights, and, although there are differences, they stem from the same deep causes.

The bureaucracy owes its origins to social forces of a contradictory nature. The bureaucracy, once consolidated, could not escape its origins and therefore retains a dual character. On the one hand it seeks to preserve its own privileges and prerogatives giving it a conservative character; on the other hand it is forced to defend certain of the gains of October on which it rests and from which it derives its justification. The continued rule of the bureaucracy depends upon the political passivity of the masses. The depolitization of the Russian masses was the principal achievement of the Stalin regime. The political passivity of the Russian worker is maintained through an omnipresent police apparatus, through illusions and concessions, and above all, through the bureaucracy's defense of nationalized property and social planning. The threat posed by imperialism is in the last analysis the justification for everything reactionary in the regime.

The overthrow of the bureaucracy can only be understood as a problem of world revolution. Successful revolution in Europe, for example, would remove the last fetter from the explosive discontent of the Russian worker. The defeat of imperialism and the democratic example of the European worker would release pent up social forces. We can see from this, in the threat posed to bureaucratic rule, the source of a profoundly counter-revolutionary current within the bureaucracy. The victory of proletarian revolutions in other countries particularly in countries with advanced production, begins to assume the proportions of a danger on a par with imperialist military intervention.

A revolution against the bureaucracy would be a political revolution although it would certainly reach into every aspect of life. The revolution would not change the form of property established by October but would extend it. In this sense it would not simply repeat October. The distinction between a political revolution and a social revolution has its origins in Marx and was applied by Trotsky to the Russian experience, and, if you please, brought to "an entirely new level". Marx faced an analytical problem when he observed the revolutions in France that followed the French revolution. These

subsequent upheavals did not establish the bourgeois mode of production since 1789 had already accomplished that. These political revolutions were nevertheless essential to liberate the productive forces for further capitalist development. It was not until 1871 in Paris that a new epoch of social revolutions was inaugurated--the epoch of proletarian revolutions for a new mode of production.

The Chinese thesis that the Russians have restored capitalism (which we only note in passing), is incomprehensible without the theory of a preliminary bureaucratic degeneration. Maoists must come to terms with Trotsky from this angle if only to avoid the notion that capitalism was restored with Stalin's last heartbeat or through a concocted Khrushchevian coup d'etat.

STRATEGY AND INTERNATIONALISM

The materialist foundation for an International is rooted in the gigantic modern productive forces. The interconnected character of world economy and therefore of the world revolution cries out for a coordinated strategy and a world party whose component parts are subordinated to the general approach. The positive elaboration of strategy requires an integrated world view and not one fragmented into its national parts. This methodological starting point is not altered because the proletariat holds power in a part of the world. The inability of any section of the world proletariat to achieve a complete socialist society (the lower phase of communism), particularly in a backward country, without the revolution advancing in the technologically developed countries, establishes with iron necessity that proletarian internationalism is based on material interests.

Marx made it abundantly clear in The German Ideology and other writings that capitalism had created a proletarian who was a world-historical, universal man and had created a world commerce and world culture whose very extension would abolish local communism as well as man in his local being. He further established that the modern productive forces had outgrown their national as well as their private integument. The modern productive forces are by their very nature social and international. The practical conclusion, which forms the starting point for Marxian strategic thought, is that the dominant peoples must more or less simultaneously take hold of the productive forces, subject them to their will, eliminate anarchy of production (for anarchy can only be eliminated on a worldwide scale since planning in the parts merely increases anarchy in the whole), and develop them at unprecedented speed. Socialism assumes the universal development of production and the world trade and society connected with it. There can be no talk of leaping from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom without these conditions.

The seizure of power by the proletariat in backward Russia did not indicate that Marx was a poor guesser or that his method was incorrect. In fact, as we know, he anticipated a revolutionary development in Russia as early as 1870. The real issue before us is strategic and not tactical. To put it plainly: Did Marx' view of revolution among the dominant peoples as a prerequisite for socialism constitute an incidental feature of his general theory? On the con-

trary, it is the guts of his theory! Further, events have not refuted his analysis but have confirmed it. True, events have shown that the workers are capable of coming to power more easily in a backward country than in an advanced one. But events have also shown that, once coming to power, the difficulties facing the proletariat in a backward state are far greater than we expect for an advanced state. Due to the law of uneven and combined development the process began in the backward states--but it can only be completed in the advanced states--such is the nature of the interdependence of the proletarian struggle. The Russians rescued the revolution from European opportunism; the Europeans will have to rescue it from Asiatic obscurantism.

The need for a revolution among the dominant peoples as a prerequisite for socialism remains no less true today. The rise, for example, of a bureaucracy in the face of relatively equal norms implemented by October rests finally upon scarcity; thus, "want becomes generalized" (which is only socialism in appearance) and, as Marx says, "all the old filthy business is reproduced". The absolute backwardness of Russia, and now China (whose margin of surplus is exceedingly thin), tho not decisive in itself becomes so in the face of continued relative backwardness vis a vis imperialism. These conditions are the prisonhouse from which there is no escape--except through revolution in the west. It is from these conditions that all the distortions in the proletarian state have their seedbed. This "theory of the productive forces", if you please, fully conforms to Marx' analysis and is an application of the central guiding idea in his strategic thinking. (It should not be necessary, but perhaps it is best said that--the subjective factor is able to alter the tempo but not the direction of events when we speak in world historic terms. In the case of Russia, such an "alternation" in the post-1924 period might have meant successful revolution in the west early enough to arrest counterrevolutionary tendencies in the USSR; a genuinely proletarian leadership would almost probably have succeeded in extending the revolution eastward in the twenties--either event, or both, would have profoundly altered the prospects for the Russian regime and therefore world history. We are in no way fatalists.)

The struggle between Trotskyism and Stalinism is the same for our time as Leninism vs. revisionism was (and is). Taking the question from the standpoint of its class roots, we can understand why only Trotskyism makes the debate contemporary. Lenin developed his theory of revisionism and its class roots, at a time when the universal proletariat was universally out-of-power. The upper stratum of the proletariat, the labor aristocracy, Trade bureaucrats, officials, some petit bourgeois, political representatives, party hacks, etc., came to strike a bargain with the bourgeoisie at the expense of the majority of the class. Though part of the proletariat, flesh of its flesh so to speak, this stratum in bargaining for itself, collaborated with the bourgeoisie and betrayed the revolution wherever its influence was strong. Sound familiar? Of course. All this is old hat.

It stands to reason that an elaboration, a development of that theory would become necessary once a national section (and only a

revolutionary fraction of that national section at that) came to power in a part of the globe. The bureaucrat is the "class" equivalent in a country where the proletariat-is-in-power of those we mentioned in a country where the proletariat-is-out-of-power. Here too we see international collaboration with the bourgeoisie for the benefit of the privileged stratum at the expense of the majority of the class internally and on a world scale. The contradiction between the part and the whole, between the short run and the long run, etc. reemerges in a new setting. Taken from this angle, we can see why national reformism, that is "socialism in one country", was bound to become the central focus of the clash between Marxism and revisionism in the epoch of workers' states. Indeed, the controversy between the permanent revolution and socialism in one country is not some dead better-to-be-forgotten controversy dredged up by "decadent bourgeois historians and embittered renegades".

This brings us back to the question at hand. The liquidation of strategy flows from this deviation whose material and historical roots we have partially identified. The various revisionist bureaucracies are bound to have mutually conflicting "strategies"--to put it more accurately--they are bound to have conflicting tactical proposals empirically derived for their own interests. The monism of contemporary world development, of which Plekhanov spoke when he was still a Marxist, forces the contending pragmatisms to universalize themselves, to speak out as if they expressed a general interest. This is nothing but the expression within the working class movement of the universal categories of bourgeois thought enshrined in the French revolution of 1789.

The systematization of the Bukharin-Stalin pragmatism takes place at the 6th World Congress in the program of the Comintern. Trotsky, tho expelled from the Russian party, was still a member of the Comintern and therefore had the right of appeal. Trotsky's Critique of the Draft Program of the Comintern is the essential document for grasping the whole consolidation of Stalinism, its liquidation of strategy and the posing of an alternative. Trotsky's critique was suppressed in committee and smuggled out by Cannon, a delegate to the Congress, and later serialized in the opening issues of The Militant.

Stalin's methodological break with dialectics which lays the foundations for class collaboration consists of his separation of internal and external factors into hermetically sealed compartments. The doctrine that it was possible to build a complete socialist society in Russia transformed intervention into the sole threat and possible spoiler of plans to turn socialism into a "force of example". Stalin's 18th Congress Report, just ten years later, went so far as to postulate an isolated communist society (higher phase). Why not? Once you have built socialism what is there left to build? The fundamental and not incidental unity of Stalin and Khrushchev lies precisely in this conception which in turn derives from socialism in one country. The corollary of this view is that in order to prevent intervention the world bourgeoisie, or at least a section of it, must be neutralized (hence Dimitrov's definition of fascism which appeals to a section of the German bourgeoisie and the world bourgeoisie); and finally, the parties of the world must become the Soviet Union's "border guards". We can thus see in relief the inter-

connection of Stalin's domestic and foreign policies, their underlying unity, and the inner mechanism which led to the de facto collapse of the 3rd International prior to its de jure abolition.

WHY NO INTERNATIONAL?

How to evaluate Mao Tse Tung Thought? The nub of the question turns invariably upon the issue of proletarian internationalism. It is here that the gendarmes of backwardness are quartermastered. We must uncover the crisis of leadership from under the wraps of cult worship even greater than that of Stalin. These are stinging words, but please, review with me the facts.

Stalin liquidated the 3rd International after it "had done its job" (!), in order to prove his "genuine anti-fascism" to the British and American bourgeoisie. Scandalous! The gravity of his crime is only mitigated by the fact, and the punyness of the event is only explained by the fact, that he liquidated the reality of the International way back in 1928! Trotsky predicted in 1928, that the International, which once met yearly (1919-1922), under extremely repressive conditions, would soon meet every four years, then every ten, then not at all. The proof that the International had ceased to exist in reality is verified by the universal silence, not so much as a peep was offered, from the member parties. Today, most of these parties line up with the Soviet revisionists and are bankrupt in every respect.

The Chinese have done nothing these 28 years (1943-1971) to create a new International. The decisive split in the parties of the Old International took place in 1963 in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Nearly 8 years have passed since the "break with revisionism" and still there are no preparatory plans for an International. The reason can be simply stated. A new International cannot be founded without summing up the Old. The Old was bankrupt. In order to sum up the past it is necessary to come to grips with Stalinism and the Chinese leadership is unprepared for this task. It is no wonder that not a single pamphlet exists summarizing the last four decades of the revolution in the west and that Lin Piao is reduced to the enigmatic "temporary postponement of the revolution in the west". What poisonous weeds have been left to blossom as the sun rises in the east?

The Maoists, like yourself, who still believe in an International, believe that the Chinese are waiting for the right time. These "delays" in preparing for an International cannot be passed off as a matter of tactics or timing. Lenin struggled for a new International even when he was isolated within his own party in the extreme (and fought publicly, but those days for some are over), and when the international forces for revolution were extremely weak. His international proposals were the last to be accepted by the re-armed Bolsheviks after April. Lenin considered a revolutionary International indispensable precisely to help the newborn parties establish their bearings. He was no harvester, passively waiting to gather up the ripe fruit, but a sower of seeds, a planter and a cultivator. The difference between Stalin and Mao on the question of

an International resolves itself to this: Where Stalin inherited a real International and was forced to liquidate it, Mao accepts the Stalin legacy and, having liquidated strategic thinking, find an International unnecessary.

MAO TSE TUNG AND STRATEGY

Let us suppose that Mao Tse Tung and the CPC were to convene an International Congress. What would be our attitude? We would hail the Congress in principle but we would have to oppose the strategic line that emanated from that Congress. Why? The current absence of an International (new) is merely an index of Mao's departure from Marxism. Stalin did, after all, head an International and he did establish "strategic" guidelines. It is obviously not enough for an International to exist, it must have a correct political line. The rudiments of strategy which the Chinese have already put forward would lead to new disasters for the proletariat.

The Chinese positions may be found in the Polemics with the Soviets, in the series of statements by Mao Tse Tung (such as those on the black struggle in the U.S., on Indochina, on Japan, etc.). These statements particularize the general strategic line within a country or area. Finally there are the important speeches by Lin Piao and various editorials, news items, etc. The analytic content of these proposals vis a vis the west is nil. The only substantive proposals are for the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the world which are nevertheless dominated by the capitalist mode of production. The theory of new democracy is the main pillar on which these proposals rest.

The theory of new democracy did not reflect the course of the Chinese revolution. Or, to put it more precisely, the algebraic character of new democracy makes it responsible indirectly and in a distorted form for both the successful Chinese revolution and the Indonesian disaster. This astonishing statement, which is the fruit of a fairly thorough research, seems to fly in the face of facts and common sense. When Mao's On New Democracy was written and distributed, it contained no references to the "leading role of the proletariat". This phrase was written into the pamphlet (and many other pamphlets dealing with the subject) in 1951 after coming to power. In fact, as late as 1938 (and we have the documents) Mao proposed that the "great" Chiang Kai Shek and the "glorious" Kuomintang should "lead the anti-Japanese united front" and without their leadership all would come to nought. These positions were subsequently written out of the Selected Works. Marx and Engels, by way of contrast, added a preface to new editions of their works when they considered an important change appropriate. They never treated essential changes lightly slipping from one "authorized" edition to another. They respected the intelligence of the proletariat and had no cult to protect. The Chinese approach is a direct methodological continuation of Stalinism. (There are innumerable other tamperings in the Selected Works going back to the twenties--but we will not bother about them here.)

The 1949 regime began to be referred to as a "dictatorship of the proletariat" in 1970 following the Cultural Revolution. The

stand was taken at that time and since repeated early this year that Mao always called it that. The recent interpretation, which is more in accord with the actual course of the Chinese revolution (albeit a deformed dictatorship from its inception), directly contradicts the theory of joint dictatorship and the theory of the four-class dictatorship. Lenin's whole theory which crystallized in April of 1917 and which is elucidated in State and Revolution and all his subsequent writings proves that a class dictatorship is necessarily a dictatorship of a single class. There is no such thing as a "joint" dictatorship except as a passing or ephemeral thing. The theory of the new democratic state is a fundamental revision of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky's conception of the state. The Leninist conception distinguishes between the nature of the state and the alliances the ruling class enters into. Mao not only blurred the distinction between these two conceptions but actually opposed new democracy to the dictatorship of the proletariat as a form of rule.

Mao Tse Tung's (really Stalin's) two-stage theory of revolution in a backward country is likewise bankrupt. The lesson of October is precisely that the proletariat must begin to carry out socialist tasks at the very moment it is completing the democratic tasks. The line between the minimum and maximum program is necessarily effaced. There can be no talk of "continuous" or "consecutive" stages---It is true that a point is reached when the democratic tasks are completed and all that remains are additional socialist tasks. This is too obvious to bear repeating. But it is not true that one "set of tasks" follows another "set of tasks" with a slight "fuzziness" at the edges (i.e. no Chinese Wall). Nor is it true that these tasks are carried out by different dictatorships. The proletarian dictatorship is faced with two sets of tasks: democratic and socialist. These were begun simultaneously in 1949 and were contained in the Constitution of the Peoples Consultative Congress. The Congress asserted that all monopoly capital (big capital, compradore capital, etc.) would undergo nationalization and that these industries would constitute thereafter the socialist sector which would be the leading sector of the entire economy.

The only conclusion we can reach is that Mao made an empirical break with Stalin and with his own conception of the Chinese revolution. The incorrigible Chiang Kai Shek made it clear that either the proletariat would come to power or the workers and peasants would face a bloodbath so sweeping that the 1927 massacre of the workers movement by Chiang would appear in contrast as no more than a prick of the finger. Mao and the Chinese had absorbed the blood lesson of 1927 even if Stalin was prepared for a re-edition of his earlier betrayal.

The events of 1965 confirm our analysis. Mao Tse Tung, on behalf of the CCCPC, issued a eulogistic statement to the Communist Party of Indonesia. The CPI had "sided" with the Chinese against the Russians in the Sino-Soviet dispute. The statement lavishly praised the leadership of the CPI, upheld the bloc of four classes in Indonesia and spoke of "consolidating" and "extending" it. The question of who held state power was completely obscured.

We are still, in 1971, awaiting a self-criticism from the Chinese on their role in these events. None has been forthcoming. The CPI published a self-criticism which appeared in the Peking Review and the Albanians published a critique of the CPI. These criticisms and self-criticism reduced the question to material preparations for violent civil war to back up the propagandistic acknowledgment of a violent transition in the CPI's pre-coup press. In retrospect the bourgeois character of the state under Sukarno was exposed and the theory of new democracy was trotted forth once again with special stress on the "leadership of the proletariat".

The algebraic character of the new democratic state, once scrutinized, resolves itself into two mutually exclusive dictatorships. When Mao speaks of a third type of state with joint dictatorships, he lassoes everyone the China of 1949 to the UAR of today. The litmus test of the class nature of these regimes is determined by which class has the "leading role", which in turn resolves itself, in Leninist categories, to a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or a dictatorship of the proletariat. The "third" form of state "divides into two" and we are left once again with two types of dictatorships in all societies dominated by the capitalist mode of production through the world market and the predominance of the town over the countryside.

The Chinese obfuscation of this elementary proposition is what leads to the tragic and treacherous "illusions" of parties like the Indonesian. It leads to popular fronts, (actually it is derived from popular fronts) such as that in Cambodia, etc., which in turn opens the door to leadership by the bourgeoisie (Sihanouk, etc.). In the last analysis it is a variation of the Russian conception of the non-capitalist (but not socialist) path of development.

The so-called "leading role of the proletariat" is not sufficient insurance against the degeneration of the revolution to say nothing of the post-revolutionary regime. This is particularly so when confusion persists over the relation between tasks, alliances, and when continued overtures are made to the "patriotic progressive forces", that is, to the "national bourgeoisie". We have seen the leadership of the proletariat degenerate completely in Spain where it meant in practice the organizational leadership of the Communist Party of Spain on a bourgeois program and in contradistinction to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The current courtship of Sihanouk by Mao has all the earmarks of previous errors. Sihanouk leads the "united front" and the public approach to him at least is the one of all unity and no struggle. Even if we assume (and it may be true) that the proletariat holds the reins of leadership in the field of military operations "where it counts", we are faced with a Spanish situation at worst and cynical bureaucratic manipulation at best. The option is wide open for a betrayal of the revolution by simply continuing the present policy to its logical conclusion.

The general strategic proposal of the Chinese can be expressed in the slogan "Build a united front against imperialism". The strategy calls for the building of a "worldwide united front against

U.S. imperialism". Imperialist Japan, for example, should build, according to Mao, a broad "patriotic united front of all strata" including "many big Japanese entrepreneurs" to oppose U.S. imperialism. The recent telegram from Mao Tse Tung to Madame DeGaulle and Chou En lai's attendance at the funeral (laying a wreath at the grave) is in the finest tradition of class collaboration. DeGaulle, it seems, says an echo from the past, is a "genuine anti-fascist". These Chinese actions are designed to prevent the French proletariat from forming a vanguard party based on the strategic perspective of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of a Soviet United States of Europe.

DeGaulle is an arch-criminal who suppressed the 1968 May-June risings of the students and the workers. DeGaulle greeted the re-awakened French proletariat with the threat of NATO (German) military intervention and released the fascist colon Generals who a few years earlier had tried to take his life. The Maoist left who rebelled alongside their Trotskyist comrades and who have been driven underground can only be disoriented and demoralized by such gross opportunism. The "telegram affair" is completely consistent with Chinese strategy in Japan and other imperialist countries. We can neither escape from this fact nor explain it away.

The crisis in all U.S. Maoist tendencies is rooted in the application of this strategy to the U.S. The only document that deals directly with the United States, aside from statements on the Negro Question, is the Open Letter to the CPUSA. The Chinese call for "an anti-monopoly united front against imperialist policies [!] of aggression and war". This strategy, if consistently applied to the U.S. is bound to bring forth the popular front. The strategy is a variant of the "two-stage" theory of revolution. Label Bergman of the Revolutionary Union actually is "enriching the revolutionary [sic] tradition of William Z. Foster" as the Chinese advise.

The Peking Review is the organ of the worldwide united front against imperialism. It cannot be read from any other angle. Now the complications begin when we consider that it is the organ of the CPC and of the Chinese state. As an organ of the "revolutionary proletariat" its avowed purpose is to spread Marxism, but as an organ of the front it treats us, as you once put it commenting on the Peoples World, to an "all class view of the news". In reality a bourgeois view. Are we perhaps exaggerating? It is a forum for Sihanouk, it supports the Allende government uncritically, it cheers the eyewash nationalization reforms of the Ceylonese government and raises no warnings, it supports the Pakistani government, the Rumanian government (as socialist no less), etc., etc. We know of course that it is not really the organ of the worldwide united front. The united front is Chinese policy. The editorial staff finds itself hopelessly confronted with mutually contradictory obligations. It is a case in point of how national reformism takes precedence over proletarian internationalism. In case the critics crow too loudly, it is a simple enough matter to pass the buck--Chou En Lai's telegram to Nasser is an "affair of state", reports on Chile are "items of news", Indonesia's affairs are a matter for Indonesians to settle, etc., etc. We can be sure, however, of one thing: whenever one policy seriously gets in the way of another policy,

proletarian internationalism will be the first to suffer.

Mao's revisionist strategy is veiled (and thereby maintained) through its extreme indefiniteness. The strategic formulations, even those concerning the "united front", are subject within limits to various interpretations. This accounts for the total inconsistency of Maoist amalgams. The Weathermen, the Venceremos RU splitoff, the Panthers, etc. (insofar as they are consistent) stress the armed worldwide united front against imperialism. They are detachments of a revolutionary army already in action. Weatherman has carried this to its theoretical extreme. These currents reflect profound pessimism with regard to the industrial proletariat and the prospects for an American revolution. The right opportunist line is expressed, as we have seen, in the "stages theory" of the Avakian-Bergman RU group and reflects the same pessimism in the proletariat by appealing exclusively to the lowest common denominator. Maoism is the source of both these deviations.

The small Maoist collectives of which we have been a part have no future whatsoever. The working premise of these groups, at least those with which we are in contact, rejects the "stages theory", rejects the "broad anti-monopoly united front against imperialist policies", rejects the popular front, rejects Dimitrov, rejects the worship of practice, rejects armed struggle now, etc., etc. The continued existence of these groups, yours included, depends upon their self-restriction to localized propagandistic activities which evade the central problem of strategy and its inevitable consequences in practice. The minuteness of the group enables it to "get high" on Mao Tse Tung Thought without ever coming to grips with its contradictions.

There is no philosophers stone which can reconcile the contradiction posed by the confusion over the "principal contradiction". The sophistic juggling of "fundamental" and "principal" only compounds the confusion. The divorce of the domestic U.S. revolution from the world relation of forces is methodologically untenable as is the vulgar theory of their "interpenetration" a la the Red Papers. There is no revolutionary formula, and this is why it engenders endless and fruitless discussion, that can make the contradiction (bourgeoisie vs. proletariat) compatible with the contradiction (monopolists vs. people). I defy you to formulate it.

The indefiniteness of the Chinese presents other methodological difficulties. One trend tries to "decode" Mao's Statements and pore over every word as if concentration would produce the analysis which isn't there. The same devotee who clings to each pronouncement of Mao may be heard whining the philistine cry: "Mao shouldn't be expected to solve all our problems for us", or as the occasion permits, "We can't blame the Chinese for our own shortcomings". These artful dodges which make up the arsenal of the same incompetent minds only serve to guard backwardness and postpone a reckoning. It is of course childish to expect Mao to divine all detailed and particular problems just as it is transparently false to cover Chinese strategic impoverishment with the criticism that it is arrogant to expect correct general guidelines from someone so far away. I know you are not guilty of this method but I raise it because a number of your

"coworkers" in the Bay Area and in L.A. insist on bringing the level of the discussion down to this low point.

THE "OLD COLLECTIVE"

The struggle for revolutionary strategy invariably produces and engenders a struggle for the dialectical method. We always considered it a truism and the "Old Collective" was founded on this premise--that the proletariat could not move forward without summing its past practice, that the present and therefore the future had its roots in the past. It is pathetic how we squabbled endlessly over the simplistic theory/practice dualism--now theory was principal, now practice was principal. These arid disputes reflect a profoundly reactionary current. It was never the issue. It is not now the issue!

It is ironic that both tendencies were committing the same fundamental error. I buried myself ostrich-like in blind opportunist practice, while others, writing mountains of words, took not a single step forward. Who was right? It is a pointless quest. The "Old Collective", before the split and its subsequent dissolution, was bogged down in the Dogmatic Tradition. The attempts that we made to sum up the Third International or the Russian experience never even reviewed the most comprehensive critique of that experience extant--the writings of Leon Trotsky. A Great Wall had been erected through a generation of Stalinists through terror, slander and falsification to turn Trotskyism into a no man's land where travelers proceeded only at grave peril. We were very close to Trotskyism without knowing it. (PLP has recently found itself in a similar dilemma. They have grown so desperate that they have taken to attacking Lenin and Mao in order to preserve Stalin. Steve and Myrna Cherkoss, as well as many others have recently split from PLP to join the Workers League. The earlier Farinas split (editor formerly of Desafio) began the process in earnest.)

Our group never considered Trotsky's thesis of the nature of fascism even tho we vaguely criticized Dimitrov's division into two sections--a fascist section and a "bourgeois democratic" section. We never examined the dialectical opposition between Trotsky's conception of the fascist state and the degenerated workers' state in the Soviet Union. We never considered Trotsky's views on the armed proletarian united front even tho we had come up with a theory somewhat similar. We never fell into the trap (you didn't I did) of accepting the Popular Front with violence (Foster) as a replacement for the Popular Front without violence (Khrushchev). We never dealt with the strategic implications of Trotsky's thesis that either mankind would relapse into barbarism (fascism or worse) or move forward to socialism. In short, we never seriously considered replacing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie with the dictatorship of the proletariat, even tho we had rejected replacing one form of bourgeois rule with another. We certainly never examined the conception of transitional demands forged at the first four Congresses of the Communist International.

If we had only been armchairs! We might have investigated the issues. We were not even that. We were dogmatists with grandiose visions. We used the club of "class stand" defined apriorily, to prevent an investigation of fundamentals (permanent revolution vs. socialism in one country). We did this, to be sure, unconsciously. Our formula was: Sum up the past plus take a "class stand" equals rehashed Stalinism.

Three years of floundering has left a bad taste in a number of mouths. There are no mouthwashes to be taken. To some we have now committed the cardinal. On the mental screen of Stalinism our turn toward Trotskyism will simply confirm the worst imaginings and predictions of the opportunists. The ideological struggle, complete with "splitting and wrecking", has ended up in the swamp of Trotskyism only one step removed from the bourgeoisie, disillusionment, or even police agency, --- so the story goes ad nauseum. Stalin did his work well. He mined and boobytrapped the path toward Marxism and then annihilated those who stumbled reaching it. The whole sick refraction of reality immortalized in the falsified histories of Stalinism (notably the History of the CPSU (B)) is producing its own mirror image. The growth of Trotskyism is the essential healthy by-product of the manifold decay of Stalinism. Taken from this angle, Stalinism is an ideological leper colony. I dare say even the bandages reek.

Our collective fought a key fight with the Dogmatic Tradition which proved to be the main methodological obstacle to even an investigation. We did so without knowing where it would lead us but knowing that it represented the antithesis of scientific socialism. Gone forever is the time when we will consider any thinker infallible and substitute his thinking, however rich, however truly an expression of the relation of class forces, for an independent inquiry and for seriously pondered, independently worked out conclusions.

We are quite anxious to talk to you either individually or as a group. We could arrange separate lodging if we came up there so as not to burden the household which no doubt has its hands full with the joyful labor of caring for the newborn and future proletarian heroine. Or if you can manage a trip south you could stay here for as long as you like.

We are making this letter generally available and we hope you do the same. I look forward to your early reply.

With communist greetings,

Marv

[May 1971]

Dear Marv,

We received your letter and the position paper a few weeks ago. We have had some preliminary discussions of it and believe it to be wrong in several respects. We have prepared a detailed study of it, which we are beginning immediately.

The main questions we are discussing are: 1) the period of transition between capitalism and communism (highest phase); 2) the roots of restoration of capitalism in the SU and your analysis of "degeneration" of worker's states; 3) the questions you have raised about the international strategy of the proletariat for revolution; 4) 'Socialism in One Country'; and 5) the Transitional Program put forth by Trotsky.

We would appreciate your full list of citations from Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, and Trotsky and also citations from Marx and Engels. I hope you could send them right away, to help bolster the list we have already compiled.

Also any supplementary papers you did in preparation, relating to the above topics, would be most appreciated.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Lyn Wells

June 2, 1971

Dear Lyn,

We were quite pleased to receive your letter. The questions you raise are indicative of the continuously serious approach you have maintained towards theory. The investigation you are beginning can be an exciting and illuminating adventure that will have a positive impact on the working class for years to come; or it can be a perfunctory exercise in the scholastic and dogmatic tradition which will prepare you only for a career of apologias. You will then be compelled to tirelessly explain why Ayub Khan's government is progressive after all in mass murdering Bengalis, retaining East Pakistan within the singular Pakistani state led by the 22 families, and why the separatists (which included Naxalite Maoists near the Indian border) were really inspired by reaction and the CIA all along. Or why the Bandaranaike government must be supported right now with a 25 million dollar loan as a gesture of confidence since it has just suppressed a CIA inspired rebellion (including tens of thousands of plantation workers led by "Guevarist" students from the cities). And why the Chinese package the loan with uncritical support of this Neo-Menshevik gang who have just jailed--you guessed it--Sanmugathsan? Of course, if he is a good boy, he will be released and then explain how progressive, wise and farsighted Bandaranaike was in arresting him and dealing with those upstart petit bourgeois adventurers (secretly aided by the CIA). After all, Wilfred Burchett has now discovered the merits of Maoism and has happily trumpeted the heretofore covert existence of an anti-Mao left wing inside the party who (undoubtedly) belittled the significance of securing China's alliances with its neighbors when it recalled all ambassadors and directed its fire mistakenly against Chen Yi. Or, of course, you can become left Maoists yourselves and whisper criticisms of a new "right turn" in China. If, however, in contrast, you genuinely make the investigation, you will conclude (I have no doubt) that Trotsky and not Stalin represents the continuity of Marxism-Leninism; and that Mao, with certain differences, is essentially following the path of Stalin's "socialism in one country" and that the path is wrong.

A bold beginning to a bibliographical commentary don't you think?

You list five major questions for investigation. All of these are quite significant and they will go a long way toward providing you with a basis for making a judgement. There are two important questions, however, which you leave out. So before proceeding with your questions, I would like to make some comments on the Marxist theory of the state and the theory of the party.

The question of the Marxist theory of the state expresses itself in this instance as the controversy between the conception of the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry (rddpp), or democratic dictatorship, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In China, this aspect of the problem expresses itself as the controversy over the democratic dictatorship

first, the new democracy second, and the character of the established peoples democratic dictatorship third. In the U.S. and Japan, the question appears as a controversy over the popular front, or if you prefer, the anti-monopoly coalition. In each instance, the revisionist line envisions some sort of multi-class state or joint dictatorship somewhere between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. In contrast, the Leninist position maintains: "The essence of Marx's theory of the state has been mastered only by those who realize that the dictatorship of a single class is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the proletariat which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire historical period which separates capitalism from the 'classless society,' from communism. Bourgeois states are most varied in form, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: the dictatorship of the proletariat. (CW, Lenin, Vol 24, p.413

The reason this is important, and it should be said directly, (something Trotsky did not do for many years) is that this brilliant formulation of Lenin's from State and Revolution (July, 1917), is in reality a self-criticism of Lenin's own position of the rddpp, developed in the course of the 1905 revolution and finally abandoned in April of 1917. Lenin in throwing out what he called the "Old Bolshevik formula" of the rddpp in favor of a struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry, was breaking partially with himself and with one of the main obstacles to unity with Trotsky. These positions are developed by Trotsky in The Permanent Revolution and in the shorter, later, and more incisive work, What is the Permanent Revolution?, a copy of which I have included in the parcel. The issue acquired symptomatic importance in 1923 with the defeat of the German revolution when Trotsky raised it in his Lessons of October with regard to tracing the struggle between two lines in the Bolshevik party between February and October. It acquired a direct and immediate significance when Stalin used the attack on Trotsky to pave the way for a revival of the "Old Bolshevik" formula as the strategic line for the then incipient Chinese revolution--with this exception--where the rddpp rejected unity with the bourgeoisie, Stalin's "democratic dictatorship" for China outdid even the Mensheviks by including the bourgeoisie in the figure of Chiang Kai Shek and calling for the CP entry into the Kuo-mintang and under their leadership with only a semblance of effective independence.

Lenin is moving toward his position of State and Revolution very rapidly in 1917. The April theses represented an initial attempt to solve the following problem: How to evaluate the February revolution and project a program for what was to be the October revolution? The dilemma arose because the rddpp was never realized. It may be said that it was realized "to a certain degree and to a certain extent" by interconnection with the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. But this presented a severe practical crisis in the party and begged the question on the theoretical level. In practical terms Kamenev and Stalin were acting as the "left opposition" to

the Provisional Government since it was a distorted (deformed?) rddpp and since the party program envisioned this goal until the revolutionary spark would sweep westward. In fact, Stalin was moving over into positions of defensism on the war! This would not do. So Lenin was forced to sharply take his own central committee to task and prevent its degeneration into reformism. On a theoretical plane the critical question was the role of the peasantry. Since the peasantry proved incapable of playing an independent role, just as Marx and Trotsky said, the peasants and their representatives were bound to follow either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. By ceding power to the Provisional Government, the Soviets as organizations of the peasantry were playing out their historical role, but as organizations of the workers, they were falling into the pit of reformism. Lenin, by projecting no support to the Provisional Government and calling for "All Power to the Soviets," expressed in this classically transitional demand, a means to expose the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries and win the workers to Bolshevism who alone took the slogan seriously and at the same time identify the new organs of power. This is how the Bolsheviks went from a minority in the Soviet to a majority. (You might speculate on how this approach would apply to Allende in Chile or to the May-June events in Paris of '68 and then evaluate the various Maoist positions.) Thus the slogan "All Power to the Soviets" would mean the dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with the poor peasants who would then be following the workers. The strong class would lead.

The depth of this struggle inside the Bolshevik party will become clearer if you examine the questions and readings I have enclosed on "The State: Nature, Alliances and Tasks." Particular attention should be paid to the role envisioned by the Bolsheviks for the Constituent Assembly which would have been peasant dominated and "democratic" in contrast to the actual role played by the Soviets. The inadequacy and harshness of the debate between Trotsky and Lenin over these questions and the misunderstandings involved are truly an unfortunate page in the history of the Russian revolution. Results and Prospects will give you an idea of Trotsky's early thinking on the subject with which Lenin was not familiar. I cannot help recounting a humorous aside in the debate which to my knowledge Trotsky never goes into. In 1905 (Vol. 8, p.291) Lenin chides Trotsky for being a "windbag" because he (Trotsky) asserted that there would be no second Father Gapon, that is, no independent role for the peasantry, and therefore, according to Lenin, no great "democratic" revolution truly consummated, etc. It turns out that Lenin and not Trotsky is the windbag in this episode. We know of course the fate of the rddpp, but not only was there never a second Father Gapon, but the first Gapon turned out to be an agent provocateur. Lenin would probably have had a good belly laugh in looking back at this polemic against Trotsky, but those who prefer the "cult of the infallible Lenin" to the more exacting complexities of the historical process which are only approximated theoretically, will undoubtedly squirm at this reading.

Of course the point of all this is not to cast Lenin in a bad light. Far from it. Lenin, in an overall sense, was the main "architect" of the Russian revolution. He not only was generally correct, separating himself from the bourgeoisie in all regards; he

not only was able to correct mistakes in time even against the majority of his own party, but he built the party for two decades and without the party there would have been no proletarian revolution in Russia. This is why I urge you to add the question of the party to your investigation and why I have included a number of readings on the subject. In the pre-1917 period it is clearly Lenin who shines and in the post revolutionary period when Lenin and Trotsky work together it is the labor of equals although Lenin proves the more capable overall leader. I have included a number of questions and readings on the nature of the party.

On the crucial question of who continued the Bolshevik tradition of the party after Lenin's death, the evidence is overwhelming that it is Trotsky and not Stalin, that Stalin's whole conception of the party is that of a bureaucratic monolith without democracy and having nothing in common with democratic centralism. Mao, in turn, is trained in the Stalin school and despite divergences basically upholds the same conception of the party as Stalin. Just to take a recent example: Peking Review #10 this year has the following quote from Mao: "Without democracy there cannot be correct concentration, because it is impossible to establish centralism when people have divergent views and don't have unity in thinking. What is meant by concentration? First, there must be concentration of correct ideas. Unity in thinking, policy, plan, command and action is attained on the basis of concentrating correct ideas. This is unity through concentration." I had always thought democratic centralism meant subordination of the minority to the majority after democratic discussion; unity in action and divergent views in discussion. Of course on some level there must be unity in thinking or you don't have a party but on "policy, plan, command and action"??..this means on every detail. At the time this came out it looked like a weapon for a purge, a bureaucratic weapon, and the recent Burchett articles seem to bear this out--but we shall see. In any case, it takes real "concentration" to make this quote consistent with Leninism and not see its cousinship with Stalinism. The above hardly exhausts the subject but hopefully such obvious incongruities will open a peephole to the real history of the question.

Now with regard to your five questions:

1) the period of the transition between capitalism and communism (higher phase)

First of all it should be noted that you place the question incorrectly. Between capitalism and communism (higher phase), there is a protracted transitional period of the dictatorship of the proletariat and then there is communism (lower phase) i.e. socialism. Not only are there two stages, but the line dividing them (of course such a "line" can only be a scientific approximation extended itself over a period of time), is the critical dividing line for mankind, that is, the line between class societies of every sort and the first classless, socialist society. The transitional period of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the last class society but it is a class society.

I have included numerous references from Lenin on the subject and the "letter to Mike" indicates the importance we place on Trotsky's Appendix II to Vol. III of the History of the Russian Revolution. In case you still have any doubts, I would recommend a close study of the selections included from Stalin which shows his evolution toward the theory of socialism in one country. You will be left with no doubts that Stalin departed from Lenin up and down the line on this issue--but having determined that,--you will still have to judge whether he is right or wrong. We did our best to rescue Stalin's theory from its jesuitical encasement but "socialism in one country" collapsed of its own weight. I am sending you gratis a copy of Trotsky's The Third International After Lenin because in it is elaborated in positive fashion why "socialism in one country" departs from Marxism in all respects and what is the correct alternative theoretical framework. Pages 24-40 answers some particular distortions raised by Stalin in his writings. We found that these readings brought old Karl to life with a relevance we never grasped in our Maoist period. The appropriate references can be secured in the new International Publishers edition of Marx and Engels Selected Works in three volumes. The index (at last the Russians are supplying an index) will be useful--look up "world market," productive forces, communism, etc. It will prove a great adventure--like mining for gold in Fort Knox.

2) the roots of restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and your analysis of the "degeneration" of workers states

Here again there is a problem of how to formulate the question. You seem to assume that it has been restored. And further, you assume (do you not?) that capitalism has been restored in 1956 or thereabouts. It may be true. As you will recall, you listened (in whole or in part) to the tapes of the two public lectures I gave last summer on "The Restoration of Capitalism in the USSR." The material I had gathered to demonstrate the Chinese hypothesis was more elaborate than anything they have put together on the subject to my knowledge. Still I was dissatisfied with my presentation. This is why I refused to send the draft around the country although I was urged to do so from many quarters. The truth is it was a puny effort which did not address itself to the most thorny problems. You may feel differently. There has been a serious case made for the state capitalist hypothesis, a case worthy of the name, in the writings of Tony Cliff: Russia: A Marxist Analysis. Cliff is an I.S.er from England where the "state capitalist" wing prevails in the organization. We believe that he too fails in making the case--but that is for you to judge. He argues that the turn came a good deal earlier than 1956 which brings us to the crucial preliminary question to any definitive characterization of the Russian state today.

What was the Soviet Union prior to becoming (if it did) a capitalist state? Was it on the socialist road? Was it a "pure" workers state? What was it? Further, when did it begin to turn sour, or partially sour, and over what? Who analyzed its degeneration? (Can you find a better word?) The question posed is this: If you hold that capitalism has been restored, then you must explain how such a profound event occurred after the greatest revolution in all

history and peacefully to boot? We found that only Trotsky's analysis made the idea of eventual capitalist restoration plausible. We believe that a study of his writings on the subject will lead you to conclude that the degeneration of the workers state dates from Stalin's consolidation of the bureaucracy between 1924-1928 and that the theory of "socialism in one country" is the outlook of that bureaucracy. What's more, we think you will conclude that despite the severe degeneration of the Soviet Union (Trotsky's critique of Soviet society is far more incisive than the bureaucratic exercises in the pages of the Peking Review), Russia remains a workers state which needs a political revolution to set it back on the socialist road. I have included my only copy of The Class Nature of the Soviet State (so please return after you are done or have xeroxed it) and I would recommend The Revolution Betrayed which carries forward the work of Lenin's State and Revolution, and Trotsky's In Defense of Marxism (Against the Petit-Bourgeois Opposition).

It is entirely possible (theoretically conceivable) that capitalism was restored in the Soviet Union in or about 1956 or even yesterday. The works cited above suggest a definitive criteria to make such a judgement once contemporary facts have been absorbed. We are sceptical but to be frank we have not yet made a sufficiently thorough investigation. We are convinced that the Chinese analysis and method are bankrupt and that only Trotskyism offers the possibility and the methodology (really Marxist methodology) for an answer.

3) the question of the international strategy of the proletariat for revolution.

This coming weekend we are holding a conference where drafts are being submitted on a number of programmatic topics. One of these documents will deal with the rise of revisionism in the Fourth International following WW II. We have made a brief analysis of Pabloism, Inverted Pabloism and the present state of the Fourth International. As soon as these documents are discussed, corrected and edited, I will send them along. Again, the "letter to Mike" serves as an excellent preliminary analysis to these documents.

4) "socialism in one country" This has already been covered in depth.

5) The Transitional Program as put forth by Trotsky.

The most useful remarks I can make on this subject short of laying out a full program would be to comment on certain confusions that permeate the "anti-economist" Maoist left (which does not include the RU).

The transitional program and transitional demands constitute a bridge from the minimum program to the maximum program. Some say that since a bridge is between two shores, we are backing off (at least by a half-step) from the kind of "all-round political exposures" that Lenin spoke of in What is to be Done? In short we are charged with introducing a new variant of the stages theory

and with tailing the workers.

The vessel of a broadly correct theoretical conception may be filled with poisonous fluids. The SWP, as we know, transforms the paltryist, the most utopian, even divisive demands, into a series of so-called "transitional demands" thereby lending the Transitional Program an elasticity it was never meant to have. The history of opportunism is replete with examples of how even correct positions are transformed into their opposite. The CP manages to convert the "leading role of the proletariat" into a cover for the reformist labor bureaucracy leading an "anti-monopoly coalition." In your struggle against revisionism, you have rightly opposed anything that smacks of the CP approach. The parameters of the Transitional Program are delimited by, and must lead to the political conclusion, that the workers must take state power.

The spirit of the Transitional Program by Trotsky is revolutionary through and through. The whole idea of raising "transitional demands" is to lead the workers from a struggle around today's conditions to the conclusion that only the conquest of political power will resolve the contradictions of capitalist society. The "bridge" is between the understanding of the masses and the socialist consciousness of the vanguard. It is no more than the way to get from point A to point B. The full program of socialism comes to life in the struggle for transitional demands.

The slogans of "30 for 40," of armed picket lines, of a Labor Party, etc., have this quality. The call for nationalization of the major industries under workers control and under conditions of expropriating the bourgeoisie are quite clear. But when we forward an economic demand of a more limited character the attendant propaganda is decisive. Take the slogan of "30 for 40." This slogan is addressed to the immediate needs of the entire working class. It strikes at the unemployment crisis, at the welfare crisis, at the issues of wages and conditions and provides an opportunity to explain the significance of historical materialism by dealing with the development of the productive forces (automation, etc.). At the same time, when raised in conjunction with the transitional program, it does not tail the spontaneous movement but "diverts" it along socialist lines. It has special significance for the minority worker who swells the unemployment and relief rolls but it handles that special oppression by uniting the class and not by pitting one section of the class against another or calling for the "repudiation of skin privileges" either from above or below.

The most advanced discussion of tailism pertaining to the two-stage theory of revolution may be found in the minutes of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International. The problem of the "two-stage" theory of revolution is implicit in all tailing activity since it postulates a class other than the proletariat taking power on the way to the proletariat taking power. Of course some class or combination of classes may temporarily find themselves in power prior to the dictatorship of the proletariat but it is not the duty of the vanguard party to expedite such an eventuality. Our task is to clear the road for the proletarian dictatorship. The two-stage theory of revolution may be considered the crowning achievement of tailism.

It is the ultimate capstone of the economism Lenin spoke of in 1903 and it finds its most complete expression in Stalinism.

You requested our citations from Mao and the Chinese along with the materials I have included. An analysis of Mao requires a full letter (at least) of its own. I have delayed this letter far too long already and would rather send it as is and write something more comprehensive on Mao in the next few weeks. We have a good deal of material and I hope, insights, on the subject, and it should receive its proper measure.

Please send us whatever materials you have prepared and let us know how your investigations have been going.

With communist greetings,

Marv

P.S. We have entered into fusion discussions with the Spartacist League and we will keep you informed of the progress of these discussions.

April 21, 1971

Dear Comrade Wohlforth,

I have enclosed two copies of a letter to a Maoist on the crisis in Maoist strategy and an elaboration of some of Trotsky's basic ideas. We have made the letter available to the L.A. Branch of the Workers League. We would be interested in your comments and reactions to the letter as well as any ideas you might have for making use of it.

Our group (Communist Working Collective) has definitely consolidated around Trotskyism and, following the 24th, we intend to begin an investigation into the 4th International in a more developed way.

I am also enclosing some copies of a proposal for joint action which we drew up and submitted to a number of local groups. The Liberation Union, a semi-Trotskyist group with no fundamental disagreements with the SWP, begged off a joint meeting for "lack of time". The Maoist October League and the Maoist Long March agreed to a joint meeting but declined joint action in favor of marching in an "anti-imperialist contingent".

We have also participated in a number of interventions with the Workers League and we are presently preparing a leaflet of our own for the 24th. We believe the combination of joint theoretical discussions as well as joint practical activities is the best way to determine where we have unity.

Looking forward to an early reply.

With communist greetings,

Marvin Treiger

B U L L E T I N

weekly organ of the workers league
Sixth Floor, 135 West 14 Street, New York, New York 10011

April 27, 1971

Dear Comrade Treiger,

We have received your letter together with your statement on Trotskyism and Stalinism and your leaflet on April 24th. The statement is a good summary of some of the differences between Trotskyism and Stalinism historically.

However there is no discussion of the Fourth International. Your cover letter states: "Our group (Communist Working Collective) has definitely consolidated around Trotskyism and, following the 24th, we intend to begin an investigation into the 4th International in a more developed way."

We are completely opposed to the methodological and theoretical position which such a stand reflects. It is not possible to separate out "Stalinism" and "Trotskyism" from the actual development of the Third International and the Fourth International. To do so is to go over to the idealist outlook of Deutscher who abstracts Trotsky the "hero" and his "ideas" out of and opposed to Trotsky's actual struggle to construct the Fourth International.

In this respect I urge that you and your group look over Trotsky's "writings" recently republished by the SWP.

Next both the statement on "Trotskyism" and the leaflet reflect a removal from the strategic expression of Trotskyism, that is Marxism, in this period of international crisis. If, as you state in your leaflet, the ruling class is preparing for civil war, then we, too, must prepare through a battle to construct the Fourth International in the United States around a strategic approach. This is why it is completely wrong of you to call for a demonstration on April 24th which does not mention either the labor party or the fight for the general strike.

Finally we understand that in addition to holding joint discussions and joint actions with the Workers League you are holding at least discussions with Spartacist. This organization is completely hostile to the Fourth International and bears no relationship whatsoever to Trotskyism.

You cannot have joint discussions or joint actions with us while you at the same time maintain relations of any sort with Spartacist. We are sure that a study of the historical development of Trotskyism will make this quite clear to you.

Finally we wish to make clear in any event we are not interested in any kind of "regroupment" or joint actions on the basis of some minimal agreement on so-called "class" issues. You say the Maoist October League and the Maoist Long March declined having joint action with you and we assume also us on April 24th.

In any event we will not have joint actions with Maoists. Maoism today means bodies of revolutionaries lining the streets of Dacca and floating down the rivers of Ceylon. We do not understand how you can say you have "consolidated around Trotskyism" while at the same time you seek joint actions with the supporters of the butchers of the Bengalis and even with the Liberation Union which you characterize as "semi-Trotskyist" and then say it has "no fundamental disagreements with the SWP." Could it be in your confusion you hold that the SWP is "semi-Trotskyist"?

We urge you to take up a serious study of Trotskyism and the development of the Fourth International and make a break with such riff-raff as the above mentioned groups. Then we will be more than happy to hold discussions with you and organize common actions based on the firm principled party grounds of Trotskyism as the continuator of the Leninist Bolshevik heritage.

Make up your mind. You cannot have it both ways.

Yours fraternally,

Tim Wohlforth
for the Political Committee
Workers League

[after 24 April 1971]

To the Los Angeles - Orange County Branch

Dear comrades,

The recent events in Pakistan and Ceylon point up with the greatest sharpness the critical necessity to construct the Fourth International in this period. On the one hand it shows that the period of civil war has now commenced on an international scale and will soon find expression in the advanced countries as well. On the other hand it shows the completely counterrevolutionary role of Stalinism and revisionism.

Our struggle against these tendencies must not be viewed in an idealist manner. It is not a matter of exchange of ideas or even clash of ideas. Revisionism is the expression together with Stalinism of actual material forces who shoot workers, peasants and youth and send their bodies floating down the rivers of Ceylon. Against these tendencies we must build an actual material force--a vanguard party rooted in the working class itself.

It was with this understanding that the Workers League planned its intervention in Washington and San Francisco on April 24th. It was with this understanding that we launched the Bulletin as a 16 page paper and took steps on the West Coast to strengthen the party with a Western Regional Office, a fulltime functionary, and a regularly printed two page section of the paper.

Confronted with this attempt of the revisionists and Stalinists to impose a liberal bourgeois leadership upon the massive movement against the war and through this to further the popular front in the trade union movement as well, we decided to hold WORKERS LEAGUE rallies on the two coasts completely and absolutely opposed to the bourgeois rallies. We counterposed to bourgeois politics and leadership the revolutionary party, US and nobody else. Anything else would be a complete fraud.

On this basis, on our basis, we invited any other working class militants to speak. It was on the platform of the Workers League, of the Trotskyist party, that we asked these other forces to speak and--particularly in Washington, we did get such speakers.

The real meaning of our April 24th demonstration was summed up in the concluding speech of the Washington rally when we urged all in attendance to join the Workers League as the only possible way to carry forward the struggle in this new period of civil war. Several came up to the mike to join and others in various areas of the country are in the process of coming into the party.

We held these rallies under extremely difficult circumstances, facing efforts by the revisionists to stop us from meeting, attacks by various assorted scoundrels like Spartacist, coming shortly after physical attacks by the MPI, actual fascist thugs in Washington, but above all the reformist and idealist outlook which predominated the big marches and tended to undermine the sharp political fight for leadership.

We held the rallies under difficult circumstances. They were held. They were not dispersed. At the time that Mao Tse Tung was aiding the shooting down of masses in Pakistan and Ceylon the voice of Trotskyism was clearly heard and the Trotskyist party put forward. The turnout was sizeable, the people participating serious. It was a major step forward for the League which if now understood can lead to a sharp development of the party.

It is now perfectly clear that at least a section of your branch had no understanding of the perspective around which the April 24th demonstrations were supposed to be built and therefore of the whole perspective which underlies all the work of the party in this period. This is expressed most clearly in the April 1971 proposal of the "Communist Working Collective" of one Marvin Treiger. It is his opinion that the Workers League issued a "Call for a United Front Rally of the Working Class Against the War." We issued no such call. He could only have gotten that misconception from the LA-Orange County Branch. He did not get it from the Bulletin or any statement of the Workers League nationally.

We are completely opposed to such a "united" rally whether or not one fallaciously calls such a rally a "united front." What must be posed in this period is not some kind of amalgam or lowest common denominator with various "anti-imperialist" groups, but the revolutionary party which is US.

Treiger sees the alternatives posed on April 24th as: "Fighting to build communist leadership of the oppressed and exploited or abandoning leadership to the class collaborators." But that raises the point of what is meant by "fighting to build communist leadership." Obviously to Treiger it means some kind of amalgam of "radicals" or even of different kinds of "Trotskyists." We went through all that stuff with Spartacist and have no intention of repeating it now that the class struggle and our international party are on a different level of development.

We need only add that Treiger reformulates the actual demands upon which the Workers League rally was called dropping both the labor party demand and the general strike demand. So the central expressions of the Trotskyist struggle in this period are simply thrown out the window.

It is not surprising that with this confusion on the question of the very character of our demonstration--and behind this of the central role of the party in this period--that upon arriving in San Francisco a sharp difference broke out between LA-Orange County comrades and Jeff Sebastian. Proceeding on the basis of a liquidationist perspective which the LA-Orange County Branch held in common with Treiger, the comrades urged that the liquidation be taken further, turning the whole work in San Francisco into a dispersal of party forces in a futile attempt to break off a large section of the liberal march.

Our perspective, however, was different. Beginning with the role of the party in this period, we fought as a party to bring forces from out of the trade unions, students, and minority youth to

Washington and San Francisco under our leadership. We were not dependent on what we could or could not capture on the spot from the revisionists and liberals. What counted was what the party built in the process of building for April 24th and the development of those cadres in the course of a collision and separation from the liberals in action.

What weaknesses were displayed in the April 24th work, and they were many and deep, were in our failure in this party work which expressed itself in either not bringing the forces which could have been mobilized by the party or not fighting with the forces we brought, so that we lost some of them in the march in the liberal confusion.

This liquidationist perspective of the LA-Orange County Branch was expressed another way. Rather than fighting for a party contingent which would come on a bus or buses, all kinds of elements turned up in cars, not under party control or discipline, without the comrades really knowing who was coming ahead of time.

This development must also express a complete disorientation in relation to this Treiger group. We do not accept the position that this group has "definitely consolidated around Trotskyism" since it then proceeds to say that now it will "begin an investigation into the 4th International in a more developed way." This separates out "Trotskyism" from the actual development of the Fourth International in the idealist manner of Deutscher which leads it to make an open approach to Spartacist at the same time as it has relations with us. Thus it views itself as "Trotskyists" out shopping among other "Trotskyists" for a berth.

Our assessment of this group is that it is an idealist group held together by subjective ties to whom "Trotskyism" is a set of ideas around which to maintain a "collective" existence. It is thus a reactionary tendency extremely distant from the working class.

The position of the Political Committee of the Workers League is as follows: The Workers League, its branches, and its members will hold no discussions nor joint activities with this group while it at the same time holds either discussions or joint activities with Spartacist. This will immediately be communicated to Treiger and the LA-Orange County Branch will function on this basis.

We also propose that the branch have an educational study of the Spartacist pamphlet immediately and suggest this also to Treiger and Co. if they have any questions on our decision.

We analyzed at the National Conference that the deepening international crisis and impending civil war has an extremely contradictory effect on the students and middle class youth. Some--particularly but not exclusively the working class minority students--have taken a sharp turn towards the working class and Marxism. Others are driven in a reactionary frenzy which they at times cover with what Lenin called "petty bourgeois revolutionism."

This petty bourgeois radical strata is extremely widespread

particularly in Los Angeles, the home of the Manson "family." There above everywhere the frenzy goes over into mysticism if not open madness.

The LA-Orange County Branch has in the past displayed a dangerous sensitivity to petty bourgeois class pressures. First was the panicked reaction to all this terrorism business in which the LA-Orange County branch took the same stand as the SWP, seeing the danger in terrorism of radicals rather than in the institutionalized terror of the ruling class. Now the brutality in Pakistan and Ceylon expose such an approach even more.

Next came the "radical" reaction to the police strike issue, again paralleling the SWP, in which a whole issue of the paper was to be withdrawn because of criticisms from such circles. This again expressed a real distance from the actual developments in the working class and labor movement and a sensitivity to petty bourgeois radical strata.

Now we have this adaptation to Treiger and open liquidationism of the party posed in the April 24th demonstration.

In this respect we pose to the branch first of all that the comrades take up a serious internal struggle for the development of Marxist theory and an understanding of the Marxist method. It is only under conditions of a branch life empty of theory that alien class pressures can gain such a stranglehold.

Secondly, we urge upon the branch a study of the historical development of the Fourth International, the International Committee and the Workers League. Comrades do not proceed from this development and are willing on the basis of momentary impressions and pressures to simply throw out the development of the party, not even consider the opinion of the National Committee as a whole, and learn from the lessons of our movement particularly in relation to Spartacist. In this respect a study of "In Defense of Marxism" would be very important.

Thirdly, the branch must develop the deepest cleavage between itself and all these sick "collectives," "tribes," "communes" and related madness out there. You must pull yourselves out of that muck. They are not only distant from the working class, they do not represent the serious students. They are subjective idealist cesspools. We are not out to win a section of them over. We don't want them in the interests of political hygiene.

A greater sensitivity to the powerful labor movement in the Los Angeles area and less sensitivity to the tribes would do the branch a world of good. If it doesn't take drastic action now it will completely succumb to subjective idealism itself and find itself in a frenzied battle against the party and the Fourth International as a whole.

In line with this we propose as a concrete step in a serious direction that: (1) all the comrades who are not full time students get jobs immediately. This means under the direction of the executive committee each unemployed comrade must put in a minimum of

4 hours each day, five days a week, on job hunting alone. (2) That the joint living arrangement in Santa Ana be packed in. The comrades in San Francisco had to take a similar step some time back. (3) That the branch take up a serious fight for the 16 page paper requiring the Executive Committee to produce the agreed upon articles for the paper each week NO MATTER WHAT; launch an IMMEDIATE ALL OUT DISCIPLINED PARTY SUB DRIVE to go over present quotas; and start a street sale expansion aimed at raising sales in Southern California to 1,000 per week within the next immediate period. (4) Turn the attention of the branch to the trade union movement particularly the steel situation, not as a substitute for a sharp persistent fight on the campuses, but in addition to this (5) No more relations of any kind with tribes and collectives--no party member to enter a collective even to sell a subscription under any circumstances whatsoever.

This letter is being sent to the West Coast branches as all the comrades were involved in this situation, and to the National Committee members nationally. As per a separate communication a National Committee Plenum will take place Memorial Day weekend in Minneapolis which will discuss this and other matters in relation to a development of our strategic understanding.

Yours fraternally,

Tim Wohlforth,
For the Political Committee

65 May 18, 1971

Dear Comrade Wohlforth,

We are writing you in reply to the letter we recently received and which, we assume, was discussed by the Political Committee (PC) of the Workers League (WL). We were taken aback by the approach you and the PC took towards our organization. There was hardly a single point you made with which we agreed or felt was historically accurate. Take for example your evaluation of Comrade Treiger's methodological approach in his cover letter and in what we will refer to as a "Letter to a Maoist". Your position that since there was no discussion of the Fourth International in Treiger's main letter and since, at least in our opinion, we have "...definitely consolidated around Trotskyism and ...intend to begin investigation into the Fourth International in a more developed way", we "...separate out 'Stalinism' and 'Trotskyism' from the actual development of the Third International and the Fourth International", and therefore "...go over to the idealist outlook of Deutscher who abstracts Trotsky the 'hero' and his 'ideas' out of and opposed to Trotsky's actual struggle to construct the Fourth International". From this, we gather, you implied our methodological approach will lead us to oppose the Fourth International. Nothing could be more wrong! What your position shows is that you completely misunderstand the nature of Treiger's "Letter to a Maoist". Let us explain. True, there was no formal discussion of the Fourth International in "Letter to a Maoist", whose main purpose was to confront a Maoist organization in San Francisco with the basic truths of Marxism which were distorted for so long by the Stalinists. However, to draw the conclusion you did means to completely miss the spirit if not the letter of Treiger's document. The entire document is a restatement of the Marxist position of proletarian internationalism, analyzes the bankruptcy of the Maoist international "strategy" and poses the question of why the CCP has never attempted to build a new International to all Maoist organizations. It further shows that the failure of the Chinese to develop a new International is an excellent exposure of their departure from internationalism. This stand of ours can only mean that we see an international party of the working class as absolutely indispensable without which there can be no proletarian revolution. Moreover, "Letter to a Maoist" in stating: "The ideas embodied in the Transitional Program [which was developed during the first four congresses of the Third International--G.R.] find their historic continuation in the 1934 program of the Fourth International", clearly indicates that we saw the program of the Fourth International as the theoretical continuation of Leninism. We purposely avoided the question of the Fourth International as it stands today because of our insufficient research at that time. The statement "...we intend to begin an investigation into the Fourth International in a more developed way" only means that there is still much ground to cover before we are soundly familiar with Trotskyist strategy and tactics and with the state of the present International. Nothing else can be read into this position.

Concerning the action on April 24th. We were dismayed by your attempting to avoid the question of our differences on the nature of the rally by implying that we called for our own demonstration.

what else could this statement of yours mean? "This is why it is completely wrong for you to call for a demonstration on April 24th which does not mention either the labor party or the fight for the general strike." And once again. "You say the Maoist October League and the Maoist Long March declined having joint action with you and we assume also us on April 24th." [my italics--G.R.] At no time did we call for a demonstration independent of the WL demonstration. If so, where was this rally of ours? Where did it take place? The Bulletin report of the San Francisco events by Jeff Sebastian stated the following: "...the Workers League and supporters broke from the march, and... proceeded to the park where an independent meeting was held and addressed by Workers League spokesmen and by representatives of the Communist Workers [sic] Collective in Los Angeles." The Bulletin completely contradicted this fantastic notion of yours. Our position was calling for "All out support of the Workers League call for a United Front rally of the working class against the war." The error we made was that we misunderstood the nature of the WL's proposed action. This was mainly due to our misreading of the April 5th Bulletin editorial. Instead of realizing that it was supposed to be a rally of the WL and its supporters, we thought (also because of the loose usage of "joint action" on the part of some comrades of the WL) what was intended was a call for a united front working class action against the war. On this point we were totally wrong. However, this does not mean you can simply pass over our differences on the form the rally should take by falsely implying we called our own rally. That just will not do!

With regard to our not mentioning "...either the labor party or the fight for the general strike." We didn't have a consolidated collective position at that time (nor, incidentally, do we now) on these specific demands of the Transitional program. The reason for this is we have not yet evaluated the history of the labor party demand in light of the present U.S. conditions. Thus we don't know whether it is correct to call for a labor party in opposition to a workers party or vice versa. Same is true for the general strike call. Under what conditions, circumstances, etc., does one call for a general strike? This is why we didn't take a position on these demands. However, in no way did our abstention on these questions prevent us from supporting the rally at which these slogans were raised.

We further object to your position that we cannot have joint discussions or joint actions with the WL while maintaining relations of any sort with Spartacist. Our group is now in the process of thoroughly investigating the present anti-Pabloite Trotskyist organizations and are not about to conclude that Spartacist "...is completely hostile to the Fourth International and bears no relationship whatsoever to Trotskyism" just on your word. We may conclude your analysis of their organization is correct, however, we feel, this conclusion must be made on the basis of our own independent investigation. Nevertheless Spartacist has shown a healthy attitude toward encouraging and aiding our investigation (which is more than we can say about your approach). That is why we will continue holding discussions with them. For these reasons, we sincerely hope the PC of the WL reconsiders its present organizational position to-

wards our group. If however, the PC decides to keep its present policy, we will still continue to investigate the WL in spite of any roadblock you may throw up in our way.

Further. We oppose the sectarian position you expressed toward the Maoists and other working class tendencies. "In any event we will not have joint actions with Maoists. Maoism today means bodies of revolutionaries lining the streets of Dacca and floating down the rivers of Ceylon. We do not understand how you can say you have 'consolidated around Trotskyism' while at the same time you seek joint actions with the supporters of the butchers of the Bengalis and even with the Liberation Union...". First of all you make a methodological error in seeing these organizations as finished party formations rather than groupings going through tremendous change. The October League and the Long March are based in Los Angeles and have between fifteen to twenty members each. The "semi-Trotskyist" Liberation Union is also a strictly local organization made up of Maoists and "Trotskyists" and has no more than thirty to forty members. Because of the crisis of world capitalism and the capitulation of the Chinese Stalinists to imperialism, many of these groups (as we did) are in fact looking to Trotskyism to lead them out of the Stalinist swamp. Your position would objectively hinder this development. Secondly, refusing to hold joint actions with Maoists on the basis that they support the foreign policy of the Chinese government is absolutely ludicrous. The Stalinists, Pabloites, Social-Democrats, and trade unionists all currently support either the existing Stalinist states or some kind of reactionary capitalist government. Furthermore, all of them have at one time or another either objectively or subjectively supported the annihilation of revolutionary struggles and are thus responsible for the deaths of thousands of revolutionaries. However, does this mean that you categorically refuse to engage in joint actions with any of these types of organizations? We feel the logic of your position must lead to either a sectarian liquidation of the united front reminiscent of Third Period Stalinism or to a series of opportunist zig-zags--now condemning joint action, now pragmatically entering into it.

From your position on our relations with Spartacist and from your approach to joint action with other working class tendencies, we can make the following evaluation of what seems to be your tactical approach. The WL has no intention of engaging in action with any tendency that does not objectively recognize it as the leading Leninist party. How else can your approach toward our organization be explained? What purpose could your "proposal" at the end of the letter possibly serve than to make us immediately acknowledge the leading role of the WL in the U.S. revolution? What other explanation can there be for your bombastic declaration in the April 5th Bulletin editorial "...either McGovern-Hartke or the Workers League..."? Here is a manifestation in practice of the sectarian danger of which we spoke. There is nothing wrong in principle in calling your own rally. But when you do so vaguely speaking of joint action, not building a united front and then counterposing your organization and your few supporters to everyone else, then we can only conclude that this represents nothing but an extreme example of "left-wing" childishness. Such an approach if persisted in

can only hinder the development of the WL into a mass Bolshevick-Leninist party.

Finally, we must make it absolutely clear to you that we will not capitulate to your pressure tactics. In no way will we be forced into a position of holding discussions with only the WL on your "principled party grounds". For us to take such a step would mean that we concluded that the International Committee of the Fourth International and the WL were the continuators of Trotskyism in our time. The next step could only be discussions on organizational merger after which fusion would take place. Needless to say, so far there is no basis for us to reach such a conclusion.

In concluding, we hope that for the above stated reasons you consider re-evaluating your methodological approach toward us and towards other working class tendencies in general. Hope to hear from you soon.

With communist greetings,

George Rep
for the Communist Working
Collective

April 23, 1971

The Communist Working Collective of Los Angeles hereby expels James Morgan from its membership for the following charges:

- 1) Secretly applying for membership in another organization (the October League) without the permission of the CWC, of which he was then a member.
- 2) Planning to withhold announcement of his resignation until Thursday April 22, in such a manner as would imperil the CWC's unity in action.
- 3) Failure to uphold the CWC decision to support and build the Workers League's united action of the working class rally, for April 24. JM broke discipline regarding this decision, which he had voted for, by secretly opposing this action in his relations with another group (the OL) with which major differences exist, and with whom formal organizational discussions were taking place with regard to the April 24 action.
- 4) Withholding from the CWC his intention to resign for a considerable length of time (at least three weeks) so as to satisfy his personal political desires, i.e., 'to learn about counter-revolutionary Trotskyism.'

For the last five months the Communist Working Collective has been re-examing the political basis of its unity. This has taken the form of collective study of the Stalin-Trotsky historical split in the working class movement. From this study almost the entire Collective has come to believe that Trotsky was correct on the main questions and Stalin was wrong. JM as a minority of one has taken the position that Stalin was basically correct.

Because of the temporary and transitional nature of the CWC JM's theoretical differences were permissable and all comrades have been openly and continuously encouraged to struggle for their opinions. In the main, all comrades, including JM, have vigorously contributed to this theoretical struggle. The result of this work has been the most fruitful period of the group's existence. The charges which have caused JM's expulsion are in no way based on his theoretical differences with the developing majority opinion of the CWC; they are based on a break of democratic centralism.

Any Marxist-Leninist collective must demand a basic honesty on the part of all members regarding their participation in the Collective. In action, all differences must be subordinated to the collective political line and all comrades must struggle for the group's line. JM has not upheld either of these two principles.

By his own admission, JM decided to resign from the CWC at least three weeks prior to his being confronted with the above charges. He finally decided to implement his general decision to leave a few days earlier when he set Thursday before the March as

his actual resignation date. He admitted this in a CWC meeting on April 18 and explained that he considered breaking with the CWC only a "tactical question." His purpose was to stay until the end of the Stalin-Trotsky class in order to learn as much as he could about Trotsky and Trotskyists, so to better fight them. JM told no one in the CWC of his plans to resign nor of his plans to join another group during this three week period.

The situation with JM came to a head with the CWC's decision to build and support the Workers League call for a United Action of the Working Class Rally on April 24th in San Francisco. On a number of votes previously, James had abstained without comment. But on this occasion JM voted in favor of the CWC's five points of participation, including "ALL OUT SUPPORT FOR THE WORKERS LEAGUE CALL FOR A UNITED ACTION RALLY AGAINST THE WAR!" This rally was based on no support for the National Peace Action Council (NPAC) rally, and JM offered no objection to this. He did want to pass out Maoist literature at the rally, but the CWC voted against this proposal

After these decisions, JM approached another group (the October League, Los Angeles) and applied for membership (on or about April 16). He then tried to involve another CWC member in his plans by requesting a meeting for April 22, the night before the CWC would leave for San Francisco, to announce his resignation. He then asked the comrade to keep the planned meeting's purpose secret. This plan to withhold from the CWC his application for membership to the October League and his resignation until Thursday night the 22nd, can only be seen as a conscious effort to undermine and sabotage a CWC action. Faced with these charges, JM admitted having applied for entry into the OL, having opposed the United Workers Rally in discussions with the OL, that he planned to resign three weeks earlier and that he had tried secretly to hold a meeting for his resignation. However, he refused to admit any error in principle, but claimed to have made certain errors in "tactics," "timing." Upon the call for his expulsion, he announced his resignation; this was rejected.

James could only justify his position, that he broke no "principles," on the ground that Trotskyism is counterrevolutionary and is not a working class tendency, that there can be no question of principles with regard to Trotskyists... While we reiterate, he was not expelled for his views, the connection between those views and his actions is clear...

Communist Working Collective (CWC)

May 14, 1971

Dear comrades Jim and Helene,

We were very enthused over our discussions of last week. It is clear to us that the Spartacist League is approaching a new period in its existence. This new period is a reflection of the ferment within the proletariat which in turn is a result of the growing political and economic crisis faced by imperialism. We were particularly encouraged by the decision to publish a national newspaper. Such a newspaper is critical if we are to accomplish our tasks of collective organizing and collective propagandizing. We believe that this step will significantly transform the Spartacist League into a force within the working class and will therefore greatly contribute to the formation of a vanguard party within the U.S. and to the rebirth of the 4th International.

We have long upheld the view that the role of a central organ is an indispensable component of the Leninist theory of party building. Naturally we consider this a generally valid proposition which must be assessed anew in the concrete circumstances of present-day party building. Prior to your visit we suspended judgement with regard to the tactical advisability of the Spartacist League launching such an organ at the present time. We were not sure whether there were sufficient forces, whether finances could be met (a not unimportant consideration), etc. We were sure it was necessary; our discussion with you convinced us it was both possible and timely.

We believe the discussion held in L.A. around the paper was a poor one. We feel many of the key issues were clouded over and that we must take up the question again upon your return trip. Permit me to elaborate.

The conception you put forward of a central organ dangerously veers toward a half-way house between a genuine party organ and an arena paper. What leads us to this conclusion? During the discussion we suggested that the Bulletin provided a model from the standpoint of form and organizational origins. You countered that the Lambertist paper (Trade Union oriented I believe) provided a better model and that you wouldn't even want to be in an organization that only put out a paper as is the tendency of the Workers League. Perhaps our example was a poor one and we should have suggested Iskra as a model for then we could have zeroed in on the key issue: Will the paper reflect more truly than before the party's line in an arena, or, will the paper be a central party organ reflecting all phases of the party's work? We completely agree that the Workers League tends to narrowly stand outside the class struggle with its "paper," but that is first and foremost a problem of their line and not that they have a national organ. The approach taken by the Lambertists appears to us as an incorrect one, one that minimizes the significance of the relative weight given to the independent standpoint of the party.

The dilemma is concentrated most acutely in the decision to retain the name Workers Action. Unfortunately I stressed aesthetic objections to the title and format and therefore clouded over what

was most germane. The real argument for changing the name is to make crystal clear the NEW CHARACTER OF THE NEW ORGAN in such a way that there can be no question of confusion with the old, arena organ. When we place the question in this way, we will be able to avoid tendencies (which are bound to arise) to transform the new organ into one that is partially an arena organ for labor and partially a central organ for the party. It is not enough to say it will be a party organ; we must take steps to ensure it. In this way we will also be able to face clearly and directly the absence of an arena organ for labor while there are such organs for women and youth. We must uphold the idea that we do not need a new "transitional organ" of a hybrid type, but a party organ which fights for the full transitional program and educates the class around the socialist goal.

Last night the CWC voted unanimously to propose to the Spartacist League that the new paper in order to distinguish itself from arenaism and break a fresh path abandon the name Workērs Action.

We should mention in passing that the continuation of Spartacist as a theoretical journal or its merger with the new paper into a single organ are both viable alternatives within the framework of this plan. It may also, for legal and/or diplomatic purposes, prove advisable to state "sponsored or endorsed by SL" or some such thing, but this will not affect the questions of substance. Furthermore, it should be stated that these brief remarks hardly exhaust our thinking on the subject and we are prepared if necessary to write a more lengthy paper justifying our position.

It is not in our nature to suggest these steps without considering our responsibilities with regard to them. Assuming that all goes well in connection with our joint discussions, our comrades are fully prepared to assist such a paper (and whatever other work is necessary) in every possible way.

We have also discussed and have proposals regarding steps toward an early fusion, perhaps September 1, as a realistic date. We should include this topic on our agenda of next week. Let us know when you will arrive.

We hope we are beating a dead horse...but then the L.A. discussion did seem inconclusive.

On behalf of the CWC
with comradely greetings,
Marv

P.S. You may show this to whomever you please.

DRAFT THESES ON
PABLOISM, INVERTED PABLOISM, AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Pabloism

1. Following World War II, the International Trotskyist movement was thrown into a profound theoretical, political, and organizational crisis. Large numbers of Trotskyist cadre were physically destroyed through the joint efforts of the imperialists and Stalinists. World capitalism underwent a relative stabilization due chiefly to Stalinist and Social-Democratic betrayals of the revolutionary working class upsurge following the cessation of fighting. In addition, Stalinist and petit-bourgeois leaderships were successful in overthrowing capitalism and establishing deformed workers states in Eastern Europe and China. All these factors posed very sharply to the Trotskyist movement the problem of building independent proletarian vanguard parties.

2. The Pabloite revisionist trend emerged as an attempt to make the Trotskyist movement more "effective" by accommodating it to the existing "left" movements in the world. The role of Trotskyists was essentially confined to that of pressure groups upon these formations, integrating themselves into whichever forces seemed to have the most potential and hoping that these groupings, under the influence of the objective march of events and prodding by the Trotskyists, would be forced to adopt a revolutionary orientation. For this reason, Pabloism can be called a liquidationist tendency. Thus, during the 1950's Michel Pablo and his International Secretariat pursued such policies as liquidation ("deep" entrism) into the social democratic and centrist parties of Western Europe, the national bourgeois and petit-bourgeois formations in the colonial countries, and the ruling Stalinist CP's of Eastern Europe.

3. Fundamental to the Pabloite world perspective is the theory, borrowed from Stalinism, that the world balance of forces has shifted in favor of socialism, resulting in a "new world reality" in which the tide of revolution is irreversible. For this reason, Pabloism can also be characterized as empiricist. This conception has gone through several variations. Around 1950, Pablo forecasted a Third World War, launched by imperialism to regain the upper hand, which would lead to the final downfall of capitalism and Stalinism. In 1953, the International Secretariat claimed that the isolation of the USSR had ended, eliminating one of the fundamental conditions for the bureaucracy's existence and leading to the imminent demise of Stalinism. More recently, the Pabloites have declared that the colonial world is the main center of revolution in the world, that the anti-imperialist struggles there are uninterrupted and irresistible, and that therefore the working class can come to power there with a "blunted instrument" instead of a Leninist proletarian party. Thus the problem of overcoming the crisis of proletarian leadership, the central problem of the world socialist revolution, is avoided, or else left to be resolved by the "objective process" going on in this "new world reality."

4. Although the Socialist Workers Party had broken with the Pabloites in 1953, by the early 1960's it became clear that the SWP was

moving increasingly toward the revisionist methodology it had once opposed. This regressive trend most openly manifested itself in the SWP majority line on the Cuban revolution: support to Castro's governmental bureaucracy in the hope that Castroism would be transformed into Trotskyism. On the organizational level, the SWP's abandonment of a revolutionary proletarian line became definitive with the "Reunification Congress" of 1963, in which "minor" political differences were overlooked in order that the SWP could carry out an unprincipled reunification with the International (USec). In fact, the main political resolution passed at this Congress included all the basic theses upon which Pabloism was based: the change in the world balance of forces, the centrality of the colonial revolution, and the end of the USSR's isolation.

5. Since the 1963 Congress, it has become obvious that, although Pablo has been discredited, Pabloism the method dominates the entire USec. The European sections have carried the "colonial epicenter" theory to its conclusion and have called for armed struggle based on rural guerilla warfare and entrism into the Castroite organizations of Latin America. At the same time, the SWP has moved sharply to the right, becoming little more than a support group for black nationalism, petit-bourgeois feminism, bourgeois liberal pacifism and the Cuban bureaucracy. (This is true although now the SWP claims that the Cuban revolution has degenerated--implying it was once undeformed.) The main work of the SWP and its youth group, the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), is building anti-war demonstrations based on single-issue politics--a plainly reformist and Popular Front approach. Thus all tendencies within USec, from the ultra-leftist adventurism of the European parties to the reformism of the U.S. section, adopt the liquidationist and empiricist Pabloite method.

Inverted Pabloism

6. Another international tendency which adapts to the methodology of Pabloism, despite proclamations of representing the only anti-Pabloite international trend, is the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), principally led by the British Socialist Labour League (SLL). The SLL, in its analysis of Cuba, uses the same objectivist premises of Pabloism and in so doing fails to grasp the critical difference between the establishment of a state, led by a Bolshevik-Leninist party, where organs of power are democratically administered by the working class (soviets) and the formation of a workers state which from its very inception is ruled by a Bonapartist bureaucracy. With this method they cannot adopt a correct attitude toward Stalinist and petit-bourgeois leaderships. They are forced, in order to maintain a firm "stand" against the Pabloites' capitulation to these leaderships, to categorically deny the possibility that, under certain conditions (the most important being timely material support from the Stalinist camp), these leaderships can in fact establish deformed workers states. This position leads them to conclude that Cuba is not a deformed workers state but some form of "statism" (despite the fact that the Castroite leadership of Cuba has expropriated the bourgeoisie, set up monopoly of foreign trade, and established the rudiments of a planned economy) From this it is clear that the methodological approach of the SLL and its followers can be characterized as inverted Pabloism.

7. This reaction of the SLL and its co-thinkers to Pabloism ultimately serves to reinforce the Pabloite current, for it cannot effectively deal with Pabloite accommodationism in a theoretical way. In essence both trends equate the deformed workers state with the road to socialism. Pabloism does this explicitly, by its support of Castroism and its one-time veiled support of the Chinese bureaucracy. The inverted Pabloites begin with the same premise, and are forced therefore to deny the fact of a social transformation in order to avoid giving this type of support. A correct Trotskyist appraisal of strategy and tactics toward these bureaucracies must start with the understanding that they are an obstacle to building socialism, thereby ruling out any possibility of support, however critical, to these leaderships, and removing the basis of the ICFI's Pablobhobia.

The Fourth International

8. With the development of capitalism into imperialism the basic tendency of capitalism to weld all areas of the world regardless of their level of development into a common economic system which dominates and subordinates to itself each of its parts is greatly reinforced. The hegemony of imperialism over world economy tends not only to level out the various stages of development of one area as compared with another, one country as compared with another, but simultaneously increases the differences between them and sets one up against the other--thus greatly aggravating the contradiction between the further development of the world productive forces and the national-state boundaries. This dynamic of imperialism inevitably leads to wars for the conquest and redistribution of markets and to the wholesale destruction of the productive forces on which human culture is based. The continued existence of imperialism thus threatens to plunge mankind into barbarism. It is on this basis, "on the insolvency of the national state, which has turned into a brake upon the development of the productive forces" (Trotsky), that the internationalism of communism ultimately rests.

9. The proletariat is the only class capable of destroying international capitalism and constructing a communist society which would forever eliminate all war, exploitation, and social inequality, thereby creating the conditions for the limitless development of human civilization. However, without the leadership of a communist party the proletariat cannot come to power and establish a genuine workers state in a single country. Further, the international proletarian revolution can only triumph if it is led by a revolutionary communist international, i.e., a world party of the proletariat. This has been completely verified by the experience of the October revolution and by the subsequent defeats the international proletariat suffered at the time when all the necessary conditions for successful world revolution were present except for a revolutionary international which could lead the insurrection. Finally, to attempt to construct a revolutionary party separate from, outside of, or opposed to the struggle to build an international can only mean capitulation to national narrow-mindedness which is inseparably linked with reformism. Thus any communist organization which does not take the fight for the construction of a communist international as its strategic starting point must inevitably degenerate.

10. The Fourth International which was founded by Trotsky in opposition to the degeneration of the Stalinist Third International no longer exists. The advent of Pabloism has destroyed the Fourth International to the extent that revolutionary Trotskyism finds its programmatic continuity only in small disunited groupings scattered throughout the world and which for obvious reasons cannot lead significant sections of the working class in struggle. Consequently, the main international focus of revolutionary Trotskyism must be directed toward the conducting of programmatic discussions with these organizations in order to achieve the theoretical clarity necessary for an early regroupment which would result in an international revolutionary tendency which would thus become a pole of attraction around which future and more complete communist regroupment could take place. Only by using this method is it possible to start the rebuilding of the Fourth International along the lines of the 1938 Transitional Program.

11. To lay the basis for the complete reconstruction of the Fourth International, it is necessary to decisively defeat Pabloism through ideological confrontation in all arenas of the class struggle. Such a victory over revisionism would carry Marxist theory forward and thus provide the necessary foundation on which genuine international unity based on democratic centralism could be built. As for now, however, it is important to stress that the battle against Pabloism has not yet been won.

12. Although an international revolutionary tendency has not yet been fully crystallized, the process of revolutionary communist regroupment can and must be started. Sufficient clarity on the basic questions posed by Pabloism has to a large degree been reached thus opening up the possibilities for principled fusion of national and international organizations. It is to this task, to the rebuilding of the Fourth International through a process of revolutionary communist regroupment, that the Communist Working Collective is dedicated.

[19 August 1971]

THE RIGHT TURN IN CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY
AND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The global right turn of the Maoist regime, which this very week extended a hand of invitation to Nixon through the secret messenger Kissinger, moves the Chinese regime one step further down the road of all-out class collaboration. Ping-Pong diplomacy is no episodic venture into "peaceful coexistence," but the logical consequence of deep-rooted failures and contradictions within Chinese society and in the Stalinist premises of Mao Tse Tung Thought.

LOPSIDED PRODUCTION AND BACKWARDNESS

Two decades of intense imperialist pressure without a revolution in the west have taken their toll. The U.S. has surrounded China with nuclear armed bases and fleets; it launched the Korean War; it encouraged India's attack on China during the early sixties; it has carried out an economic embargo, kept China out of the UN, waged a prolonged war against the Vietnamese, and generally, done everything in its power short of a direct invasion to overthrow or warp the Chinese regime.

These intense pressures are applied to a country with a narrow margin of surplus in its vital agricultural sector. Chinese agriculture, which is powered mainly by unmechanized labor-power, stands only a disaster away from having to import food stuffs to feed its population as it did in the early and middle sixties. In a backward country, the source of funds for industrial development which alone can eliminate underdevelopment must come from the agricultural sector. Those grain imports were superficially the result of droughts but in fact underscored the absence of reserves.

This permanent agricultural crisis has been aggravated by the lopsided character of the industrial sector. It is estimated that over 50% of state expenditures go into defense production (particularly into nuclear weaponry) which absorbs a high percent of industrial workers and perhaps two-thirds of all physicists, chemists and engineers. The severity of these problems exceeds those of Russia in the late twenties and early thirties where Stalin led the masses onto forced labor marches and destroyed the Bolshevik vanguard with a series of disastrous policies. It is this history of betrayal that we see repeated today in China.

SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY

The fundamental unity between the Russia of Stalin and the China of Mao consists in this: Each regime has accepted the revisionist idea that it is possible to construct "socialism in one country" in an isolated, backward regime with a tiny (relatively) working class and a massive peasantry. In turn, each regime has generated on the backs of the masses an inefficient bureaucratic apparatus whose outlook becomes increasingly narrow, conservative and even counter-revolutionary with each new defeat.

Marx pointed out that so long as want was made merely general, all the old crap would rise up again. Socialism-communism could

only be built on the most advanced productive forces. Mao has abandoned this first principle of historical materialism and substituted the idealist notion that Mao's Thought in itself is the "invincible weapon" which can overcome all obstacles.

There could not be a grosser distortion of Marxism. Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky made it clear that socialism (the first phase of communism) was a classless society which could only be achieved after a prolonged transitional period of the dictatorship of the proletariat in at least several of the most advanced countries.

Stalin opposed to this conception the theory of "socialism in one country." He maintained that Russia had all that was "necessary and sufficient" to build a complete socialist society. Stalin's "theory" proved to be no more than an expression of the material interests of the privileged bureaucracy within the Soviet Union. Brezhnev and Kosygin are the direct and uninterrupted descendents of this stratum.

If it is possible to build socialism in a single backward country then only foreign intervention can spoil the prospects. This logical corollary of Stalin's led him to the view that it was essential (and possible) to "neutralize the world bourgeoisie (or at least a section of it)." Lenin and Trotsky's irreconcilable hostility and opposition to the bourgeoisie was thrown overboard and a career of class collaboration and betrayal was substituted.

Mao Tse Tung has applied just this principle to all phases of Chinese foreign policy and with the same purpose in view: To prevent intervention in China in order to preserve, not the gains of the revolution as we shall see, but the prerogatives of the ruling clique, of which he is the supreme representative.

The policy of uniting with this or that "anti-imperialist" bourgeoisie and not with the struggles of the workers and peasants of that country becomes more and more blatant in proportion to the intensity of the struggle and the proximity of a workers victory. This reflects the deep-seated need of the bureaucracy to transform its local alliances into a grand alliance with the bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries. It further reflects a fear of a successful revolution which would either become a new nationalist competitor or a genuine workers democracy whose very existence would threaten the bureaucracy's web of lies and myths.

It is in this sense that we can understand the unerring knack Chinese diplomacy has for extending aid and diplomatic support (while keeping its own people in ignorance) at the very moment when reactionary regimes mount repressions against internal popular movements. Recent events in Iran, Pakistan, Ceylon, and now Vietnam, reflect this with a clarity even the RU apologists will be hard pressed to conceal.

IRAN--SOWING ILLUSIONS

Princess Pahlavi, sister of the Shah of Iran, recently (April 13) laid the groundwork for diplomatic recognition in Peking where

Chou En Lai hailed the continued dominance of the oil monopolies by congratulating this U.S. puppet with "safeguarding state sovereignty and winning victory (!) in struggles with the oil monopolies." All this while the execution of 13 Maoist students two months earlier went unreported in the Chinese press.

PAKISTAN--A REACTIONARY POLE

The regime of Yahya Khan is among the most reactionary and cynical in the world. Yahya Khan is the representative of the 22 families who have ruled Pakistan throughout the modern period. These 22 families constitute one of the narrowest oligarchies anywhere, ruling their own people brutally and acting as a master race over the Bengalis in East Pakistan. Pakistan is the cornerstone of two anti-communist alliances SEATO and CENTO while the masses are denied even the right to vote.

The Chinese have a long history of opportunism toward this regime. Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi, speaking in Lahore in 1966, said of Ayub Khan, Yahya's predecessor, "Under the leadership of Mohammed Ayub Khan, the Pakistani people united as one and filled with a common hatred of the enemy (India), triumphed over the enemy." Chen Yi, (who was deposed and has now been reinstated as an unjust victim of the Cultural Revolution) remained silent a few months later when striking railway workers were run over by trains when they lay across the tracks in protest. In November, 1968, a massive general strike which paralyzed the capital was put down by the army and police. These incidents also went unreported in the Chinese press so as not to damage the "firm friendship" of Mao and Khan.

The Chinese rationale that India and imperialist powers (the CIA) are maneuvering and behind the rebellion is no different from the Russian allegation that Germany was inspiring the Czechs and so they could be crushed with tanks and foreign troops. Of course there is Indian and U.S. intrigue, just as there was German intrigue--there always will be so long as imperialism exists--but point must be made--the Bengali fight for independence is a legitimate, historic fight against an oppressing ultra-reactionary racist regime 3,000 miles away. It should be noted in passing that India was forced to change its border garrisons on the Bengal-India border from Bengali soldiers to Punjabi soldiers in order to prevent its own troops from aiding the resistance to Khan and stirring up resistance in West Bengal.

Today, under the cover of "non-interference in the internal affairs" of Pakistan, the Chinese have supported the butcher Khan with arms and diplomacy in his crushing of the Bengali independence movement. In contrast, the Chinese correctly did not hesitate to support Kashmiri independence when directed against its "enemy" India. There should be no doubt that the Bengali nation is a nation. It includes what is presently East Pakistan and a part of India (West Bengal). It has a common territory (3,000 miles away from the 22 families), a common language, culture and once had a common economic life. The right of self-determination appropriate in a multi-national state such as Russia must be replaced in this instance with a clear call for independence, just as we call for

"Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution."

Revolutionaries must struggle to overthrow the Yahya Khan regime and in no way support it with war materials or diplomatic cover. The U.S. has once again stepped up its military aid to Pakistan on the ironic grounds that to not do so would "constitute interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan"!

The Pakistani and Chinese actions will objectively strengthen bourgeois nationalism in Bengla Desh. The Awami League and other nationalists will be the immediate beneficiaries of Pakistani aggression. We therefore draw a line between ourselves and the psuedo-Trotskyists of the Liberation Union who uncritically tail after every national struggle. Instead, we call for political and military independence from the bourgeoisie, military support to the defense of Bengal, land reform, and the nationalization of industry based on workers control and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. In short, we support the creation of a workers and peasants government in Bengal.

CEYLON--A "PROGRESSIVE POLE"

The popular front government of Mrs. Bandaranaike in Ceylon is a classic government of alliance with the bourgeoisie. Working class parties uniting with their class enemies to institute a few reforms and ultimately heading off revolutionary movement by the masses. Such was the Provisional Government of Kerensky in Russia in 1917. The Mensheviks supported Kerensky, but the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin and against the policy of Stalin in March and April, refused any support to the regime. Lenin and Trotsky pointed out that even the democratic tasks would not be carried to completion unless the working class took full power. If the bourgeois Kerensky regime were able to consolidate itself, the revolution would eventually be beheaded.

In Ceylon, Pabloism (a revisionist trend within the Trotskyist movement) has been carried to its inevitable and logical conclusion in the form of the Lanka Sama Samaja party's (LSSP) entry into a coalition government. Although USec, the international group which the SWP affiliates with (and which Milt Zazlow also identifies with) has expelled the LSSP from its ranks. The LSSP's action was only the logical conclusion of USec's relying on the inevitable left development of petit-bourgeois formations and labor bureaucracies. That is relying on every force but the working class mobilized on an independent basis through the building of a Marxist-Leninist party

The student "Guevarist" leadership of the uprising of tens of thousands of downtrodden plantation workers was without doubt an adventurist disaster, but it was broad and deep and certainly no CIA plot as Chou En Lai alleged in a post-mop-up extension of aid to the bankrupt Ceylonese government. The Peking Review has consistently hailed the Ceylonese "restrictions on foreign capital" and other measures, which, instituted in a way that protects the property of the bourgeoisie, only contributes to Ceylon's mortgage to the U.S. controlled World Bank. Popular front governments like those in Ceylon and Chile only indicate those countries stand on the eve of civil

war between the proletariat and bourgeoisie; their governments must be exposed. The uncritical Chinese praise of Bandaranaike's government can only foster illusions that some "third" form of state is possible.

The main lesson on the state learned by the Bolsheviks in the Russian February revolution was summed up by Lenin when he said: "The dictatorship of a single class is necessary....The forms of bourgeois state are extremely variegated, but their essence is the same; in one way or another, all these states are in the last analysis inevitably the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The transition from capitalism to Communism will certainly bring a great variety of and abundance of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be only one: the dictatorship of the proletariat." (Lenin, State and Revolution, p.32)

Spreading illusions about the state is part of the Maoist stock and trade. The Indonesian massacre of 500,000 communists and their supporters took place in 1965 six weeks after Mao sent the ignominious message of support to the Indonesian CP in its uncritical support and participation in the "progressive" Sukarno regime. (Sukarno had even dropped out of the U.N.) The Maoist theories of "two-stage" revolution, of joint dictatorships, of progressive bourgeoisies, of new democracy and national democracy, trace their lineage to Russian Menshevism by way of Stalin. They are deep-rooted prejudices and need to be overthrown.

JAPAN--POTENTIAL CENTER FOR ASIAN SOCIALISM

The absurdity and tragedy of Mao's alliance with the bourgeoisie internationally is illustrated in the case of Japan. Mao calls for a "peoples democratic dictatorship" to include all classes of Japanese society who are supposedly all oppressed by U.S. imperialism. In reality this is no more than a cynical attempt at a China-Japan alliance against the U.S. at the expense of the Japanese working class.

A Japanese socialist revolution, liberating the powerful industrial base of Japan, would stand as a workers bastion against U.S. imperialism in Asia and provide the material and cultural basis for the construction of Asian socialism. It would further severely threaten the very existence of the Maoist bureaucracy, leading to its overthrow and the rebuilding of a truly proletarian international course in China.

VIETNAM--A NEW BETRAYAL IN THE WORKS

The L.A. TIMES reported this week that Chou En Lai had made clear that China is prepared to participate in a new Geneva-type conference. At the very moment when the U.S. is nearly unable to continue the war, China is stepping forward (following in Russia's footsteps) to bail the U.S. out and betray Vietnam. This is a harsh statement, but let us review the first two Geneva accords. In 1954, with the French defeated at Dien Bien Phu and unable to continue the war, the "Great Powers"--China included--urged the Viet Minh to accept partition of Vietnam and thereby abandoning on the confer-

ence table the fruits of military victory in the fire. This settlement set the stage for the present Vietnam war. Also, it was none other than Chou himself who pressed for the removal from the agenda of the Laotian and Cambodian questions, thus necessitating a second Geneva meeting in 1962, this time to establish a "neutralist" government in Laos.

These betrayals mark a sharp contrast to the Bolshevik practice at Brest-Litovsk (1918) where a necessary compromise was openly treated as such and the Russian delegation to the negotiations headed by Trotsky, talked over the heads of the German delegation to the soldiers in the trenches to rise up and overthrow their governments. The Geneva accords have been more in the tradition of hypocritical bourgeois diplomacy with Chou standing silently for the French national anthem and the Vietnamese calling their retreat an advance.

The pattern of Chinese intervention at a moment of upsurge, revolution or even on the eve of victory is no accident or mere journalistic fact-selection. It is a consequence of the narrow conception typical of a parasitic bureaucracy long since alien to the workers and the world revolution. A complete victory of the NLF in Vietnam would bring to power an independent base which might oppose the existing bureaucracies; it might make the U.S. imperialists frantic and endanger a rapprochement. "Wouldn't it be better," the pragmatists argue, "to settle for half a loaf (which is after all better than none) and reap the benefits, not of a socialist revolution in Vietnam, but of mutually advantageous alliance with the U.S." Dressed up in the rhetoric of Maoism, this is just about the answer we get.

FOREIGN POLICY AND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Foreign policy has its roots in domestic policy and is an extension of it. There has been a right turn domestically as well. Wilfred Burchett, who writes for the Guardian, and who was for a long time either neutral in the Sino-Soviet dispute or pro-Soviet has recently come over to Maoism. In the past, he always avoided reporting factional struggles but now he has reported in some detail the semi-mystical struggle of Mao against the "left" in China. It seems that an "ultra-left current" "raising the red flag to oppose the red flag" is now being purged and associated with all the excesses of the cultural revolution period (calling back ambassadors, etc.).

PLP, in its break with Maoism, makes an important analytical error here. They believe that Mao has reversed the cultural revolution. But they miss the whole point. The present right turn in foreign policy is the harvest of the Cultural Revolution. It is PL's unwillingness to come to terms with the roots in Stalinism that has led them to their leftward-moving theoretical impasse.

It is Mao who conducts the present policy and it was Mao who organized the Cultural Revolution. By shoring up the cult of Mao as one of its major objectives, the Cultural Revolution insured that any "left" opposition would be narrowly confined to the same

premises that have given rise to the present policy. The present course has freed the hand of the Maoist wing of the bureaucracy to pursue a course increasingly to the right even of Liu Shao Chi.

The social gains of the Chinese revolution stand in jeopardy unless the present viciously limiting circle of economic development can be broken and the disastrous policies of the Maoist bureaucracy reversed. In order to set the Chinese revolution onto the "road of socialism," it is necessary for the working class, led by a vanguard Leninist-Trotskyist party, to overthrow the bureaucracy in a political revolution.

PESTANA-AVAKIAN-ZAZLOW

Tonight's debate pits two varieties of petit-bourgeois nationalism against one another. The battle is between tailing Chinese Great Nation Chauvinism and tailing the bourgeoisies of the oppressed nations.

The dialogue could use a rather heavy dose of proletarian internationalism.

TOMORROW WE WILL DISTRIBUTE PART II OF THIS LEAFLET DEALING WITH THE RU'S "STRATEGIC UNITED FRONT" AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF MAOISM FOR U.S. REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS, WRITE:

COMMUNIST WORKING COLLECTIVE (CWC)
P.O. BOX 72098 WATTS STATION
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[16 July 1971]

THE STRATEGIC "UNITED" FRONT
BLUEPRINT FOR PROLETARIAN DEFEAT

Imperialism is moving toward an economic and political crisis on a scale comparable to the 1930s. Nothing at all about revolutionary strategy can be understood unless this fundamental characteristic of the period we are going through is grasped.

Lin Piao spoke of the "temporary postponement of the revolution in the West" and built his entire strategy on this conception. The scenario of the countryside surrounding the cities: with the colonial world acting as the "countryside" and the advanced countries as the "cities" is not only a profoundly erroneous conception of the world revolutionary process but a complete misreading of the history of working class struggles in the last forty years. Lin Piao's thesis represents a profound pessimism regarding the role of the working class.

The "temporary postponement of the revolution in the West" was a direct consequence of the revisionist line that permeated the Third International during the Thirties until Stalin decided to liquidate the International in the early Forties. In other words, the crisis which faced the working class movement then and which is facing it once again today is the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

It is impossible for the Chinese or the RU's Avakian to understand this idea because to understand it is to make a thorough critique of the failure of Stalin's International. If Stalin's policies were "in the main" correct, then the reason the Germans, French, Spaniards, and the Italians were defeated both before World War II and again after World War II is because imperialism was too strong as a system; i.e., the objective conditions for revolution did not actually exist. The Communist Parties, after all, led a majority or near majority of the working class in the countries in question.

The "strategic 'united' front against imperialism" is, in the last analysis, a rehash of the Stalinist policies of the middle Thirties. It is a thinly veiled effort to resurrect the very same policies which brought to the working class its greatest defeats.

It is for this reason that the Revolutionary Union pretends not to have a past, why it claims it has only a "primitive understanding." In our opinion it is why the R.U. won't have a future--at least a future which contributes positively to the socialist revolution.

"HISTORY IS BUNK"

The disastrous ultra-left policy of the Comintern 1928-1933 prevented a united front of the working class and thereby contributed to a fascist victory in Germany--a victory achieved without so much as a shot fired by the then largest Communist Party in the International outside of the Soviet Union. The C.I. was thrown into panic-stricken confusion. A headlong shift to the Right ensued which culminated in the 7th Congress of the Comintern at which

Dimitrov's strategy of a united front against fascism was adopted. The C.I. never met again and seven years later, the compromised and bureaucratized C.I. was dissolved by fiat from Stalin without so much as a peep from any of the member parties. His brief statement declared that the C.I. had "done its work" (!) and that now the allies could see the Soviets were "genuine (!) anti-fascists."

In essence Dimitrov's policy meant that the Leninist-Trotskyist strategy of a united front of the working class (see Left-Wing Communism--An Infantile Disorder) would now be abandoned for a popular front policy of all-class unity against fascism, which only embraced the "reactionary" section of the bourgeoisie. The popular front meant a bloc of the Communists, Social-Democrats, and liberal bourgeois parties to wage either an electoral or military struggle against fascism. Although the Communists sought to lead the bloc, leadership meant organizational control around a program of bourgeois democracy. Thus in Spain the defense of the Republic and indefinite suspension of the perspective of proletarian dictatorship; in France a bloc with the liberal bourgeoisie with no inroads into bourgeois property or dismantling of the state. After the War, it meant surrendering their guns in France and Italy and joining bourgeois coalition governments.

The policy of Stalin in Western Europe after 1934 became indistinguishable from that of Social-Democracy. This purely reformist conception which attempted to reconcile antagonistic classes in a coalition government had nothing in common with Bolshevik theory and practice. It was in fact borrowed from Kautsky, the revisionist leader of the 2nd International, who envisioned that "Between the time of the pure proletarian democratic state and the pure bourgeois, there is a period of transition from one into the other. This has its corresponding period of political transition, when the government as a rule should take the form of a coalition government."

THE CHINESE PUZZLE

The general strategic proposal of the Chinese can be expressed in the slogan "Build a united front (read: popular front) against imperialism" and is embodied in the Polemic with the Soviets. The strategy calls for the building of a "worldwide united front against U.S. imperialism." Imperialist Japan, for example, should build, according to Mao, a broad "patriotic united front of all strata" including "many big Japanese entrepreneurs" to oppose U.S. imperialism. The recent telegram from Mao Tse Tung to Madame DeGaulle and Chou En Lai's attendance at the funeral (laying a wreath at the grave) is in the finest tradition of class collaboration. DeGaulle, it seems, says an echo from the past, is a "genuine anti-fascist." These Chinese actions are designed to prevent the French proletariat from forming a vanguard party based on the strategic perspective of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of a Soviet United States of Europe.

The crisis in all U.S. Maoist tendencies is rooted in the application of this strategy to the U.S. The only document that deals directly with the United States, aside from statements on the Negro Question, is the Open Letter to the CPUSA (1963). The Chinese call

for "an anti-monopoly united front against imperialist policies (!) of aggression and war." This strategy, if consistently applied to the U.S. is bound to bring forth the popular front.

In this remarkable document (to the CPUSA), the Chinese advise us to "enrich the revolutionary tradition of William Z. Foster." Foster was leader of the CP long after it had degenerated into a revisionist party. He fully supported the CP line in the 1930s and was conciliatory toward Browder when he dissolved the party in 1944. Foster was the main architect of the "anti-monopoly coalition" which still dominates the CP today (although Foster's version envisioned a bit more violence). The Party's accommodation to Roosevelt's New Deal, which sealed its doom as a revisionist party, also took place under the advice of Stalin who was still supposedly, "in the main" a great revolutionist.

Mao's revisionist strategy is veiled (and thereby maintained) through its extreme indefiniteness. The strategic formulations, even those concerning the "united front," are subject within limits to various interpretations. This accounts for the total inconsistency of Maoist amalgams. The Weathermen, the Venceremos RU split-off, the Panthers, etc., insofar as they are consistent, stress the armed worldwide united front against imperialism. They are detachments of a revolutionary army already in action. Weatherman has even carried this to its theoretical extreme.

These currents reflect profound pessimism with regard to the industrial proletariat and the prospects for an American revolution. The Right opportunist line is expressed in the "strategic united front" of the Avakian R.U. group and reflects the same pessimism in the proletariat by appealing exclusively to the lowest common denominator. Maoism is the source of both these deviations.

THE RIGHTWARD MOTION OF THE RU

The dilemma of Chinese strategy for the U.S. may be posed in the following way: If it is necessary to unite with the bourgeoisie everywhere in the world against the U.S. imperialists, then the least a U.S. Maoist party should do is not unite with its own bourgeoisie which, after all, is oppressing the peoples of the world. This seems logical, but since the worldwide "united" front is actually against imperialist policies, and the main focus of the struggle is to get the imperialists out of, say, Vietnam, then inevitably the "united" front must come to include the "progressive" section of the bourgeoisie who, for various reasons, begin to call for withdrawal.

The strategy which is essential to break with this reformism must establish the independence of the working class from the capitalist class. There must be a break with the capitalist parties and the call for the creation of a Labor Party; capitalist spokesmen must be excluded from the anti-war rallies; we must call for all U.S. troops out of Asia Now; we must call for victory to the Indochinese revolution and no confidence to sellout "leaders" at home or abroad, and finally we must call for labor political strikes against the war.

Political strikes by U.S. workers in solidarity with the Indochinese working people could compel the capitalists to face an

enemy even more potent than the Vietnamese revolution--a powerful, organized and conscious working class in struggle for its own class interests in the very citadel of imperialism. Such a program would constitute part of the transition, or approach to the perspective of a workers dictatorship.

The RU remains ambiguous about its approach to the revolution. Rhetorically it calls for a "single stage" revolution in the U.S., but its programmatic line and its adherence to the Chinese push it in another direction. The RU upholds a minimum and maximum program. The minimum program is "anti-imperialist" (the policies or the system--take your pick), and short of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the maximum program is socialism and communism, which means in RU language, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The division of the Marxist program into minimum and maximum sections must eventually be crowned with the division of the social revolution into "two-stages" which means into no revolution at all. The minimum-maximum controversy was exploded with the failure of the 2nd International. The 3rd International, in its first four congresses, developed the forms of transition and the transitional demands to the single stage proletarian revolution.

The series of left split-offs from the RU and the RU's desperate attempt to keep up with the rightward drift of China indicate a rightist consolidation in the organization. In programmatic terms, this means a greater emphasis on the formulations which will serve outright reformism.

THE TROTSKYIST ALTERNATIVE

The crisis of capitalist society is developing to the point where all the necessary objective conditions for the conquest of power by the proletariat will shortly be met. Only the present subjective conditions (entire class under reformist leadership and the absence of international communist leadership) can prevent the victory of the proletariat. The construction of this international leadership is thus the most important task presently posed before the communist movement.

Such an international leadership can only be built on the basis of irreconcilable opposition to Stalinism and all other forms of reformism. In essence this means rebuilding the Fourth International, which was founded by Trotsky in opposition to the degeneration of the Third International, and making it the most powerful force in the international working class movement.

"The strategic task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow. Its political aim is the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie." (The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International, Trotsky)

Not only must the F.I. lead the struggle of the proletariat in the advanced imperialist countries and in the semi-colonial world, but equally critical is the construction of Leninist-Trotskyist

parties in the degenerated (Russia) and deformed (China, Korea, North Vietnam, Cuba, Eastern Europe) workers states in order to lead the political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies and clear the road toward socialism.

The program of revolutionary Marxism as developed during the first four congresses of the Third International under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky finds its direct continuation in the 1938 Program of the F.I. This program is based on the concept of transitional demands, that is, demands "stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat." (Trotsky)

The Transitional Program thus serves as a bridge linking the daily class struggle of the workers with the socialist program of proletarian revolution. It is a program whose demands are not governed by the constraints placed on them by capitalist production, but which express the objective needs of the proletariat as a class irrespective of whether they can be realized under capitalism. Finally, the complete implementation of the Transitional Program can only take place if the proletariat seizes state power, and expropriates the bourgeoisie; i.e., accomplishes the socialist revolution.

WORKER'S DEMOCRACY

Zaslow's withering critique of Stalinism* coinciding with the news of the Nixon trip to China left Avakian defenseless on the podium. Provoked by the above and by Part I of our leaflet, Avakian threatened a member of CWC (who was once an RU member) with physical violence if he returns to the Long March tonight.

We consider these strong-arm tactics antithetical to the principle of democratic discussion among working class tendencies. It is essential, not only for the present health of the working class movement, but to prepare it to rule, that these practices, historically associated with Stalinism, cease. We also consider it obligatory to defend this fundamental Marxist principle.

SPARTACIST-CWC FUSION

The Trotskyist "splitters and wreckers" of the CWC and the Spartacist League are carrying out a principled fusion of the two organizations in order to "unite and construct" a revolutionary party.

*Our two criticisms of Zaslow's line in Part I of this leaflet did not materialize in the debate and therefore we withdraw them as unfounded.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS CONCERNING LENIN'S AND STALIN'S POSITION ON "SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY," WRITE:

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[17 July 1971]